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Do we have any fans of the 1960s-70s science fiction mega series, "Star Trek"? All the others followed from this: 2001 A Space Odyssey, Alien, E.T., Close Encounters, Star Wars (the series) and many others

In one episode of Star Trek, Captain Kirk and his crew landed on a planet where they discovered a large sculpture in the ruins of an ancient city. Mr Spock, always the cool scientific investigator, realised it was a sophisticated machine which peered back in time, and so the crew of Star Ship Enterprise were able to watch the American Revolution, Napoleon's armies conquering Europe, and America winning World War II.

I am not sure if we have mastered the essence of time and matter to make such a machine, but when God says, *As far as the east is from the west, thus far have I removed any memory of your wrong-doing*, why would I want to visit my past? But let's suppose for a moment, such a machine did exist. Which events in human history would you want to see first-hand?

- Noah build the ark and wait for rain?
- Watch Moses lift his staff and see God part the Red Sea?
- David kill Goliath?
- Watch the disciples trying to control the boat during the storm on the Sea of Galilee?
- Perhaps watch as Jesus fed 5,000 men (not including women and children) with five loaves of bread and two fish?

Curiosity would drive us to want to see more and more. You know what? On a rainy day in Heaven, it might be something to ask God to run the box set on Miracles as we settle down with a mug of hot chocolate, while the angels swanned around outside!

One of the *rewinds of history* I would like to see, is the event we just read. Follow me if you will, in the Gospel of Luke 24:13-36.

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The 7-mile journey from Jerusalem to Emmaus would take 3-4 hours, perhaps a bit more. All the paintings and pictures drawn of this scene show two men walking, with Jesus in white, walking between them. Verse 18 tells us, one of two was called **Cleopas**. Who then, was the other?

Turn with me to John 19:25 where we read, *Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, **Mary, the wife of Cleopas**, and Mary Magdalene*. So, Cleopas **and** his wife Mary, were in Jerusalem for the Passover, witnessed Jesus' crucifixion. It is highly likely, they were the two now returning home to Emmaus, on the day of Jesus' resurrection.

Earlier that very day, at the break of dawn, Jesus met Mary Magdalene at the tomb where He was buried, and this encounter with two of His followers, would have been His second.

Cleopas and Mary were clearly rattled by the events of the past three days. Jesus' crucifixion would have been very traumatic to watch. The Disciples and Jesus' followers would have met on several occasions over two days, trying to make sense of it all. As if that were not enough, then comes news of Jesus' resurrection. On their way home, Cleopas and Mary were trying to piece together the events, to see if they missed vital details which might provide clues to the main question, **WHY?** They knew the answer to **What?** They were witnesses. The burning question was **WHY?**

Our journey into a meaningful relationship with God through Jesus the Christ, begins with an examination of the evidence, as it is presented. Scientist and doctor agree, the best diagnosis begins with an investigation of the evidence as it is presented to them. A good Doctor spends more time investigating the evidence before them, by questioning the patient, asking questions of the person(s) who brought the patient in (what happened, how, was the patient lucid, in pain...) all as thoroughly as possible, before prescribing a course of treatment or medication.

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That's what Cleopas and Mary were doing, sifting through the evidence before them, to see if the evidence helped explain the event.

It is also important to note, God **NEVER** imposes Himself on us. God created us in His image; He enjoys free-will, and He has given us free-will. We exercise our free-will to choose the quality of our relationship with God: from as much time as possible, to as little time as possible, even no time at all with Him. As with all relationships, the more time we spend with a person, the better we get to know them. God comes alongside us, **only when** we want to know Him better. God **NEVER** imposes Himself on anyone.

The conversation between Cleopas and Mary, reveals the depth of their relationship with God. They knew the Scriptures, they knew God's promises, they knew about the Messiah, but they could not make sense of what happened. Didn't the Messiah come to save Israel from its invaders and persecutors and restore God's kingdom for ever? These two were eager to know more, find out **WHY** what happened, happened.

