

**TMUC Church at Home**  
**Reflection – Sunday May 24, 2020**

Jeff: (rapping head) Open up! Open up!

Carol: Is this some kind of 'knock knock' joke?

Jeff: No, I'm praying!

Carol: Nice technique!

Jeff: It's Biblical. In this week's scripture reading from Luke's Gospel, it says that Jesus opened the minds of the disciples to understand scripture.

Carol: Sooooo...you're praying to God to open up your mind...?

Jeff: You got it!

Carol: Annnnnndddd...how did Jesus open up the disciples minds in the scriptures?

Jeff: Well, as I recall, Jesus began talking about Moses, and the prophets and the psalms...

Carol: Jesus talked about the stories and the writings and the songs of their faith...

Jeff: Stories and writings with which they were familiar.

Carol: Yes, but Jesus talked about how his own life, and his crucifixion and his resurrection, were all part of the faith story they already knew.

Jeff: If Jesus talked about Moses, and the prophets and the psalms, he would have talked about a history of God being with people through times of loss and times of promise, times of exile and times of homecoming, times of creation, the disruption of creation and then new creation.

Carol: Jesus showed them that God is present in a history of life, death, and renewed life.

Jeff: Put in the context of their faith story, the disciples could grieve the crucifixion of Jesus and still expect a new act of God's creation, God's love, God's dream for the world.

Carol: The resurrection of Jesus was the first glimpse of that new creation, and then Jesus promises them that they will experience God's spirit in a new, amazing way.

Jeff: So, when Jesus opened the minds of the disciples, Jesus was opening up their perception of the world, opening up their perception to accept that life doesn't follow our scripts, doesn't always turn out the way we want – that tragedy is part of our lives, but it is not the most fundamental part of our lives...

Carol: The most fundamental part of history, of life, of our lives, is God's faithful love, is God's commitment to peace, to the just sharing of resources and respect; God's

commitment to the health of all creation.

Jeff: So, when we pray, we open ourselves to discover a new way to see the world.

Carol: We discover how God is rebirthing, re-creating, resurrecting God's love that is loose in this world.

Jeff: When we pray we open ourselves to discovering that Christ is not found in the sky, but in the love and hope and healing embodied in our lives.

Carol: So, we can hope for new creation even after COVID-19, hope for a world more open to living in peace and love.

Jeff: For we live in God's world. Thanks be to God. AMEN

Carol: and AMEN.

And here is the script for Esther and Emmett:

Esther and Emmett -Ascension Sunday

(Emmett is looking upwards. Esther enters, looks at Emmett, looks up)

Esther: What are you doing Emmett?

Emmett: I'm doing an enter-active Bible study of Luke's Gospel.

Esther: What is 'enter-active' Bible study?

Emmett: It's when you read a story in the Bible and then try to 'enter' into the story, and act it out.

Esther: So that's what you're doing right now...

Emmett: Shhh! I think I see him...nope, just a spot on the ceiling.

Esther: Esther (looking up) Who's up there?

Emmett: Jesus. I'm entering into the story about him rising into the sky, leaving his friends on the ground...

Esther: Oh, you mean the Ascension story.

Emmett: No, I'm pretty sure it's a Jesus story.

Esther: It is a Jesus story. 'Ascension' is the word used to describe this story. To 'ascend' means to go up, just as descend means to go down.

Emmett: I get it. Jesus rises into the sky. He 'ascends', goes up. So, it is an ascension story.

Esther: Yes. What else have you learned about this story from your enter-active Bible

study?

Emmett: I've learned that Bible study is hard on the neck!

Esther: Well, maybe you should stop looking for Jesus up in the sky.

Emmett: Okay...my neck says thank you.

Esther: As I recall the story in Luke, before ascending Jesus did some Bible study with his disciples.

Emmett: Did they do an enter-active study?

Esther: I think it was more of a "let me tell you some stories" study.

Emmett: Gee, that sounds like fun. What kind of stories did Jesus tell them?

Esther: He told them stories that we now read in the Bible. He told them the story of Moses, called by God to free people enslaved in Egypt.

Emmett: I remember that story – so God, told Moses to say to Pharaoh "let my people go!!"

Esther: Indeed. Jesus also told the disciples stories about people called 'prophets' – like Isaiah, Deborah, Jeremiah, Esther...

Emmett: Esther!! You're a prophet Esther?

Esther: Well, there was a prophet named Esther but it wasn't me! The prophets talked about how much God loves everybody, how everybody should also love everybody – and that everybody should be able to have enough to eat, and a place to live, everybody should feel safe and welcomed.

Emmett: You do that! Should I start calling you Prophet Esther?

Esther: Just Esther is fine. I think Jesus was saying that God always cares about people who are treated unfairly, who don't have enough to eat, or a place to stay, or feel that no one cares about them...

Emmett: Those sound like the people Jesus loved and spent time with.

Esther: God's love was shown in Jesus' love. So, after the disciples saw Jesus ascending...

Emmett: Going up...

Esther: After Jesus' ascension, the disciples went back to the city of Jerusalem.

Emmett: so they stopped looking up into the sky?

Esther: Yes...

Emmett: I bet their necks had gotten sore.

Esther: They stopped looking for Jesus up in the sky, and started looking at people... at people who were tired, who were lonely, who were hungry, who needed a friend.

Emmett: People who needed to know that God loved them.

Esther: That God loves everyone.

Emmett: So...God is up in the sky..

Esther: And also on the earth, and in the hearts and lives of all people.

Emmett: So, I can stop looking into the sky and start looking for ways to love people like Jesus loved them.

Esther: Yes...that would be quite an enter-active Bible study. God is with us. Amen

Emmett: AMEN