

'ROAD TO EMMAUS – GOSPEL AND MISSION' # 2

Theologian Tom Wright describes this week's Bible passage as 'If the story of the prodigal son has claim to be the finest short Jesus ever told, the tale of the two on the road to Emmaus must have equal claim to be the finest scene Luke ever sketched ... at the level of drama it has everything ... learn to live inside this story, and you will find it inexhaustible.'

Read Luke 24:13-35

You belong to a small group who are viewed as troublemakers or worse by the authorities, whose leader they have just executed. Would you tell a complete stranger that you were an active member of that group? *What parallels, if any, do you see today, in both the UK and further afield?* For Cleopas and another (most likely his wife Mary – she was at the foot of the cross) the result of sharing their conversation with a stranger about what they had been doing

was positive beyond measure. *Does this challenge you or excite you about sharing the Gospel?*

I suspect, like me, you would have loved to be on the Emmaus Road listening when Jesus 'beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the scriptures concerning himself.' Most of us struggle to see and understand how all of the Bible holds together in one magnificent continuous account of God's relationship with His creation, humanity. And Cleopas and Mary were no different; Jesus apparently needed to take them through the scriptures from the beginning to enable them (and all Israel) to see and understand why Jesus had to suffer, die and be raised to life again. Tom Wright's analogy is, 'Israel had been reading the scriptures through the wrong end of the telescope.' The result: 'were not our hearts burning within us while he talked ... and opened the scriptures.' *What does this say about Bible Study? How is it best to do this? Individual personal study, or group study, or listening in church? How important to you is a good understanding of the Bible 'as a whole'?*

With their 'hearts burning' they immediately returned to Jerusalem and to the Eleven. Have you noticed that their arrival at Emmaus with Jesus was at 'nearly evening.' So, this couple immediately about turned and walked (possibly skipped!) the 7 miles back to Jerusalem in the dark, which probably placed them in some danger. Notice also that before they met Jesus, they had not fully accepted that Jesus had risen – they only had the witness of women (!) about angels and what they had apparently said. But Cleopas and companion had now actually met the risen Jesus, and were rushing to tell the Eleven. *How long has it been since the scriptures were 'burning in our hearts'? How long has it been since we were burning to tell someone that we have met the risen Jesus? What more can / what more should the church do to ignite or reignite our hearts?*

Prayer: *I like the comfort zone. I like to be popular. I settle with the few. I prefer to make small waves. I don't like being out of my depth.*

God, get me out of this. Release me from this ... niceness.

Put me in the centre of things, where people will react to me because I tell them the truth.

I'm scared. I don't want to look back when I'm old and see a life of lost opportunities. I don't want to look back and see all the ways in which I haven't shaken the world no matter how small the tremors.

God help me to tell the truth, with love, to all who will listen (24/7 Prayer)

Bible used = NIV 2011 translation

St James Church, Taunton – Roger Fenton - 2026