



Hello

As we begin the Easter season, let us remember the stories that have led us to this place. Let us remember the time that we have spent through Lent reflecting on the promise that we make to God and renew each year and now having heard the story of Jesus' death and resurrection, take the next steps in our own stories.

The Easter season is 50 days long, finishing with Pentecost. Throughout these days we will travel through the Stations of the Resurrection or Via Lucis- The Way of Light.

Each Sunday we will look at one of the encounters that Jesus had with his disciples in the days following his resurrection, leading us to the day when the gift of the Holy Spirit is imparted.

Throughout the week, there will opportunity to reflect on another of these encounters as a Bible study, building a more complete picture of how the disciples grew in their faith, despite Jesus not being with them in the way that they had become accustomed to.

We like them, have things to hide from, fears and anxieties, circumstances that have changed. But also like them amidst our fears God breaks through, we are reminded of why Jesus came in the first place. Let us during this season, keep our eyes open for the risen Lord, keep doing our best to strengthen our faith community and when we finally get our Pentecost day, let us be bold and brave, set on fire by the Spirit to proclaim God's love.

Each week there will be a reflective walk, an order of service and an activity to interact with, alongside opportunities to share in prayer on and Bible Study.

May Christ illuminate your way as we travel by the light of God from despair to hope, from the death to new life.

God Bless

Elizabeth

19th April- The Way of Light- Week 1

Let us pray:

Loving God, for the times I have seen you journeying with me, I am thankful.

Gracious God, for the times I have seen others journeying with you, I am humbled,

Holy God, for the times I have not recognised your journeying with me, I am sorry.

Forgiving God, thank you for the assurance that you will continue to journey with me.

Living God, in my journey this week help me to see glimpses of your good news so that my heart burns within me. Amen.

Read Luke 24:13-35

Reflection

The Emmaus Road is a well-known journey of two disciples, possibly a husband and wife, who have been in Jerusalem celebrating Passover with Jesus and the others and may now be returning home. As the Sabbath has passed and Jesus' body is thought to have been moved, there is nothing else they can do. Trying to make sense of everything, they walk the road together, a stranger walks with them and through his supposed disconnectedness to the recent events, gets them to tell the story. However, the stranger seems to have a better understanding of their confusion and helps them understand the story they were trying to tell.

We sometimes forget in the confusion and emotion of events that God is there with us and wants to help us to come to an understanding. We need to hear the words, see the truth and be open to their meaning. Our stories are all full of God's love, let's trust in the stories we know, those that we have lived, and find Jesus on the road, at the table with us and in the sharing the truth with others.

STF 308

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 he opens 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 in our dying and the hope in 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) Reproduced from *Singing the Faith* Electronic Words Edition, number 308
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Let us pray

Faithful God, you are present in all aspects of life even when people don't see it. We call on you today to send your Spirit to bring comfort and peace to all who find their path ahead difficult.

We pray for your church and all those seeking ways to be church in these times.

May they recognize your living presence.

We pray for the world and all those seeking to offer leadership in the midst of uncertainty.

May they recognize your living presence.

We pray for all those who suffer at this time in body, mind or spirit.

May they recognize your living presence.

We pray for all who are bereaved whether through the loss of loved ones or the loss of human contact.

May they recognize your living presence.

Merciful God, accept these our prayers today in and through the name of the living Christ.

May we too recognize your living presence in the week ahead and trust in you for all that is to come.

The Lord's Prayer

Blessing

May the road rise to meet you,
May the wind be always at your back,
The sun shine warm upon your face,
The rains fall soft upon your fields,
And until we meet again,
May God hold you in the presence of Christ
Wherever you are on the road.

Activity

The Emmaus Road:

Each week write on a footprint something that you feel that you have learnt about God from the readings or the world in the previous week. With each step we take we move closer to understanding all that Jesus came to represent.

Pentecost



19th April

May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

As you walk try and tell yourself the story that leads to Easter.

