Hi,

Well, it is finally April. March seemed to go on forever! But the sun is shining and we begin a new month in the virus saga. I hope you and yours are doing well.

Here’s a few updates:

* The links to the on-line classes, the video recordings of the classes, the class audio podcasts, and the archive of these daily emails can all be found at [www.scottengle.org](http://www.scottengle.org/). This week’s videos and podcasts are all uploaded.
* In addition to the Elijah study, I’ve attached the Weekly Bible Study for this Palm Sunday.

***Luke 24:30-35 (NRSV)***

**When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?” That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!” Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.**

***Acts 18:24-28 (NRSV)***

**Now there came to Ephesus a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria. He was an eloquent man, well-versed in the scriptures. He had been instructed in the Way of the Lord; and he spoke with burning enthusiasm and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue; but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained the Way of God to him more accurately. And when he wished to cross over to Achaia [the Greek peninsula], the believers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. On his arrival he greatly helped those who through grace had become believers, for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the scriptures that the Messiah is Jesus.**

Some books really stick in my memory. One is Leo Buscaglia’s *Bus 9 to Paradise*, written nearly twenty years ago. In the book, readers are taken on a mythical bus ride toward paradise on earth, looking for ways to embrace the simple joys of life. What struck me most was Buscaglia’s observation that the most joyful people have passions in their lives, activities or interests that make them excited to get up in the morning. On Bus 9 it mattered less what the passion was, than simply being passionate about something – leading a passion-filled life. Buscaglia was right so far as he went, but I’ve come to learn that the object of our passion matters too. To the point, all of us are created in the image of God so that we might become passionately devoted to God and to one another . . . so that we might become passionate disciples of Jesus Christ. After all, who doesn’t want a life filled with enthusiasm, passion, and joy. In today’s Scripture passages, we meet several people who must have been surprised by the passion they found welling up in their own hearts.

*“Were not our hearts burning within us . . .”*

On a Sunday afternoon, two disciples were on the road to Emmaus, a town some distance from Jerusalem. They were followers of Jesus from Nazareth and had been in Jerusalem for the tumultuous last week of Jesus’ life. They talked busily about all that happened in the past few days. They were puzzled and confused about how it all had ended on Friday. But then again, some women had made the most amazing claim that morning – that Jesus was alive! Soon, they were joined by a third man as they walked along. The man walked with them and talked with them, explaining why the Messiah had to suffer. When they sat down to the evening meal, the man took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. When they ate, their eyes were opened and they knew that the man was Jesus. Later, after Jesus had left them, they realized that their hearts had been burning inside them as they talked with this unknown man. *Burning inside them* . . .

When we talk about the people of history, whether it is Julius Caesar or George Washington, we are talking about a dead person. But when we talk about Jesus, we are talking about someone who lives, who is still involved in the world and in our lives. We may not be able to sit down with Jesus at the dinner table like the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, but we can have a relationship with Jesus that burns in our own hearts as well.

*“He spoke with burning enthusiasm . . .”*

Apollos is one of the lesser known figures in the New Testament. He was a Jewish Christian, both educated and eloquent, from Alexandria, Egypt, the second largest city in the Roman Empire. We first meet Apollos in Ephesus, a very large city on the western coast of modern-day Turkey. He has come there to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. He does so knowledgably and with a “burning enthusiasm.” It seems though that Apollos has some things to learn (who doesn’t!). He not been taught well about the Christian practice of baptism, for he knows only about the baptism practiced by John the Baptist. However, being a devoted and passionate disciple, Apollos is eager to learn. In Ephesus, a husband-wife team, Aquila and Priscilla, take Apollos aside and teach him more about the Christian faith. Better equipped for his ministry, Apollos left Ephesus and headed for Corinth, where he would continue to play a prominent role in the young church. So far as we know, Apollos’ passion never subsided. More than fifteen years after Apollos first appeared in Ephesus, Paul urges Titus to see that Apollos lacks nothing in his work of proclaiming the gospel (Titus 3:13).

*Finding the passion*

Reading stories from the NT of disciples with burning hearts is one thing but, for many of us, “burning hearts” would rarely describe our lives as Christians. Perhaps we feel the burn once in awhile, but too many Christians don’t find much to be truly passionate about in their life, much less in their faith. We must seek a discipleship path that can rekindle in all of us a deeper commitment to Christ, to one another, and to the Christian life. There are no tricks here, no simple1-2-3 steps, no new programs. Rather, that path is the same discipleship Christians have talked about and endeavored to live out for 2,000 years. And from our passionate lives as disciples of Jesus Christ will continue to emerge an evermore passionate church, a passionate St. Andrew equipped and ready to be the light to the world, to throw head, heart, and hands into the joyful work of helping others to live within God’s kingdom and to enjoy a passion they never imagined. Such is the power of burning hearts in passionate servants.

*A site to check out*

Here’s some encouragement for you: [a Pew Research survey](https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2020/03/30/most-americans-say-coronavirus-outbreak-has-impacted-their-lives/) on the prayer practices of Americans during the crisis. A lot of folks are turning to prayer in this time, even those who don’t pray regularly. This has to be a good thing.

*Movie recommendation*

If you missed *Hidden Figures,* here is your chance. The movie tells the story of some African-American women who helped put America in space and more. Well done and a story that needed to be told. Highly recommended.

*Book Recommendation*

A good day to go back one of Savannah’s, our daughter-in-law, recommendations: *Siracusa* by Delia Ephron. Here’s the blurb: An electrifying *New York Times* bestselling novel about marriage and deceit that follows two couples on vacation in Siracusa, a town on the coast of Sicily, where the secrets they have hidden from one another are exposed and relationships are unraveled.

‘til tomorrow, grace and peace,

Scott