

Luke 24:13-35 1 Peter 1: 17-25

19<sup>th</sup> April 2026

Have you ever felt profound disappointment? You're so gutted that something has not worked out like you thought it would, that you can't see the way ahead. You've been waiting and waiting for something to happen and now it's all gone wrong.

And profound disappointment is certainly how the two disciples on the road home to Emmaus felt on that first Easter Sunday evening. They had thought Jesus was the Messiah. They had thought he was going to redeem Israel. They had had such high hopes but suddenly it was all over. Jesus was sentenced to death and then crucified. They are dejected, confused, afraid, hopeless.

So here they are walking away from Jerusalem talking together about all that had happened, trying to make sense of it, when unexpectedly they are joined by a stranger. Luke tells us that Jesus himself came up and walked along with them, v 15, but that they were kept from recognising him. This account is full of irony. The One they mourn is actually there walking along with them, but they miss the significance of the stranger because they are too focused on their own disappointment and their own hopelessness. Jesus meets them where they are and asks, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?" They are so amazed that there could be anyone who doesn't know what has been happening in the last few days that they stop walking. At Jesus' invitation, they pour out their disappointment and confusion.

They tell the stranger that this Jesus of Nazareth was a prophet, that he was powerful in word and deed. Their admiration for Jesus comes through their words but also their bewilderment at what happened next. The chief priests and rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death and they crucified him. They can't believe it. He wasn't just a prophet in their eyes. They believed that He was The One who would redeem Israel and now He is dead. All those hopes and dreams dead and gone.

And now more confusion and bewilderment. Some of the women had gone to the tomb that very morning but the body had gone. They said they had seen

angels, who said that Jesus was alive. Other disciples had gone to see and had found the tomb empty, but v 24 'they did not see Jesus.' What did it all mean?

So poor Cleopas and his companion start the seven mile journey back to Emmaus. So full of hope and expectation and now so dejected and full of misery. When Jesus died, Jesus' followers lost all hope. Jesus had repeatedly told them that he would be killed and after three days he would rise. But they didn't understand what he meant and they didn't remember his words.

The angels at the tomb had rebuked the women. "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; He has risen!" "**Remember how he told you** while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" Then we read that the women remembered Jesus' words.

But Cleopas and his companion have not remembered. So Jesus himself draws near. He cares so much for these individual believers that he walks along with them in their distress. Just as the angels point the women to Jesus' words so Jesus points Cleopas and his companion to Scripture. "How foolish you are and slow to believe all that the Prophets have spoken," he tells them. He reminds them that the prophets spoke of a suffering Messiah. "Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" First century Judaism had developed the idea of a conquering Messiah. In their occupied land, they had put their hope in a military leader who would one day come and free them from the Romans.

But Jesus reminds the two disciples that this is not the Messiah of the Old Testament. He takes them on a wonderful journey. V 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. A tour of the Old Testament, led by Jesus himself. What an amazing experience that must have been. Indeed when later on the two reflect on the day's momentous events, they ask each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" Imagine Jesus explaining how all those references to the promised offspring in Genesis, the suffering Servant in Isaiah, the pierced one we read about in Malachi and how they all point to Him. What

a wonderful Bible study that would have been. I would have loved to have been there to listen in, wouldn't you?

So although the two disciples knew their Scriptures, they had failed to understand that it was Christ's suffering that was the path to glory. So Jesus starts where they are and leads them along through the Scriptures, opening their hearts and minds to God's plan. We heard in our first reading that we are forgiven through the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world but was revealed in these last times for our sake. This plan of salvation wasn't made up at the last moment. It was planned before the creation of the world.

But even then, they don't recognise who Jesus is. It's only later on that evening when they reach the village that their eyes are finally opened. They urge their new friend to stay the night because it's getting late and they are concerned for his safety. They invite him to take the bread and offer the blessing and as they watch him do this, something Jesus would have done many times in front of them, their eyes are opened. They recognise him and they realise that this is Jesus, risen from the dead.

He disappears from their sight, we read in verse 31 but the two are so excited they can't wait till morning to tell the other disciples. "Remember how our hearts burned within us." So despite the fact that it was seven miles back to Jerusalem and they have only just arrived home, they leap to their feet and return at once. We can imagine there would have been a spring in their step this time. They were so excited they burst into the room with their news to find that the others have their own news. Jesus has appeared to Simon! Simon Peter, who had let Jesus down so badly after his arrest, who had denied even knowing him has been given precious one to one time with Jesus. Now Peter knows he is ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven. Just like we can be.

We can only imagine the excitement in that room that evening. Fear of the future has been transformed into faith and hope. How are you feeling at the moment? Do you feel afraid about the war in the Middle East? We all have a temptation to feel anxious during uncertain times and we need to make a positive choice to choose faith, not fear. It's like a battle going on in our minds - faith or fear. What can we do to help ourselves?

Firstly be prayerful. In 2 Chronicles Chapter 7 we read a very challenging verse. "If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land." Let's pray for our world and for our nation, and for our Government to make wise decisions, for many to turn to God at this uncertain time. Prayer takes us right into the presence of God and helps us to have an eternal perspective on our situation.

But we also need to be praying for our church, for each other, for ourselves. Stay after the service for the Annual Meeting and commit to praying for our church. I have just amended the Prayer Diary and I hope you will all come and take a copy. If you remember, everyone on the Electoral Roll is on the list divided into 28 groups. It's the 19<sup>th</sup> day of the month today so today we would pray for those on the 19<sup>th</sup> day list which are David & Fiona Pryor, David Pyke, Catherine Quarini and from Chilton Carol and John Pigott. We pray for them by name and let's use the diary to learn each other's names and find out something we can pray for them.

So stay prayerful. Secondly remember the words of Jesus. We have the gift of God's word in written form and let's use it. Have you ever used daily Bible notes to help you get to know God's word? I can recommend it as a great way of getting to know God's word and of learning to listen to what God is saying to us each day. I have some old copies of daily notes here. Come and get one and start reading. And how about joining a homegroup? It's a way of learning more about God's word in the company of others so we can help each other to learn.

And lastly keep trusting- Jesus is sovereign! We're not in control of this world situation or even of our own lives. But thank God He is. Let's keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and fill our minds with resurrection hope. Let's pray that in the uncertainty of our world situation many will come to know Jesus as their Saviour and Lord.

The two on the road to Emmaus were transformed by the hope that filled them when they knew that Jesus was alive. Their misery and bewilderment was transformed because v15 Jesus himself came up and walked along with them. Let us remember that if we have put our trust in Him, nothing can

separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Let us choose to walk through our day to day lives with Jesus walking alongside us. It transforms everything!

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