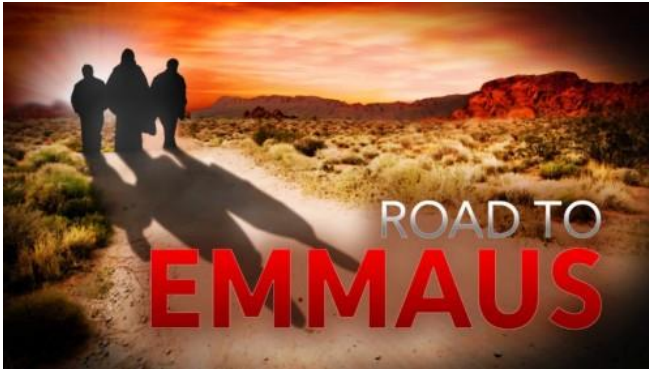




Worship@Home
14th April 2024
3rd Sunday of Easter



Call to Worship – Psalm 96 (“Psalms Now” – Brandt)

“God is here: God is now!
It is time for celebration!
Our praises need not be confined to old songs.
Nor do we need great organs or massive choirs to
honour his name.
Let us create new songs of praise to our God.
Let us discover new ways of proclaiming his greatness
and glory!

The elements around us reflect his majesty.
The roaring sea and all that inhabits it,
the wind that bends the trees,
the creatures that fill the air and land,
the mountains that probe our skies,
the rivers and lakes that slake our thirst,
the great planets and stars that light up our night –
all these reveal God’s beauty and splendour.
And out of this comes that fashioned by human mind
and body:
art, architecture, music, literature,
and the inventions of science.

Wherever one turns,
God’s power is manifested,
God’s presence is made apparent.
Let us celebrate his presence in our world today.”

Sing or read our first hymn, or listen to it on this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xvYUV8PFQa8>

1. Let all the world in every corner sing:
my God and King!
The heavens are not too high,
his praise may thither fly;
the earth is not too low,
his praises there may grow.
Let all the world in every corner sing:
my God and King!

2. Let all the world in every corner sing:
my God and King!
The Church with psalms must shout,
no door can keep them out;
but above all, the heart
must bear the longest part.
Let all the world in every corner sing:
my God and King!

George Herbert (1593-1633) StF 57

Prayers of Praise and Adoration

Father, we thank you for being our creator-God, who made all things with your hands. We thank you for being the creator, governor and preserver of the universe that you made.

We praise you for creating us in your image, and for infilling us with your love and your Spirit. We thank you, that although you are the creator of the universe, that you are personally interested in us, and that you love us with a Fathers’ love.

We join with the whole of your created world in singing praises to “my God and King!” **Amen**

Bible Reading: Luke 24:13-27

On the Road to Emmaus

¹³ Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. ¹⁵ As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; ¹⁶ but they were kept from recognising him.

¹⁷ He asked them, “What are you discussing together as you walk along?”

They stood still, their faces downcast. ¹⁸ One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, “Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?”

¹⁹ “What things?” he asked.

“About Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. ²⁰ The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; ²¹ but we had hoped that he was

the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place.

²² In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning ²³ but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. ²⁴ Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus."

²⁵ He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?"

²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

Reflection

On this 3rd Sunday of Easter, we recall one of the resurrection appearances of Jesus. It is possible that Jesus appeared on many occasions, to many of his disciples or followers, and maybe our present Bible's only contain a few of those incidents. Fortunately, Jesus appearing to two followers (one called Cleopas, the other unnamed) on the road to Emmaus made the cut!

It is a fascinating, detailed and intimate account. I would like us to reflect, just now, on verse 16: "but they were kept from recognising him." Why were they prevented from recognising Jesus? Who prevented them? Was it God's will? Was it someone else? Was it Satan? Was it their fault – their unbelief and lack of faith? Or was it symptomatic of their state of mind and soul – their distress, confusion, anxiety?

Can you recall a time when you have not been able to recognise the presence of Jesus with you? Maybe at a time of bereavement, or challenge or doubt? When we experience these times, let us remember that God has promised us: "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5 – also see Deut. 31:6).

Sing or read this hymn, or listen to it on this link:

[On The Journey To Emmaus \(Singing the Faith 308 / StF308\) \(youtube.com\)](#)

1. On the journey to Emmaus with our hearts cold as stone -
the One who would save us had left us alone.

Then a stranger walks with us and, to our surprise, he opens our stories and open our eyes.

