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4/25/12

Let the words of my mouth and the
meditation of my heart
Be acceptable in Your sight,
O LORD, my strength and
my Redeemer.

Have you ever seen a photo of a famous person with text next to it and realized that in your mind you had read the text with the voice of the famous person? I tend to think of people with distinctive voices like Morgan Freeman, James Earle Jones or Sean Connery as being responsible for this. As I read this gospel, I realize I had put voices to the characters. Most notably, I had read Jesus in the voice of John Cleese. In fact, in my mind it was worse than that... I had read this entire gospel story as a Monty Python skit, complete with the rest of the Flying Circus cast as the disciples.

Now having said that, and being reminded of sermons with metaphors that were of questionable relevance, I will admit, that I tried to dismiss this image and get back to what I was sure was a more relevant topic.

But it occurred to me that there was a reason this gospel text didn't read like I was expecting: it's particularly different from the other stories of Jesus greeting the disciples after the resurrection. Consider for a moment that there is no Thomas. There is no exhortation to believe without proof. Instead we find Jesus being all about the answers. We often talk about how Jesus is considered to be fully human and fully divine, and in this story Jesus is really demonstrating his humanity. And with the Ascension story on the end, his divinity.

For a moment I'm going to back up to Good Friday in Luke.

Mary, Joana, and Mary and the other women go to the tomb, and find two dazzling figures, and no Jesus. The women tell the apostles, who think this is an idle story and do not believe them.

Then two apostles are walking to Emmaus, when they meet and don't recognize Jesus on the road.

After explaining to Jesus the story of Jesus' own resurrection, Jesus begins to preach to them the scriptures foretelling his own story,

and finally he reveals himself, just before disappearing.

These two apostles then appear to the disciples and explain what has happened.

Now we reach the start of today's Gospel.

Jesus appears to the disciples. They are frightened.

He says "Why are you troubled and why do questionings rise in your hearts?"

Here are my hands and my feet.

Touch me and see.
I am not just a ghost, I'm real.

By the way, do you have any grub, I'm hungry.

They give him some fish.
He then proceeds to explain the relevant scriptures that foretold his death and resurrection.

He opens their minds.
And he gives them one instruction, keep going until things work out.

Then he goes off into the clouds (and since I started with Monty

Python I have no shame in admitting...) in what I imagine to be a fantastic song and dance number, complete with volumetric rays of sunlight and a somewhat rewritten rendition of "Defying Gravity".

I like this Jesus. This Jesus could totally make it as an academic. He has answers, he has evidence, he has citations, he's all set. In particular he's got a profoundly human need: he needs to eat.

You'll notice all the scripture stuff comes after the eating part. Jesus' order of business is to appear, introduce himself, calm them down just enough to ask the really important question, "What do you have to eat, I'm starving," and then proceed to educate them. And this is where John Cleese comes in for me. In my mind, the disciples are freaking out and starting to rejoice, but they don't understand what's going on. They don't know what in the world to make of this sudden apparition of Jesus, who in my mind has been asking for food the entire time since he appeared. Jesus does his best to calm them down, but they aren't getting it, and that's getting in the way of his eating. So he offers proof of his hands and

side. And eventually that gets him to the important part, eating.

I like the role of food in this text and I think it's got a profoundly relevant message for us. The crowning jewel on the collection of evidence for Jesus's return from the dead is that he's hungry, and that he needs to do what all other humans need to do. In fact the two times Jesus appears to anyone after the resurrection in Luke, he makes his identity known with food. In the Emmaus story, he breaks bread, and here he eats fish. In John we get the story of fishing by Galilee.

I asked for the rest of Luke to be added to the end of today's gospel text, first because it's so short, but also because it completes a picture. Looking at this text, I was faced with a surprising trend.

The only thing Jesus does after the resurrection, is to visit people, and eat with them, to open their minds, to tell them to keep going, and then he leaves.

If there's a point to this gospel for us, I think it comes from this.

Think about our Wednesday nights.

(silence).

I periodically find myself concerned that I'm not doing enough, both as an MIT student, and as a Christian, as a leader, as any of the roles I might consider myself. And frankly it's getting worse as graduation approaches.

But the example we have been given, by the most empowered Jesus in all of the Gospel, a Jesus who knows that his time is limited, and soon he must depart, is to

visit,
eat,
open minds,
and continue until we have inherited a better world because of our efforts.

Amen.