

**Luke 24.13-35**

**PRAYER**

Father may these spoken words be faithful to the written word and lead us into the living word, Jesus Christ our Lord - Amen

**SERMON**

Our gospel reading is well known. It is still Easter day and we are with two men who have set off from Jerusalem to Emmaus about three and a half miles away. This may be a familiar story to some of us and perhaps that familiarity means we do not really pick up the shock and awe of that event on the road to Emmaus. Perhaps they were intending to stay there now that the main feast of Passover was finished. They may have turned their back on Jerusalem. But their thoughts are very much still upon that city and the events of the previous days, the joy of palm Sunday, the miracles, the arrests, the flogging, the crucifixion

Suddenly Jesus joins them on the road as they walk along but they do not recognise him. There are various theories as to why this would be

- Jesus deliberately disguises himself for his own purposes
- The men are so self absorbed in their own deliberations, they cannot see beyond their own issues
- They are so focussed on the natural possible secular world they miss the supernatural and only see a man because no one can come back from the dead

As they chat and walk along Jesus asks them what they are chatting about. Now I know there wasn't Facebook twitter TV or radio in those days but the men are *astounded* *Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days* they ask. They clearly were followers of Jesus as they believe him to be a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people. But only a prophet they did not yet acknowledge him as the Christ, the messiah. They then go through the whole story of the arrest and execution. But then there was a strange story to add *some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there; they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive.*

They went to the tomb and with their own eyes could verify that it was empty but they conclude sadly they did not see any angels or the risen Jesus. Even with that knowledge, even as they look into the face of the man they are walking with they still do not see Jesus. The man begins with a mild rebuke – did they not know their scriptures? Did they not remember that the messiah must suffer and die in order to reach glory. Perhaps in all their studies they knew this intellectually, but not personally, not spiritually in the events that were happening around them. Jesus then begins to give them a long and detailed bible study beginning with Moses and through all the Old Testament reference to himself. Not only were their minds informed but their hearts were also touched.

It seems as they reach their destination Jesus was intending to go on but the men press him to stay with them. At the table normally the host (i.e. one of the two men) would have led the

prayer of thanksgiving before the meal where bread was normally broken, but Jesus lifts the bread. And finally at the breaking of the bread, the men see Jesus for who he is – the risen lord. And so he vanished from their sight

The talk, the bible study everything that had touched them in that long discussion as part of the journey suddenly clicked into place. Their hearts had burned within them as the scriptures were opened to them.

Despite the long walk and the late hour of the evening their only thought is to return to Jerusalem to Peter and the other disciples to share the good news of the risen Christ, but the good news had preceded them as Jesus had also been seen by Peter. Can you imagine the joy, ecstasy and astonishment at such news? They must have been dizzy with happiness.

These men had a literal walk with Jesus, but we too have our own walks with Jesus, oh not the physical kind, but a spiritual kind as we go through the various ups and downs of our life and our faith. I wonder if we too sometimes cannot see Jesus in our lives. Perhaps he walks alongside us but we just don't see him because

- Jesus deliberately disguises himself for his own hidden purpose
- we are so self absorbed in our own deliberations, we simply cannot see beyond our own issues
- we are so focussed on the natural possible secular world we miss the supernatural We look for practical solutions to our problems in our own strength rather spiritual solutions, relying on in Christ's strength

Perhaps in all our studies we know the bible and our beliefs intellectually, but not personally, not spiritually in the events that were happening around us. We do not feel the shock and awe of those events 2000 years ago. But there will come a time where Jesus will reveal himself, not only in the breaking of bread but in deeply spiritual moments, or practical coincidences – God incidences. I don't know about you but looking back at in hindsight we see Jesus walking alongside me in the most traumatic of times when we did not see him at the time. Just as the men on the road to Emmaus only fully appreciated all the teaching and all that Jesus had said to them on their journey when they looked back after seeing Jesus for who he was.

When we do see him in good times or in bad our reaction is the same as those men 2000 years ago – we just want to tell everyone. I pray this day and every day we are not so self absorbed in our own deliberations, we simply cannot see Jesus beyond our own issues, that we are open to spiritual solutions and god at work in our lives not trying to sort things out in our own strength and that in many and varied ways seeing Jesus at work in all that happens to us. I pray we feel and experience the shock and awe of Jesus every day in our lives. As we journey through the valleys and mountains of our life, lifted high in the good times and upheld in love in the bad times, let us always remember the risen reigning living Jesus walks beside us this day and always.

AMEN