

The Road to Emmaus

(Luke 24:13-35)

This is one of my favourite stories of the New Testament. I can really relate to these two unidentified disciples who not 2 weeks earlier had entered Jerusalem with Jesus and been caught up in the excitement of the build up to the great Jewish festival of Passover; just as a young child might be looking forward to Christmas or a birthday or we might be looking forward with excitement to that special holiday.

And now...? Now they were lost... Not physically lost, but emotionally lost. They had lost the man they had given up their livelihood for, left their homes and followed for the previous 3 years. They were lost in their thoughts and conversation as they walked down the road to Emmaus. Jesus had been crucified 3 days earlier and now there were reports that His tomb was empty. So, what next?

Some said He'd risen from the dead... oh, really...? An empty tomb they could believe, for there were plenty around who wouldn't think twice about robbing a grave. But risen from the dead... come on...? Nobody rises from the grave and they certainly hadn't seen Him. They only had the word of others. But he wasn't nobody.

Where was He...? We know He was with them, but they didn't realise it. They were too preoccupied, too busy with their own thoughts and worries to realise He was walking alongside them and that's the bit I can relate to. How often are we too busy to pray and wait on God. Like the photo on Facebook says, "**God is not our last hope, He is our only hope**".

And once the disciples stopped to have a meal, to relax for the evening, they realised that Jesus had been with them all the time. Too busy and concerned about themselves to see what was right in front of them, staring them in the face. Sound familiar?

Jesus appeared to the disciples several times over the coming days and told them to go into their own form of lockdown. Acts 1 verses 4 and 5

- On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "*Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father has promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days, you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit*"

As we continue our lockdown, don't let your thoughts be dominated by problems in life. Yes, they may be important or a worry, but take this time of quiet to know that God is with us. Many of you will be familiar with the Footprints in the Sand story – God is with us even when we don't think He is. Just as the disciples were told they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit "in a few days", so our current restrictions will come to an end.

As my mum used to say when I was a child, good things come to those who wait. I can't promise you wait of a few days, but I do pray, and hope lockdown ends before Ascension Day!

God bless and stay safe

Keith