

Let us pray... Open the eyes of our hearts Lord, we want to see you. Breathe your Spirit in our presence, and fill us with your peace... Amen.

The power of prayer is a wonderful and beautiful thing... But what about all the prayers that go unanswered?

Unanswered prayers challenge our faith... And too many unanswered prayers may lead to doubt...

And when doubt starts to seep in, it can be hard to find motivation, and harder still to have faith... Trusting that things will work out...

Because trusting that things will work out is a leap of faith...

Especially when you are going through something that might take months or even years to know the outcome...

Having that kind of trust day in and day out, can really drain a person... Where doubt can easily make its way back in...

And doubt is something we find a whole lot of in the Easter stories...

But before we get to all this doubt, I would like to explain where we are in the Easter story, as we have been doing a lot of Gospel jumping lately...

Easter Sunday, we were in the Gospel of Mark, last Sunday we were in the Gospel of John, and today we are in the Gospel of Luke...

Today's Gospel still takes place on that first Easter Sunday, though now it is late in the evening...

The resurrected Christ has made a few appearances in Luke's Gospel, but like we discussed last Sunday... Nobody really knows what this means... And because they don't know what this means, they start to doubt that Jesus has actually risen from the dead.

Even when the disciples see Jesus, they doubt what is right in front of their eyes... They think Jesus is still dead, and has taken on the form of a ghost.

And they continue to doubt, even after touching Jesus' hands and feet...

In fact, it takes Jesus' eating a piece of fish to eradicate their doubt...
Which had to be bizarre... Seeing a once dead person eat a piece of fish...
While at the same time, eating fish had become associated with Christ...
From the famous feeding of the 5000 with the five loaves and the two fish...
To Jesus making disciples of fishermen... The fish symbol quickly became
associated with Christ followers, long before the cross was.

In fact, some early Christian communion meals centered around bread and
fish, instead of bread and cup... Because of this very Gospel...
Where Christ proves that the resurrection of the body is real...
And the resurrection of the body is good news for what is yet to come...
And it is good news for us here and now...

As our world is all about what is tangible—what we can touch, see, taste,
smell, hear, and experience...
Our world is not based in some far-off dream mounted on the horizon
outside the scope of reality...
Our world is here and now...
Which is why Christ appeared in a resurrected body... To erase the doubts
of his disciples... And to show them how the kingdom of God has come to
earth through his resurrected body.

The resurrected Christ has crossed the bridge of doubt... Rooting faith in
something that is solid, real, and tangible.
Because what is solid, real, and tangible cannot be erased from existence...
Not even death can't erase life from existence... And the resurrected body
of Christ is proof of this.
And we are reminded of this every time we take communion...

You hear the words of institution... You see the bread and the cup... You taste and smell the bread and wine...

And then you experience Christ in your body.

All of these things are an embodiment of Communion... So, you may know that the resurrected Christ is real and that God's promises are for you...

Promises that provide nourishment... So, you may have strength for the days ahead...

When you are met with doubt... When you are worried about all of the things going on in the world... When you are waiting on news...

When you are confronted by the things that drain your tank...

In those moments remember how Christ has been poured out for you... So that you can be filled...

Because Christ wants to fill your cup from his cup...

As a full cup is a reminder of God's bountiful love... A full cup reminds you to stop looking for what is not there... And to start looking towards what is.

Because God is all around us... Even in unanswered prayers...

For example, Keenan and I have put a lot of faith and trust in finding a house the last two years... This has been draining, frustrating, and has filled us with doubt...

And so, it was time to change our tactic... And we started looking for an apartment instead... And since then, our search has unfolded with many God moments...

Now, it hasn't all unfolded perfectly... Nor was it easy and flawless... Nor was it what we originally wanted... But by opening ourselves up to this change, God has shown us something unexpected...

Unexpected, kind of like, the risen Christ eating a piece of fish... Such a strange and bizarre act... And yet eating is one of the most natural things we do...

And maybe that's the point... God reveals Godself to us in the most natural ways... Through everyday living...

Because that is exactly where we find God... In our embodied reality...

Because the God who raised Jesus from the dead, promises to be with you in your very real lives...

Showing up even when you have doubt... Because that is what the risen Christ does...

Christ appeared to his disciples even when they doubted... And he didn't give up, even though they continued to doubt...

Because the risen Christ is always present, he might just be in places you least expect... Amen.