

CITYWEST CHURCH

07.04.2024 - 10 AM

THE TABLE TURNAROUND.

Keep on loving each other as brothers and sisters. **2** Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it!

Hebrews 13:1-2 (NLT)

That same day two of Jesus' followers were walking to the village of Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem. **14** As they walked along they were talking about everything that had happened. **15** As they talked and discussed these things, Jesus himself suddenly came and began walking with them. **16** But God kept them from recognizing him.

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

They stopped short, sadness written across their faces. **18** Then one of them, Cleopas, replied, "You must be the only person in Jerusalem who hasn't heard about all the things that have happened there the last few days."

19 "What things?" Jesus asked.

"The things that happened to Jesus, the man from Nazareth," they said. "He was a prophet who did powerful miracles, and he was a mighty teacher in the eyes of God and all the people. **20** But our leading priests and other religious leaders handed him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified him. **21** We had hoped he was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel. This all happened three days ago.

22 "Then some women from our group of his followers were at his tomb early this morning, and they came back with an amazing report. **23** They said his body was missing, and they had seen angels who told them Jesus is alive! **24** Some of our men ran out to see, and sure enough, his body was gone, just as the women had said."

25 Then Jesus said to them, "You foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures. **26** Wasn't it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his glory?" **27** Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

28 By this time they were nearing Emmaus and the end of their journey. Jesus acted as if he were going on, **29** but they begged him, "Stay the night with us, since it is getting late." So he went home with them. **30** As they sat down to eat, he took the bread and blessed it. Then he broke it and gave it to them. **31** Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And at that moment he disappeared!

32 They said to each other, "Didn't our hearts burn within us as he talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?" **33** And within the hour they were on their way back to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven disciples and the others who had gathered with them, **34** who said, "The Lord has really risen! He appeared to Peter." Then the two from Emmaus told their story of how Jesus had appeared to them as they were walking along the road, and how they had recognized him as he was breaking the bread. **36** And just as they were telling about it, Jesus himself was suddenly standing there among them. "Peace be with you," he said.

Luke 24: 13-36 (NLT)

So here we are 1 week away from celebrating the resurrection of Jesus. And we are reading a story that took place on the same day that Jesus rose from the dead.

We read last week what happened early in the morning, but today's reading we have looked at what is taking place at the end of the day.

I'm sure by late afternoon on the Sunday of Jesus' resurrection there were rumors swirling around Jerusalem, and there was potentially even more heightened tensions than what transpired in Holy Week.

Questions would be asked?

Reflection made

Today we will look at how this story unfolds and some significant theological points and then we will have some questions to reflect on what does that mean for us as a church and what does this mean for me personally to close out time today.

The first thing in this story is that Cleopas and his companion are travelling the road to Emmaus. 7 miles, 11 km walking.

And on face value we can be like thanks bible for the name and where they are travelling too.

But for the context of our story today and what I feel like God has on my heart for us is that if they are going to Emmaus, it means they are leaving Jerusalem.

Now there are geographical implications here, they are on the 11 km walk away from the centre of all that has transpired in Holy Week and towards the end of the day, they are walking away.

Jerusalem is a symbol of God's presence on the earth, but at this point and time for Cleopas and his friend, it's a place of pain confusion, and despair.

This is a picture of us with the human condition, we are all moving away from something and moving towards something else.

PILGRIMS PROGRESS.

So these disciples find themselves walking away from Jerusalem towards Emmaus and they are evaluating the last season through their eyes, trying to make sense of all that they had seen and heard.

As they talked and discussed these things, Jesus himself suddenly came and began walking with them. **16** But God kept them from recognizing him.

17 He asked them, “What are you discussing so intently as you walk along?”

They stopped short, sadness written across their faces. **18** Then one of them, Cleopas, replied, “You must be the only person in Jerusalem who hasn’t heard about all the things that have happened there the last few days.”

Notice here that Jesus joins them, remember they are walking out of Jerusalem and he walks with them, not in front or behind but alongside.

Jesus meets Cleopas and the other disciple not where he thinks they should be at or where they “should be”

Jesus comes alongside them with one aim, to help them understand all that is happening around them and that it's not by chance the fulfillment of prophecy.

This is a powerful truth for us, God is with us. Even in our doubt and confusion, even when all of this doesn't make sense, even if you walk away Jesus will show up and walk with you.

David Tracey calls it being present to “ the God who is already there in our lives.”

Carl Yung said that whether called on or not God is present.

25 Then Jesus said to them, “You foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures. **26** Wasn’t it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his glory?” **27** Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

Jesus now pipes up and makes things clear to them about what is really going on.

He puts scripture to the feelings and emotions they would have shared with Jesus. Jesus helps them put a blessing on their past feelings.

He doesn't just say nice words, he opens the word and without a scroll recites scripture to them concerning him helping them see past what they think happened to what really happened and is happening right in front of them.

The word has the power to bring clarity to our minds, comfort to our souls, and regulate our emotions.

Reading the bible and letting it wash over you is not just a discipline we should do but it should be something we crave.

Jesus with these disciples lets scripture do the work in their lives. He illuminates not opinion but the truth of God's word.

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Now we come to the hospitality part of the story.

The disciples invite Jesus in to share a meal they open their home and seat at the table.

Hospitality in three parts

God's welcome - shown throughout the life of Jesus, one of welcome to all humankind.

Us welcoming God - zachaeus welcomes Jesus and his life was changed

US welcoming each other.

It's at the table that Cleopas and the other disciple see Jesus for who he really is.

They see it's Jesus and then he disappears.

Didn't our hearts burn within as he explained scripture on the road?

Jesus illuminated the word. It was the written word becoming the living word.

The work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Within the hour they were heading back to Jerusalem.

THE POWER OF RECONCILIATION AT THE TABLE.

Some questions for us to reflect on today/

- 1. Where am I going? What am I headed from and walking towards?*
- 2. Am I limiting Jesus, do I look for him in everything? (Jesus is in the valley as much as he is on the mountain top).*
- 3. How is the word impacting my life?*
- 4. Am I open to convos with strangers that could lead to spiritual renewal?*
- 5. When i sit with Jesus am i turning around? (repentance.)*
- 6.*