

DAY 1 - (week beginning Mon 22nd April 2019)**Read - Luke 24:13-35**

“They were talking with each other about everything that had happened.” v 5-6

As we conclude our Journey through Luke, we come to the wonderful story of the men on the road to Emmaus. Emmaus is about 11 km from Jerusalem, so a good few hours walk.

As the men are walking, they are talking about all that has happened over that first Easter. It seems, from later in the story, that this is after the resurrection and that they have heard about it, but yet we are told they are ‘downcast’.

One of the important things in the Christian life is to talk about our situation – both the things that are wonderful in our walk with Jesus, and the things that are difficult and confusing. There are many millions of books on the Christian walk because there is so much to ponder and try to understand.

It is not possible to grow and develop in our Christian lives if we do not engage in discussions with fellow Christians to help us. Coming to church and listening to the sermon is a good start, but only a start. We need to discuss with and listen to others, in a Christian fellowship group, to be able to gain more understand and thus grow.

Sadly too many Christians limit their attempts to understand to attending church. Yes, church makes a difference, but there is so much more to be gained in a small group.

Because where 2 or 3 gather, Jesus is there!

Prayer: Father, help me grow. Come alongside me on the way.

DAY 2**Read - Luke 24:13-35**

“And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself”. v 27

As these two men discuss their dashed hopes, Jesus comes alongside them, but they don't recognise Him. It is a sad truth that in the hustle and bustle of this crazy life we live, we often miss Jesus coming alongside us.

For that reason, it is important that we put aside time when we can focus specifically on Jesus. These times can include a daily quiet-time, a fellowship group or actively reading a Christian book. All these activities help to focus our senses on Jesus so that we can recognise Him then.

But Jesus helps to bring some sense into the situation and He uses the Scriptures (what we call the Old Testament) to help them to understand that all these bewildering events were meant to happen.

Our sense of understanding and growth will come from a better knowledge and understanding of the Bible (all of it) because the Holy Spirit will use this to open our eyes to the glory of our God and His work in our lives. There are some folk who only read the New Testament, but the reality is that the Old Testament helps us to understand the rest.

Nevertheless, the truth we need to take from this is that sense and understanding needs to come from God – through Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Bible or our fellow Christians (books and discussions). There is no sense anywhere else.

Think: Where do you go to try to make sense of this world?

DAY 3**Read - Luke 24:13-35**

“As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. But they urged him strongly, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them”. v 28-29

Eventually the men come to the end of their walk. They have had an enjoyable walk and inspiring discussion (“Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us” v32).

Jesus, however, continues as if He is wanting to travel further. Jesus never forces Himself or His way on to us. He needs to be invited. I wonder how many times in my life I have let Him walk on simply because I was too focussed on what I was doing, or just too dumb to notice.

But the two men do the sensible thing: they show their Christian nature by inviting Him to stay with them. We must remember that at this time, they did not yet know who Jesus was: He was just another man on the road who made a lot of sense.

The nature of our life is that there are so many distractions around us – noise, hurry and crowds, as Richard Foster says – that are the enemies of our Christian walk. I was very aware just this morning of how many times I was distracted during my quiet time.

So when we walk along our spiritual road and Jesus comes alongside us, we must be aware of those times and grab the opportunity to invite Him to stay with us a while.

Prayer: Lord, please fine tune my senses to know when You are speaking to me.

DAY 4**Read - Luke 24:13-35**

“When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him”. v 30-31

We are reading this story over and over again because there is so much in it for us to learn from. It is one of the great stories of the New Testament.

Finally the moment comes when they recognise Jesus, and it is when He breaks the bread. Now this is almost certainly not in the form of a communion type event, but simply a normal meal. These men were not some of the 12 who were at the last supper so that would not be a memory for them, but they may possibly have been at the feeding of the 5 000 and so there could have been something about the way Jesus broke the bread that they recognised.

The important thing for us is that Jesus reveals Himself, not in some sacred event, but in the normal course of life. There is a tendency for us to separate church from normal life, and so when we go to church, our senses are more aligned to spiritual matters.

But the reality is that God reveals Himself to us in the normal activities of life. We don't have to be in church: the whole world and everything we do is part of our life with Jesus and He will often speak to us and reveal Himself there.

We need to live life with the expectation that He might speak to us at any time on the way.

Prayer: Lord, please help me to see and know You all day, every day, everywhere.

DAY 5**Read - Luke 24:13-35**

“They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together and saying, “It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.”” v 33

What a change comes over these two men when they finally realise what has happened to them. These men, who were downcast and tired, suddenly get up and charge back the 11 km to Jerusalem to share the news.

Sharing our experiences is an important part of our Christian duty. No doubt the folk in Jerusalem were encouraged and strengthened by the story they were told. We all find other peoples stories of Jesus working in their lives encouraging and uplifting, and so we should want to share our stories too.

The one interesting part of this story is that Jesus had appeared to Simon (Peter). We don't have a record of this story of Jesus appearing to just Peter, but no doubt it was a time when Peter was able to express his sorrow at forsaking Jesus and Jesus was able to give him a big hug. How sad that we don't know the details of that encounter as many of us need that chat with Jesus too.

But we all have experiences to share and this is part of the reason why we need to meet in small groups where we can encourage each other in the presence of our risen Lord.

How sad that, just like Peter's chat with Jesus, it goes unshared and eventually forgotten. We all have the opportunity to be one of the men on the road, but also to be the encourager.

Think: What stories do you have to share?

DAY 6**Read - Acts 26:1-23**

“About noon, King Agrippa, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’” v 13-14

We spoke yesterday about the importance of sharing our experiences. The reality is that there is a big difference between hearing and experiencing. People can tell us about something wonderful, whether it be music or a sight or a trip, but when you actually experience it for yourself, you get the real goosebumps.

When Paul was having to defend himself to King Agrippa in our reading today he didn't embark on a whole sermon about the promised Messiah and how this was all evidenced in Jesus. He simply told the king what happened to him – his experience – and how that changed him and made him do what he did.

In the same way, the two men, when they got back to Jerusalem, did not repeat Jesus' explanation from the Old Testament so that the other disciples could understand. They simply said: “We have seen the Lord” and the other disciples said “So have we!”

No one can argue with our experiences, so we can safely share that because we know it is true. And we don't have to have a more dramatic experience that someone else! We must experience God at work in our lives and then share that with others.

Prayer: Father, thank You for Your work in me.