Read Luke 24:13-16, 25-32

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.

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. ²⁸ As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. ²⁹ But 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?"

These disciples had decided to leave Jerusalem and couldn't help but relive the events of past few days. Then a supposed stranger comes up and starts helping them to understand all that has happened. This journey describes the Christian journey, were we spend time trying to understand what we have seen or experienced, it is then with the help and insight from God that our experiences begin to reveal something hidden deeper within.

- **I wonder, if there are any parts of the story that you are struggling with? What makes them difficult to understand?**
- **I wonder, if there are parts of your own story that you struggle with?**
- **Can you recognise where God is on your journey? What has helped you recognise God?**
- **Has recognising God's presence changed anything for you?**

Take some time to recognise who else is walking the road with you. Imagine the scene when the risen Christ broke the bread and suddenly disappeared. Hold that moment of disappearance in silence and pray that you may be open to Jesus in despair and hope.

Time of Contemplation and Prayer

Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided, urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way, sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided:

Lord for the years, we bring our thanks today.

Lord, for that word, the word of life which fires us, speaks to our hearts and sets our souls ablaze, teaches and trains, rebukes us and inspires us:

Lord of the word, receive your people's praise.

Lord, for our land in this our generation, spirits oppressed by pleasure, wealth and care: for young and old, for

commonwealth and nation,
Lord of our land, be pleased to hear our prayer.

Lord, for our world where men disown and doubt you, loveless in strength, and comfortless in pain, hungry and helpless, lost indeed without you:

Lord of the world, we pray that Christ may reign.

Lord for ourselves; in living power remake us-self on the cross, and Christ upon the throne, past put behind us, for the future take us:

Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone.

Spend a moment in silence reflecting on the hymn.

What standouts to you?

What images are brought to mind?

Spend time offering these things to God in prayer.

Read Matt 28:17-20

This is known as the great commission, when the disciples are told to go and make disciples of all nations.

Matthew doesn't include any other appearances of Jesus as John's gospel does, Matthew is more interested in showing that Jesus is fulfilling the promise in Matthew 26:32.

For some the idea of going and making disciples is an uncomfortable one. Not everyone can or wants to leave their way of life to tell others about the Jesus. Although this commission is given to these disciples, we still can take this commission on here and now. Just like the passage, even some of the disciples doubted, but they are still given the commission and there in the final sentence is the reminder of hope, that we are not being asked to do something that cannot be done, nor that only certain people can do. God is with us to the end of the age.

This passage is full of so many images and themes, see if you can note them down and share them at tomorrow's Bible study. Finally tell God about those fears that hold you back and find hope in the words of this final song.

God forgave my sin in Jesus' name
I've been born again in Jesus' name
And in Jesus' name I come to you
To share His love as He told me to
*He said freely freely, You have received
Freely freely give, Go in My name
And because you believe*

*Others will know that I live
All pow'r is giv'n in Jesus' name
In earth and heav'n in Jesus' name
And in Jesus' name I come to you
To share His pow'r as He told me to
He said freely freely, You have received
Freely freely give, Go in My name*

*And because you believe
Others will know that I live*

Bible Study Questions

Reading Matt 28:17-20

Some of the disciples doubted.

What caused their doubt?

Have you ever doubted? What caused this doubt? Has this doubt changed and how?

Jesus said 'all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to him.'

How do you understand this statement of 'in heaven and earth'? What did Jesus mean by this? Why does Jesus need the authority and who gave it to him?

Jesus said, 'go and make disciples of all nations.'

What are disciples? How do you think Jesus imagined this would happen? Who was Jesus talking to? Does this apply to us today? If so, how are we 'going' and 'making' and 'baptising'?

In verse 20 it says: 'teaching them to obey everything that I commanded you.'

Is this a suggestion or a command? Do you obey everything? What do you find hard about this passage?

What is the importance of the final sentence?