

“Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.” Luke 24:26-27 (NIV)

Our passage today is from the well know story of the road to Emmaus where we see a couple of unnamed disciples walking along the road where Jesus joins them for a seemingly casual conversation before the disciples discover who they’re really talking to after he is gone.

If you think too hard about it, it sounds a little ridiculous. Jesus starts walking with them and they don’t recognise him, even though they’ve obviously spend enough time with him while he was initially alive that you would have thought they would notice who it is they were talking to. And yet, they really don’t - they don’t have a clue. But let’s rewind a moment...They, like everyone else in the area knew that Jesus had been crucified. He was definitely dead and buried. Even with the slightly more ‘primitive’ medical knowledge of the time, Jesus was definitely dead. The blood in his body had separated which only happens after death. So even if they had considered that the person walking with them looked like Jesus, their minds would have dismissed it pretty quickly.

But it isn’t the craziness of this passage on which I wish to focus today. Sure, when put that way, it is a bit amusing, but, more importantly, Jesus is appearing in a casual conversation and discussing the whole of His purpose as messiah by going through all the knowledge of Moses and the prophets and how they pointed to this single moment in history and the reason for Jesus’ crucifixion and that it was not the end. Few of us could just casually bring up a theological discussion in a day to day conversation, but Jesus goes further and even later on gives away his identity by breaking bread in a way that was distinctive of him. This reignited the disciples with a sense of understanding and a renewed vigour for life.

So what exactly does this mean for us now. How can a casual conversation in a time when religion was important to everyone be related to a period of history when the world appears to be chasing a secular, ‘lets offend everybody by trying to not offend anyone’ attitude? Simply this; Jesus may not always come to us with a fanfare and make a great scene about it, he will likely come to us in the casual, daily activities and conversations of life. I don’t suggest you attempt to casually have a theological discussion with someone - unless they want it - but I think it’s time the church; and that means all the people who follow the way of Jesus, whether in a formal church building, a home church or just at home because they can’t go out; learns to discover God in all things. God is just as likely to show up by reminding you where you placed something you lost as He is to turn up in the things people, including non-christians, say. He will happily turn up sometimes by just a thought from something you’ve read, and other times he will make His presence known by more tangible means like miracles. There is no end to what God can do and, unfortunately, the western church likes to put limits on what God can, or will do. This just isn’t the case. Admittedly, God prefers to use us as His hands and feet, but if we take that to mean that the only way a person will get healed is by human intervention, or a person manages to get off an addiction is by a human programme, then we are limiting our understanding of God. We are practically saying ‘Yes, God is there, but He only works through humans so basically He is a human.’ It’s very difficult in human understanding to not limit God, but my challenge to you, and to myself, is to relearn that childlike faith that says nothing is impossible and really believes it 100%.

Pray;

Living Lord, thank you that through you all things are possible. We apologise for trying to put you in a box that, however big it may be, only limits our beliefs of what you can and will do for your children. Please forgive us for our limited thinking and help us to increase our understanding of who you are. We thank you that you often work through people, casual conversation and other human means, but we thank you that you are not limited to this and can do so much more than we can ever begin to imagine. Thank you for just being awesome. Please help us to be open to everything you want to do in our lives. You are in every miracle from getting up in the morning, to healing and everything else in between. Please help us to learn anew that childlike wonder that sees the joy and miraculous gift in even the smallest of things. Amen.