

When Jesus Drops In Luke 24:13-25

Throughout this Easter season as we've been looking at the different Resurrection encounters, it often seems like Jesus just drops in from nowhere like a drone.

There seems to be a lot of controversy and fear about drones, but I read a cool story this week about how drones are being used in humanitarian efforts.

A San Francisco company has developed a system of using drones to help rural medical clinics in Rwanda. Many of these clinics are so isolated that deliveries cannot be made by trucks or motorcycles. So airplane-style drones are being used to carry blood for transfusions, vaccines and medicine for malaria and HIV / AIDS. The drones are able to make the deliveries within 45 minutes and save lives by airlifting these supplies when they are needed.

Of course, other companies are interested in using this technology for their own purposes. But Zipline says no. They are totally focused on "serving health care systems." Zipline's cofounder said, "Every delivery you make is potentially saving a human life."

Like Zipline, Jesus is totally focused on serving people in need. And after being raised from the dead, he travels the country and pops up in surprising places.

- On Easter morning, Jesus appears to Mary in the garden and says, "Woman, why are you weeping?" (John 20:15).
- On Easter evening, he appears to his disciples and showing them his hands and his feet (v. 39).
- A week later, Jesus drops in on Thomas and the other disciples in a locked room.
- Then appears to the disciples on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias where they have breakfast together (John 20, 21).

In today's gospel reading, two disciples are heading away from Jerusalem after the events of what we call Holy Week. They are talking as they walk along, when Jesus drops in on them, not via a

Zipline drone, of course, but in the form of a stranger asking, “*What are you guys talking about as you walk along?*”

The two disciples proceed to tell the stranger about Jesus, “*a prophet powerful in word and deed,*” condemned to death and crucified. They report that they were astounded by the women in their group who found the tomb of Jesus empty, and who were told by angels that Jesus was alive. Heads spinning, the two disciples are not sure what to make of all this.

So Jesus begins to teach them. “*Beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said about him in the Scriptures*” (v. 27). In essence, Jesus engages them in a small group Bible study, and helps them to see how Jesus fits into and fulfills God's plan since the time of Moses.

These 2 disciples remind me of so many students and even a number of adults I've met over the years. They are walking along through life, trying to make sense of this Jesus stuff and they don't quite get it. They've been through Sunday School and Cross-Training. Parents, teachers and even mentors have done their best to teach and explain about Jesus but they just don't have it figured out yet.

It is my hope and prayer that you graduates, and all of you here today, know the love God has for you, what God has done in and through Jesus - his death and resurrection – all to prove that love.

There is an important lesson for us all from this conversation that happened on the way to Emmaus – it was three people, talking together along the journey. The truth is that sometimes we don't get it, sometimes we don't understand, sometimes we find it hard to believe, and we need others to help us see. The way of following Jesus is different from the ways of the world. It is important to be in conversation with others and study God's word together with others, to talk about life experiences in the light of faith, to be honest about our disappointments and grief, to explore our questions.

It is important for us to study the Bible, but if we only do so in isolation, we're going to continue to come to conclusions based on

only our own point of view and that can be a slippery slope towards misunderstanding.

These disciples were disappointed about the events that happened in Jerusalem in part because they fundamentally misunderstood how God was working to save the world. Expecting a God of power, they got one of vulnerability. Expecting a warrior God, they got a suffering servant. And while it might be tempting to chide them for their lack of understanding, we need to recognize that it is easy to see things the way we want to see them. Bible study is most valuable when it is done in community, with strangers as well as friends.

Graduates, as you move into the next chapter of your lives – I urge you to find others with whom you can be in conversation about faith and life – whether it is a campus ministry group like Lutheran Campus Ministry, FCA, CRU, or Navigators, maybe an army chaplain or a group of friends you can meet with to study the Bible and talk about it. We all benefit from the study of God’s Word but even more so, when we are in conversation about it with others.

Just as important as study is putting our faith into action. These 2 on the road to Emmaus didn’t see that it was Jesus walking with them. But as they arrived at their destination they urged this stranger to stay and be their guest. Talk about an opportunity to show hospitality to a stranger and to serve someone.

So often, when we find ourselves feeling desperate and distressed, the best way to experience a lift is to serve a person in need. This might mean offering a hot meal to a homeless person at a shelter, tutoring a struggling student or working on a house for Habitat for Humanity.

Prevention magazine (February 4, 2013) reports that "people who volunteer are likelier to be happier than those who don't -- regardless of how much money they make. ... Researchers believe volunteering boosts happiness because it increases empathy."

Serving a person who is a guest or a stranger puts us in touch with the resurrected Jesus. According to Matthew 25, Jesus said, *"Come, you that are blessed by my Father, I was hungry and you*

*gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me. ... Truly I tell you, **just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me**" (Matthew 25:34-35, 40).*

Serving others is serving Jesus!

Many times it is through our serving others that we experience blessing ourselves. After inviting Jesus to stay with them, they sat down to eat. At the table, Jesus takes bread, blesses it, breaks it and gives it to them. Then their eyes are opened and they recognize him.

At the table, Jesus delivers the gift of himself. He revealed himself to the two disciples in the breaking of the bread, and he reveals himself to us in the very same way. When we gather at the Communion table, we are not gathering at a Lutheran table, a Methodist table or a Baptist table. Instead, it is the Lord's Table. Jesus is our host, offering us the gift of himself and promising to nourish us for lives of faithful discipleship. This is a gift that is every bit as life-giving as a container of blood delivered by drone to a remote African health clinic.

Jesus made his first delivery to Emmaus, and he continues to drop in on us today. He comes as a stranger, interpreting the Scriptures to us. He arrives as a guest, giving us opportunities to serve. And he swoops in as a host, offering us the gift of himself in the breaking of the bread.

Our challenge is to respond to these surprising deliveries in the same way that the disciples of Emmaus did -- by telling other people what has happened to us, and how Jesus has been made known to us.

If we do this, the delivery of Jesus will be complete, and we might even help to save a life.