

Easter 3. 23 April 2023.

Sermon. Revd David Treharne

**7 words from the Road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35) for our journey together here in Tidenham Parish:  
Journey, Story, Scripture, Invitation, Encounter, Transformation & Share**

What a fantastic bible passage for AGM day when as well as doing the appropriate Parish business we are thinking about the next part of our journey as a worshipping community. What's next on the road for you, me and us?

What can we take from this Scripture? What is the Spirit saying to you, me, the church?

1. **Journey.** This is a journey story. Cleopas and his companion are walking away from Jerusalem after Jesus' death, away from the disciples and their community. Jesus joins them on that journey. He seeks them out in their confusion, sadness and distress. Jesus is unknown and unrecognised... but he is present. (God with us).

***Journey***

In an echo of the famous Footprints poem... this is a reminder that God seeks us out. Jesus is with us on our journey by his Spirit... we are often unaware of him there... he is often unrecognised by us. BUT he is present with you, with me, with us. He is God with us.

2. **Story.** Jesus listens to Cleopas and his companion. He listens to their story. "Haven't you heard?" "What things have happened?" In other words, "Tell me," says Jesus... "tell me your story, what's going on." Jesus asks questions and listens. "I'm here with you, listening." They share their grief. They share their despair and sadness... their lost of hope. "We had hoped. (vs 21)" When hope goes the future becomes very bleak and we walk a dark road.

***Story***

Jesus wants to listen to our stories. Prayer is a gift for us to share with Jesus.

Jesus also models for us. As Christ's body... we are to listen to others' stories on their journey.

3. **Scripture.** Jesus wants to listen to our stories, but he also wants us to hear his story. He opens the Scriptures to them and he speaks to their despair and sadness. He speaks into their journey and their story with his word.

***Scripture***

Jesus wants to speak to us through his written word, the Bible. He wants us to be open to hearing his voice. His voice informs our journey and our story. After listening and hearing Jesus we can also share our stories of faith and the hope... redemption, the good news, the life that we have in God through the risen Jesus... the story of Scripture.

4. **Invitation.** The two characters in the story invite Jesus in to where they are staying. "Stay with us, Lord"... an interesting reversal of the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus asks his disciples to "stay with me."

Jesus accepts. Jesus reclines with them and takes bread and breaks it. Jesus went from guest to host... and they recognise him in the breaking of bread.

***Invitation***

On our journey Jesus wants us to invite him into our homes, our lives, our hearts and stay with us. Jesus wants to recline with us and to be the host in our lives. Echoes of John 14:23... "Whoever loves me will keep my word. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them."

The power of invitation and hospitality... you could be welcoming Christ unawares!  
The power of Communion... and the invitation to receive the body and blood of Christ.

5. **Encounter.** This whole time with Jesus on the road and in the house was an encounter. The risen Jesus establishes a relationship with these two companions and they have a powerful experience of him. Jesus is not just a subject to be discussed on our journey's... for that's what they were doing at the start. Jesus is not just a subject to be discussed or a story to be told... but a person to be listened to, invited in and encountered. He is the word made flesh. He is God with us. And the encounter is on so many levels here.
- It's head... he opens their minds "interpreting to them the things about himself in all the scriptures" verse 27.
  - It's heart. "Were not our hearts burning within us<sup>l</sup>while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" vs 32
  - Their eyes were opened
  - They talked with him and heard his voice
  - The experience is physical (on a walk and with food), it's emotional, it's relational, it's spiritual.
  - Through journey, through story, through invitation and hospitality, through word and through sacrament, the breaking of bread... they encounter Jesus.

WOW, what an encounter!

### ***Encounter***

Jesus wants us to meet us in our journeys. He wants us to encounter his presence and he'll find lots of ways to do it.

6. **Transformation/conversion.** The encounter with the risen Jesus changes their lives
- Despair is turned to hope
  - Sadness is turned to joy
  - Mourning is turned to a run back to Jerusalem!
  - They were in a spiritual and emotional death... but are alive again!
  - The darkness (end of the day) is turned to light... the darkness is no darkness to them. Again a reversal. In the Garden of Gethsemane their eyes close and they fall asleep. Here their eyes are opened and as night approaches they are wide awake!
  - They return to fellowship, to the community of faith.
  - Their broken hearts now burn!

### ***Transformation/conversion.***

An encounter with Jesus and his presence... in whatever form it takes transforms our lives. It can convert us, turn our lives around for good and change the whole trajectory of our lives.

### **7. Share**

The disciples dash back to share their encounter with the risen Christ. Jesus gives them a new story... good news to share! Hope for the world.

### ***Share.***

We have a gospel to proclaim. Meeting Jesus on the journey. Jesus hearing our stories and speaking through Scripture and shaping our stories. Through journey, story, Scripture and invitation we encounter Jesus, an encounter that transforms our lives. It's an encounter we want to share with others!