

Moravian Women's Association – Devotional Paper – May 2025

On The Journey Together

Read Luke 24:13-35

Cleopas and his companion are devastated as they return to their home from Jerusalem. They tell the 'stranger' who accompanies them on their journey the tale of the horrific events that have taken place in Jerusalem and also of the 'rumour' that Jesus is not in fact dead, but alive. They speak to the 'stranger' of their hope that Jesus 'would be the one who was going to set Israel free' (v21). Their hope has been shattered. One commentary I read on this passage described the road to Emmaus as the 'road of broken dreams.'

It seems odd doesn't it that the men who clearly knew Jesus and had heard him teach, did not recognise him? But these men are in the depths of grief and sometimes when we are in a very dark place, we cannot see what is in front of us. I think it is probable that most of you reading this have been in a similar position to these two men – this road to Emmaus is a road many have travelled – a road of broken-heartedness.

They reach their destination and still they do not recognise Jesus. Jesus begins to continue along the road but Cleopas and his companion invite him to eat with them. Only when they sit at the table and Jesus breaks bread does recognition occur. It is Jesus, of course it is Jesus – now everything becomes clear, everything changes!

I think this story provides us with a 'map' we can use when we are in these dark places. Firstly, Jesus responds to the men by reconnecting them to their faith tradition, pointing out to them all that had been written about himself in the Scriptures. He is perhaps indicating to them that despite outward appearances, God is in control of this dire situation.

When Cleopas' home is reached, it looks as though Jesus is going to travel on alone. However, Cleopas invites Jesus in to eat with them. When it feels like everything is lost, we need to invite Jesus to be with us – Jesus will not force his way in to our lives but if we ask for his presence, he will be there.

The final revelation of the story comes when the bread is broken – an act familiar to Cleopas and his friend and an act which is very familiar to us as we month by month participate in Communion. This familiar routine, regularly practised provides us with a framework, a structure to return to when everything around us feels unsteady and insecure.

Belief in Christ does not prevent us from experiencing devastating events in life. But in those dark days which we will experience, we can hold on to the fact that we are Easter people. People of hope and resurrection and our trust in our Redeemer will help bring us through.

Discussion

1. Why do you think Cleopas and his friend did not initially recognise Jesus?
2. Have you ever felt that God was not present? Either in your own life or in the midst of world events?
3. Do you have any habits, practices you turn to when everything seems lost?