2. And our hearts burned within us as we talked on the way,
how all that was promised was ours on that day.
So we begged him, 'stay with us and grant us your word'.
We welcomed the stranger and we welcomed the Lord.
3. And that evening at the table as he blessed and broke bread,
we saw it was Jesus arisen from the dead;
Though he vanished before us we knew he was near –
the life of our dying and the hope of our fear.
4. On our journey to Emmaus, in our stories and feast,
with Jesus we claim that the greatest is least:
And his words burn within us – let none be ignored – who welcomes the stranger shall welcome the Lord.

Marty Haugen (b. 1950)

StF 308

Prayers of Intercessions

Lord, God, we pray for all who are travelling a lonely road today. Lord, will you come alongside all who feel isolated, alone or forgotten just now.

Our thoughts are with those who live alone, especially some of the elderly or those with limited mobility.

We pray for those who have recently been bereaved of a loved one or who are experiencing the loneliness of life without a partner, friend or family member.

Lord, may the warmth of your presence be with all who need to experience you as their Living Lord and Saviour. **Amen.**

Bible Reading: Luke 24: 28-35

On the Road to Emmaus ... continued

²⁸As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. ²⁹But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them.

³⁰ When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. ³² They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”

³³ They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together ³⁴ and saying, “It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.” ³⁵ Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

A word from the Word

We have already reflected on Luke 24 verse 16: “but they were kept from recognising him.” And, as we have seen, there could be all sorts of reasons for this spiritual blindness. Cleopas and his fellow-traveller were obviously struggling. They were trying to make sense of all that had happened.

When someone dies, it is natural for those who are left behind to recount the final hours before death. That’s what is happening here (v14). But, not only were they confused, they were also distressed and distraught. When the resurrected Jesus (as yet, unrecognisable to the travellers) asked what they were talking about, they couldn’t even speak. They just stood still and that their faces were “downcast” (v17). Doctor Luke recognised distress and depression and chose to record that detail.

Furthermore, these two were struggling because their hopes and dreams had been shattered through the crucifixion of Jesus: “but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel” (V21).

All of this is natural behaviour for those who have been bereaved of their Lord. But there is something puzzling about this discourse. Not only were they recounting the death of Jesus, but they go on to relate what had happened earlier that day. Women had visited the tomb, but found it empty. Angels assured them that the body of Jesus had not been stolen or removed, but that Jesus is, in fact, is very much alive. And they add that other Jesus-followers then visited to see the empty tomb for themselves.

Strange that these two believers were able to comprehend the crucifixion but were unable to grasp the resurrection. They spoke of the empty tomb and

were able to report the words of the angels who confirmed that Jesus is not dead, but alive. And yet, they could only embrace the death at the expense of the resurrection. No wonder Jesus rebuked them for their lack of belief (vv 25-26).

But then something marvellous happens – it often does when Jesus arrives on the scene! When they reach the village, and as they invite Jesus to stay with them, these blinded followers receive sight: “their eyes were opened and they recognized him.” Why was that? What triggered this ability to see Jesus? Luke’s detailed account informs us that it happened as soon as Jesus “took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them” (v30). Maybe it was because they had often been with Jesus when this happened? Or maybe, at the table, they were starting to relax and this allowed this realisation to take place?

We can guess and make presumptions, but what we can say is that when these believers were in communion with Jesus, their spiritual eyes were opened. Suddenly it all started to make sense. Once downcast, now their faces were looking up at their Risen Lord. And now, all was well – with their souls as well as with their eyesight!

Sing or read this hymn, or listen to it on this link:
[\(15\) All Heaven Declares - Lyrics - YouTube](#)

1. All Heaven declares
The glory of the risen Lord
Who can compare
With the beauty of the Lord
For ever he will be
The lamb upon the throne
I gladly bow the knee,
And worship him alone.

2. I will proclaim
The glory of the risen Lord
Who once was slain
To reconcile man to God
For ever you will be
The lamb upon the throne
I gladly bow the knee,
And worship you alone. StF 293

Noel Richards (b 1955) & Tricia Richards (b1960)

Blessing

The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, now and for evermore. **Amen**