Our Tuesday house group is studying the book of Revelation. Each of us in the group has a relationship with God, we know something about Him, especially those of His promises which promise to bless us and keep us healthy, provide all our need (and wants), but we cannot make sense of what will happen, and we gather because we are eager to know more.

Its not that Jesus does not know what is in our hearts and minds, but He wants us to put our thoughts into words. *What are you both so intensely talking about as you walk back home?*

Jesus' question makes them stop dead in their tracks. Sadness was written across their face, but now mingled with shocked amazement! *Stranger! Are you the **only** visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there recently?*

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Be more specific, Jesus says. What things?, he asks. It like being in New York City when aeroplanes brought down the twin towers. Three days later you meet someone who asks you why all the flags are flying at half mast!

*It is contrary to Jesus character for Him to be patronising, and His questions are not intended to be read as patronising. His questions are for our benefit. *Tell me what you know, tell me what concerns you, tell me what you believe and what you don't, and I will carry you **from where you are**, to where you should be! I will set you on the right path of life.**

*So, Cleopas and his wife Mary tell Jesus what they know, *Jesus from Nazareth, a mighty prophet, our chief priests and rulers sent Him to be crucified; **we had hoped He was the One to redeem Israel**, now its three days and there are reports of His body missing, some disciples saying they encountered angels who said He was alive! We just don't know what or whom to believe!**

*You want to know more? Let me explain, says Jesus. He does not appeal to their intellect, He does not draw on witness statements, He does not go on hearsay. Jesus opens the Word of God and interprets **all** that has been written about Him.*

*Cleopas and Mary were hungry to know more, and here was a man making sense of it all. Later that evening, after Jesus had left, they said to each other, *When He talked with us along the road explaining the Scriptures, didn't we feel our hearts burning with excitement?**

*Their excitement was so palpable, they insisted *this Man* stay with them the night. Over the evening meal, when Jesus *took the bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to them, **that's when they recognised Him!*** Obviously, between Thursday evening, Jesus' last passover meal, and Sunday, the disciples practiced what was taught to them, and taught others the same: Jesus said *Do this in memory of me.**

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This *seemingly* insignificant bit of historical narrative about Cleopas and Mary, lays the groundwork for our relationship with God for the rest of human history.

We are witnesses of the events in our world. We can go through life, accepting everything happening around us as the result of human greed, human folly, godlessness, evil etc., but none of it begins to make sense unless, like Cleopas and Mary, we want to know more, using the Word of God as the framework for our understanding.

It starts with **us**. We step into God's journey, and there discover Him. He reveals Himself to us through His Word, where He can be found and heard, where His promises make sense.

But it takes a personal, persistent, insistent invitation into our home, into our lives, to *come dine with me; come stay with me. Its dark out there; I need your presence in here with me*, for Jesus to transform you into His likeness. Jesus does not to take up residence in your heart; you cannot appropriate Him for yourself; that would be to make an idol of Jesus, to place in your heart.

Jesus transforms you into His likeness, so that you like what He likes and hate what He hates, that you act as Jesus would, to reach out as Jesus would, to be **as** Jesus to those who need Him.

This transformation is so radical, so life-changing, you cannot contain the excitement of telling your experience to those around you.

It all starts with a genuine thirst for answers against the backdrop of world events. As God reveals Himself, the answers become evident, giving way to a desire for greater intimacy in our relationship with Him, to the point of surrendering to Him, insisting, His Son our Christ, occupies centre-stage in our lives.

AMEN.

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LET US PRAY

Father God, Thank You for Your Word, a window through which we can look back and see history, and learn of Your great love. Thank You for the Truth revealed in Your Word this morning. Help us to receive it and learn to live by it. We thank You for Jesus, Your Son, our Redeemer and Saviour, for His willingness to transform us into His likeness, that You Father, would recognise us as Your Sons and Daughters.

I pray for those this morning who want to know You more. May they be personal, persistent and insistent in their invitation to welcome You into their lives, and may they be filled with such abundant joy when you enter in and dine with them. Make this possible in the Name of Jesus.

AMEN.