

The Road to Emmaus

Luke 24:13-32

There is the sense in which the gospels are rather like a road movie. Jesus acts in people's lives on roads.

Examples of where Jesus met people in streets etc.

Here were two disciples, coming back home from Jerusalem on the day of Jesus' resurrection. It had been a bit of a week for them. Jesus had come triumphant into Jerusalem. He had done miracles, he had taught wonderful things and they expected Him to be the one to redeem Israel - to save them from Roman rule. But all that was dashed when Jesus was crucified. Then in their story to the stranger on the road they say *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 him they did not see."*

Sometimes what we are not told is as important as what we are. They had heard the news from the women and the disciples but were still walking home sadly from the scene. They didn't stay to find out if the stories were true.

Perhaps it was the final straw. They had seen and heard lots of things about Jesus but raised from the dead? Come on - that's just a story too far.

That's maybe where some of us are this morning as we hear afresh about the resurrection of Jesus. It's one thing to hear about all the stories - but it all sounds a bit too fantastic. It's all right to talk about a good man who did good things - but all this rising again from the dead stuff - a bit far fetched!

And this stranger comes up to these weary and confused disciples and they repeat the tale to him and he starts to explain. *He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Did not the Christ 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.*

Take a listen to these words

Isaiah 53:1 Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? 2 He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. 3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. 4 Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. 6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. 8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. 9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. 10 Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.

Or how about these

Psalms 22:14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted away within me. 15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death. 16 Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evil men has encircled me, they have pierced my hands and my feet. 17 I can count all my bones; people stare and gloat over me. 18 They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.

Do they sound familiar? Jesus started with Moses and all the prophets and explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself. As you've listened to these verses this morning, the most amazing thing about them is that they were written hundreds of years before Jesus ever walked this earth - hundreds of years.

Did you know that there are over 300 references concerning Jesus in the Old Testament. They aren't just fleeting either. Psalm 22 gives a clear description of someone dying in the way Jesus did. It's no coincidence that Jesus spoke them on the cross because that's what he wanted to let them know

Ps 22:1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Then in Isaiah 53 we read the reason why Jesus died

he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. 6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

No wonder the disciples' hearts burned within them as they listened. It was a shock to the system. They had seen all these things. They were probably Jews who had an excellent knowledge of the Bible - yet as they considered these things afresh, they understood.

As we have studied the Jerusalem Road over the last few weeks we have seen how people looked but they didn't see and people who heard and didn't listen. These people didn't listen and therefore didn't even realise who the stranger was. That is until He broke bread. What made them realise - the blessing or the view of his scarred hands?

If you've never trusted Christ this morning then I would encourage you to listen and see. They hear the stranger, they looked at Him, but as they listened they understood so they began to see. God wants to reveal His Son Jesus to you this morning. He wants you to understand that He died for You. He died to forgive YOUR sins. He died to give YOU eternal life, to give you hope and meaning to life.

What did the disciples do when they understood and Jesus left them - they ran back to Jerusalem in the dark and told the rest. They understood and they acted upon what they knew. No longer did they walk away, but they had a faith to act on. That's what God wants you to do this morning. You've heard, You understand - act on it - trust Jesus today.

Maybe you've been a disciple of Christ for a long time. Maybe you're trudging wearily along like Clopas and the other person. You come to Church, but all the joy you've once had is wearing a bit thin. Like the disciples you know the message of salvation, you've followed Christ for many years but all this talk of supernatural stuff - miracles, raisings from the dead seems unreal right now and when people in the Church start talking about God doing a new thing in Swaffham and in Norfolk, you just feel a bit weary of it.

If that's so, then look again at the risen Christ and see again that He died for you. Hear His words again and listen and understand. This same Jesus who did such mighty works in people's lives 2000 years ago, is still working in people's lives today. And that includes yours. He's wanting to do a new thing in my life and your life - something that will stir us and we'll be excited anew in it and like Clopas will make us run and tell others.

Have you looked this morning, well see. Have you heard, then listen to the voice of God and act upon it.