



The Road to Emmaus

Colour me!



Luke 24:13-20, 22-23, 25-33a (abridged)

The news of Jesus having come back to life began spreading. Some of his friends saw him alive but others only heard about it and it was hard for them to believe. Here we see two of the followers of Jesus, all confused and wondering if the news they heard was true.

That same day two of Jesus' disciples were going to the village of Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. As they were talking and thinking about what had happened, Jesus came near and started walking along beside them. But they did not know who he was. Jesus asked them, "What were you talking about as you walked along?" The two of them stood there looking sad and gloomy.

Then the one named Cleopas asked Jesus, "Are you the only person from Jerusalem who didn't know what was happening there these last few days?" "What do you mean?" Jesus asked. They answered: Those things that happened to Jesus from Nazareth. By what he did and said he showed that he was a powerful prophet, who pleased God and all the people. Then the chief priests and our leaders had him arrested and sentenced to die on a cross.

Some women in our group surprised us. They had gone to the tomb early in the morning, but did not find the body of Jesus. They came back, saying that they had seen a vision of angels who told them that he is alive. Then Jesus asked the two disciples, "Why can't you understand? How can you be so slow to believe all that the prophets said? Didn't you know that the Messiah would have to suffer before he was given his glory?" Jesus then explained everything written about himself in the Scriptures, beginning with the Law of Moses and the Books of the Prophets. When the two of them came near the village where they were going, Jesus seemed to be going farther. They begged him, "Stay with us! It's already late, and the sun is going down." So Jesus went into the house to stay with them.

After Jesus sat down to eat, he took some bread. He blessed it and broke it. Then he gave it to them. At once they knew who he was, but he disappeared. They said to each other, "When he talked with us along the road and explained the Scriptures to us, didn't it warm our hearts?" So they got right up and returned to Jerusalem.

Commentary

Jesus appeared first to Mary beside the empty tomb. Now he turns up on the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus. The two disciples are on their way home after all that has happened over the weekend. When Jesus joins them, they don't recognize him: perhaps he was wearing travelling clothes that obscured his face or it was just getting dark, or he looked different after coming back to life. They are surprised that he hasn't heard about the crucifixion and the rumours of Jesus being alive again, and even more surprised when he tells them that it was all prophesied in the Old Testament. Hadn't they realized that this was the way God's special rescuer was going to come and save everyone?

Jesus then goes on to explain the whole Bible story of God's plan to mend the world, and it is such an exciting story that the disciples beg him to stay and tell them more. Only indoors, in the light of the house, and particularly as he breaks the bread at the meal table, do they recognize Jesus. They must have kicked themselves for not knowing at once that it was him. Jesus is alive, and this is so wonderful that, even though it is dark by now, they set out straight away to run back to Jerusalem and tell the others the good news.

Questions

- ▶ What mood do you think the two disciples were in as they walked home to Emmaus?
- ▶ Why didn't they recognize Jesus at first?
- ▶ Why didn't Jesus reveal himself to them straight away?
- ▶ What was it in the end that made them recognize Jesus?



Visual aid

Take a complete Bible and put a series of bookmarks or pieces of paper in the Old Testament section, on each of which is written "This story points to Jesus". Lots of Old Testament stories have clues in them about what will happen when God sends his special rescuer. Can you think of any?



Activity idea

Play a game of 'Guess who?' as a family. One person should write the names of famous people (you could include Bible characters) on sticky notes and stick one on to each person's back, so that everyone can see everyone else's name but not their own. Ask questions that can be answered only by 'yes' or 'no' to see if you can find out who you are.



Prayer idea

The Old Testament has lots of stories and picture language to help us understand what God is like, and Jesus used many of these images to describe himself. Using these picture words, create prayers to God; for example, ask him to be a shepherd, food, father, king, lion, rock or water for you and your family.

Key verse

"Jesus then explained everything written about himself in the Scriptures" (Luke 24:27).

New Testament story link

Deuteronomy 18:15-19: Moses predicts that God will send a special prophet one day. This could have been one of the Bible passages that Jesus talked about with the two disciples.



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