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ELCA Churchwide Assembly Bible Study Guide: Man-Hei Yip, July 24, 2022

Devotional Presenter on Luke 24:13-35. The Walk to Emmaus.

“What things?” A question Jesus asked his disciples on the road to Emmaus. The question happened at a time when the disciples were discouraged and dispirited by the death of Jesus. It is not difficult to show empathy to the disciples and see why they were disheartened. Their leader was arrested, handed over to the empire to be condemned to death, and crucified. But these things and responses only expose how the disciples misunderstand and misinterpret Jesus’ identity. The suffering and death of Jesus comes into contradiction with the kind of messianic hope that is based on glory and victory.

Through walking with us, and at times challenging our beliefs about him and interrupting our conversations about the things that had happened, Jesus unceasingly explains to us what things really matter. The crucified one connects and communicates with our bodies through his compassionate love on the cross. Jesus, the misunderstood and misinterpreted other, has deeply felt the pain of the oppressed and otherized persons. His death and resurrection continually disrupt patterns of thought that distort and depreciate the message of freedom and liberation. That reckoning will further open our hearts and minds to see our limitations and recognize our vulnerabilities in our shared humanity.

We are living in highly divisive times. While Christian love is and should be incarnated, what does the incarnation of Christian love mean in spaces where division, obstruction, and even violence prevails. What things are shaping our act of extending empathy in the journey toward a shared humanity?

Further questions:

The wordings “recognizing him (Jesus)” and “recognized him” appeared twice in Luke 24:13-35. What does that suggest to us? “What things” have kept our eyes from recognizing Jesus in our respective contexts?

What patterns of thought and practice need to be disrupted as we support one another as the body of Christ, and journey together in love and peace?
