



## **Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2021, Luke 24:13-35, Road to Emmaus**

Last Sunday we celebrated Easter, our second in lockdown, to celebrate that Jesus conquered death and rose to life, despite being locked down in a tomb. Between now and Pentecost we are going to look at some of the other resurrection appearances of Jesus, not all of them, just 5-6.

This morning, Jesus appears to disciples on the road to Emmaus. It is still Easter Day, the day of resurrection. It is the evening now. Here's what the 4 Gospel writers have told us about this day so far ...

Matthew 28, Mary Magdalene and "the other Mary" who is Mary the mother of James according to the other writers, went to the sealed tomb where guards had been left on Friday night. An angel told them Jesus has risen and to go and tell the others, so they did. As they went Jesus came to meet them. The 11 disciples went to meet Jesus on the mountain in Galilee as arranged.

Mark 16, Mary Magdalene, Mary mother of James and Salome went to the tomb. They were told by an angel, "Go and tell the disciples and Peter" but Mark says they were too scared to tell anyone.

Verses 9 – 20 of Mark 16 (disputed as not in earliest versions) say that Mary Magdalene told them but they didn't believe her. It also mentions that the 2 who had met Jesus on the road to Emmaus told the disciples but they didn't believe those 2 either (v.12) Then Jesus appeared to the 11

Luke 24, Angels declared that Jesus was alive to "the women" (later named as Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary mother of James and "others") who went back and told the 11 who didn't believe them. Peter went to look for himself but couldn't work out what had happened. Then today's passage which we'll come back to.

John 20, Mary Magdalene found the tomb empty, got Peter and John. Then Jesus came to her as she sat and wept. She thought he was the gardener at first. She went and told the others. In v 19, Jesus came among them that evening, Thomas was out and when he got back and heard he said he wouldn't believe till he'd seen for himself

So, the empty tomb was seen by a bunch of people but the risen, living Lord Jesus was seen only by Mary Magdalene, 2 disciples travelling out into the country (the Emmaus road ones) and then, also in the evening, the remaining 11 disciples, apart from Thomas who John says was out. There was confusion and they didn't understand what was happening. But there were also points of clarity amid the confusion, enough for us to trust what we are hearing/reading.

Let's see what Luke records for us:-

### **READING: Luke 24: 13 – 35**

On the evening of Easter Day, two of the disciples (the wider group of disciples, not the 11) were taking a 7 mile journey. They were headed for a village called Emmaus. No idea why they were travelling. They were downcast we are told. And as they walked they talked about the events of the past days and what had happened to Jesus. As they walked along a stranger caught up with them and walked with them and joined in the conversation. They told



him about Jesus and what had happened. Verse 21 outlines their disappointment, “We had hoped that he was the one who would redeem Israel”. These 2 disciples had already heard the resurrection claims of the women but had no idea what it all meant or what was going on. So, Jesus started with their Scriptures and went through how the Christ had to suffer in order to enter his glory. He explained their familiar Scriptures to them.

They arrived at Emmaus and they urged Jesus to stay with them. Later they would say that as he spoke the word of God their hearts burned within them. They wanted more of Jesus. The stranger agreed to stay and as they began their meal, he took bread, gave thanks and broke it. Then as he began to give it to them we are told that “their eyes were opened” (compare verse 16 where they were kept from seeing that it was Jesus and verse 31 where their eyes were opened to see who he really was)

Verses 33-35 always make me smile. These 2 disciples, who had just got in from a 7 mile trek, dashed back to Jerusalem (7 miles again), in the dark, dangerous, late at night, so they could tell the others that they had seen Jesus. And when they got their and told them, the 11 replied “We know, we saw him too”!!! Not funny but it makes me smile every time.

Luke ends his Gospel by saying that Jesus came to them, pointed them back to their Scriptures to understand about him and in verse 45, “opened their minds so that they could understand the Scriptures....”

There are a couple of things in this passage, as well as marking resurrection appearances of Jesus.

- Understanding the Scriptures. As the stranger came to walk alongside these dispirited disciples, he explained to them the Scriptures that would have been so familiar to them. And again, when Jesus appears the assembled disciples at the end, he opens their minds to understand their Scriptures. They probably thought that they knew all about the Scriptures. They’d learned them as children. But the Lord has yet more light and truth to break forth from his word. Jesus was illuminating, contextualising, the Scriptures they knew. The meaning of the Scriptures then, and now, is seldom the surface reading. Can we read, listen and learn and ask Jesus to open our hearts and minds to what God says in His word?
- Verses 16 and 31, it was God who closed their eyes to who Jesus was and then opened their eyes to see who the stranger was. Who do we know whose eyes are not opened to the glory of the risen Lord Jesus? Can we pray for them each day and ask God to open their eyes? So that they can know meaning and purpose and forgiveness and freedom, so that they can enjoy life in all its fullness. Can we pray, starting today?
- The thing I love so much about this passage though is that it shows us how there are different ways to come to know Jesus. When Paul was converted to faith in his dramatic encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus, this for many people became the one way to know the Lord. And it isn’t. The road to Emmaus shows us that it is also valid to come to know the Lord more slowly, through the careful study of God’s word rather than the drama of a blinding light. The issue isn’t how we come to faith, it is simply that we do come to faith

Christ is risen, he is risen indeed, Hallelujah!!