**MSCC 14th September 2025**

**A Journey of Discovery**

**Reading: Luke 24:13-35**

This is the last in our summer series of talks on Encountering Jesus which has covered different people, different places, and different circumstances. Our final reading covers the account of the two disciples walking the seven miles back home from Jerusalem to Emmaus. They encounter, and eventually, recognise the risen Christ. It’s a journey of discovery.

But it started as a journey of bewilderment as they trudged along and discussed the events of the past few days and tried to make sense of them.

Who were these two disciples? We know one of them was Cleopas and it’s quite likely that the other was his wife, Mary. They are mentioned as a couple in John 19:25 and Mary was present at the cross, although the spelling of Cleopas name is slightly different it is probably the same person.

Today I want to focus on this journey because it’s … **A Journey with a Purpose, it’s a journey of Discovery through their a meeting with the resurrected Christ**

**Where did they start their journey and where did it end? The reading shows us their point of departure and the place of their arrival physically and spiritually.** In their journey from Jerusalem to Emmaus I want to look at their spiritual journey that afternoon. So, what was their spiritual starting point?

1. **They started out Downcast in Jerusalem vs 17**

On that day walking home to Emmaus, they were discussing everything that had happened in Jerusalem in the last three days. As they talked and discussed the events, they became demoralised and defeated. Their hopes had been dashed, they had a sense of loss, and they were confused, and unable to understand what was going on which led to dejection resulting in unbelief.

The eleven disciples, who they had been with earlier in the day, had also struggled to grasp the resurrection and so Cleopas and Mary’s expectations as they walked along talking were low. So low that even when Jesus walked alongside them, they didn’t recognise him’ Vs 16

I wonder why they didn’t recognise him. I think it was because of a lack of faith. It was not a lack of physical identification but spiritual identification. They did not expect to meet him because of their lack of knowledge of the scriptures, consequently their faith was so low, Jesus later referred to it as unbelief.

He asked them ***‘What are you discussing together as you walk along?’*** They stood still, their faces downcast.

**Cleopas**, asked him, ‘***Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?’***

***19‘What things?’***he asked.

What Cleopas gives us is the Gospel according to Cleopas. A wonderful reply despite being downcast of the facts about Jesus in vs 19-24, which included...

* The ministry of JESUS, a Prophet, in word and deed. Vs19
* The crucifixion which completed it. Vs 20
* The hope of redemption which gave it meaning. Vs 21
* The conquered grave Vs23
* The apostolic witness. Vs 24

It’s all there except a personal word from the living Christ which would have made the facts alive also.

**25**He said to them*,****‘How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken!***

**This was the turning point in this meeting that made the difference.** The stranger on the road (Jesus) who gave them a Bible study on the important scriptures concerning the Messiah Vs 27

The turning point was the word of God and as Jesus said, ***‘man shall not live of bread alone but on every word that proceeds from the mouth of God’***

**Jesus began to teach them *Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and enter his glory?*** and beginning with Moses and the prophets he explained the scriptures to them. There are at least 18 scriptures including some in Psalms that talk about Jesus. Here are some of them **Gen 3:15, Numbers 21.9, Deut 18.15, Isa 7.14, Isa 9.6, Isa 40.10,11, Isa 53 etc.**

Wow, what a bible study that must have been! When I have read this passage, I have often pondered what he told them and thought it would have been brilliant to listen to him. Jesus set everything in its context and that is why it is important for us to **regularly** read God’s word, including the Old Testament, so we get God’s perspective on what is going on as he fulfils his plan of redemption.

After this Jesus appears to be going on past Emmaus Vs 28, 29 but the culture of the day required you to offer hospitality to travellers and so Cleopas, and Mary invited him to Stay with them. After such a Bible Study you could imagine them not wanting to let him go at any cost. This study had built their faith: Bible Study, Meditation and the application of God’s word are great faith builders.

The truth of Jesus’ words ***where two or three are gathered in my name*** ***there I am in the midst of them*** was realised but not immediately as they still didn’t recognise him, but you can almost feel the gloom being lifted...

1. **They go from being Downcast in Jerusalem to Elated in Emmaus**

Vs 29 ***they urged him strongly, ‘Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.’ So, he went in to stay with them***. ***30When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. 31Then their eyes were opened and they recognised him, and he disappeared from their sight.***

This scripture graphically illustrates what should happen in a spiritual sense when we have communion – our eyes should be opened to recognise Jesus.

The Roman Catholic church believes in transubstantiation i.e. the bread changes into the actual body of Christ and the wine becomes his actual blood. We don’t actually believe that, but we do believe that when we have communion we are meeting with our Lord in a real spiritual way. Like reading and meditating on God’s word, having communion is also important. We worship God together and he feeds us together through the communion elements.

For Cleopas and Mary this was a spiritual awakening that resulted in a physical and spiritual recognition of Jesus and what a transformation that was! And then just as they have him, he disappears again

**32They asked each other,*****‘Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?’***

This is the blessing of knowing the presence of the Lord. For them it energised them so much, so they marched straight back to Jerusalem at dusk to tell the other disciples.

When they get there, it appears the penny had been dropping all over the place that Jesus was alive and the doom and gloom of the morning gave way to great joy, rejoicing and elation

***at 33They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together 34and saying, ‘It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.’ 35Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognised by them when he broke the bread.***

**How do we recognise Jesus with us now?** It is by his spirit. Jesus promised us **another** counsellor, **another** helper, the Holy Spirit, who came on the day of Pentecost and who comes to us when we first put our trust in Christ and stays with us. It is the same spirit who keeps on making Jesus known to us, more so as our faith grows.

**So, what can we learn from this passage?**

* **Cleopas and Mary did not expect to see Jesus on the road, Jesus says they are foolish and slow to believe. If our faith gets weakened, we take our eyes off God and may become downcast, but by building our faith, by the usual things we talk about, like reading the Bible, prayer and fellowship with each other, then we can learn to recognise God in our lives and be comforted by his presence with us.**
* **We go on a lot about faith because its important, mentioned more than 230 times in the NT alone. We need faith as everything we get from God comes by faith and, as Hebrews tells us, without faith it’s impossible to please God**
* **So, lets press on with building ourselves up in our most holy faith so that we may also be able to say with Cleopas and Mary**

***‘Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us… and opened the Scriptures to us?’***