

Reflection



- Showing love
- Giving hope
- Bringing peace

The Church of St John & St Leonard

Luke 24: verses 13-27

On the Road to Emmaus

26th April 2020

¹³ Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. ¹⁵ As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; ¹⁶ but they were kept from recognizing him.

¹⁷ He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?"

They stood still, their faces downcast. ¹⁸ One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?"

¹⁹ "What things?" he asked.

"About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. ²⁰ The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; ²¹ but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. ²² In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning ²³ but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. ²⁴ Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus."

²⁵ He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. (NIV)

How often have we read this passage, I wonder? Is it so familiar that we sail through it knowing what it says without having to really concentrate? So what is going on here?

Let's join what I like to think of as Mr and Mrs Cleopas as they trudge along that road home from Jerusalem. They were evidently on their own, not with a crowd, and in their grief, confusion and probably fear they were no doubt trying to make sense of their experience of Jesus and everything that had gone on.

Why there? Why then? Why had it all gone so terribly wrong? Should we have seen it coming? What has happened to Jesus' body? Has He really been seen alive?

The Cleopas' were part of the group close to Jesus, not just bystanders up for the Passover. Then this stranger intrudes on their grief, invades their personal space, and starts to make conversation. Why couldn't he just leave them to themselves?

Rector: The Revd Vicki Bryson



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Their heads were so full of everything that had gone on around Jesus that they were consumed by their thoughts and could not imagine that others were not as affected as they were. But Jesus would not be put off ... “What things?” He asks.

Wearily they explain to this obviously insensitive or unobservant stranger what had been going on.

They identify that it is all about Jesus, they describe Him as a prophet, and blame the authorities for His death. They had put their hopes in Him, and really thought that it was He who would redeem Israel. Now there were all sorts of reports and rumours of angels and an empty tomb doing the rounds.

As I reflect on Jesus’ response, I can almost hear Him sighing, as a parent who realises that their child has simply missed the point or not understood something really vital.” *“How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?”*

The Cleopas’s were clearly faithful Jews, anticipating the Messiah, but had they missed the point? Were they so familiar with the prophets, with the scriptures, that they were missing what God was saying through them? Did they know all the right verses, but they remained on the pages of the scrolls and they had not taken them into their hearts?

How do **we** approach Scripture, the Bible? Are we very well-versed in the words, to the point that we do not see beyond the words on the page, or are content with summaries which mean that we have effectively made up our minds and do not leave space for God to speak to us, to fill in the gaps of our understanding, to have those scriptures written on our hearts?

Our locked-in situation is one in which many of us are confused, frustrated and even fearful. So how are we listening to God at this time of uncertainty? How are we engaging with our communities during this period of enforced isolation? Remembering, as someone recently said, we are not defined by being locked in – we are God-defined.

- Jesus listened to the Cleopas’s hearts before He spoke ... How can we listen to others? Is it in sharing concerns over the garden fence the weekly clapping, telephone calls, even letters, or through Facebook and other platforms?
- How can we move beyond the word on the page? How can we put aside our pre-conceptions as to what the Bible is saying? Avoid the simplistic understanding and discover what God wants to say today, what is the word he wants written on our hearts?
- How can we share with others? In word, yes, but also in deed – joining in to re-inforce shared understanding, to provide support, and being able to answers for the Hope that is in every follower of Jesus.

David Lambert

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