

New Kilpatrick

Podcast

26th April 2020

Luke 24:13-35

Welcome

Welcome to this weeks podcast. Today we gather round a story of encounter with a stranger on a road to an unmarked place, but then those who have travelled this way before know... Jesus is always found in a strangers guise. Join us on the road with Iain and Fiona McMillan and Jeanette Peel who share our time today.

Gathering

You are invited to provide some bread and wine, or crackers and juice, some symbol of a basic meal in your worship space today for we invite you to share bread and wine in whatever place we find ourselves today, for we are going to a place, not on a map, but a place where we can meet each other in our imaginations, a place called Emmaus, and there in breaking bread, recognise Jesus still connects, communes, keeps company with us. Welcome to our podcast communion.

Prayer

Let us gather for the journey
Let us pray

Travelling God
we may not be able to travel far these days
but we have travelled a greater distance than we can
imagine

from what is familiar
to what is new and yet to be understood

from routine
to new responses as uncertain yet

from touching and being present in community
to distancing ourselves from culture and tradition

travelling backwards it feels
away from each other,
yet today we travel
towards one another again



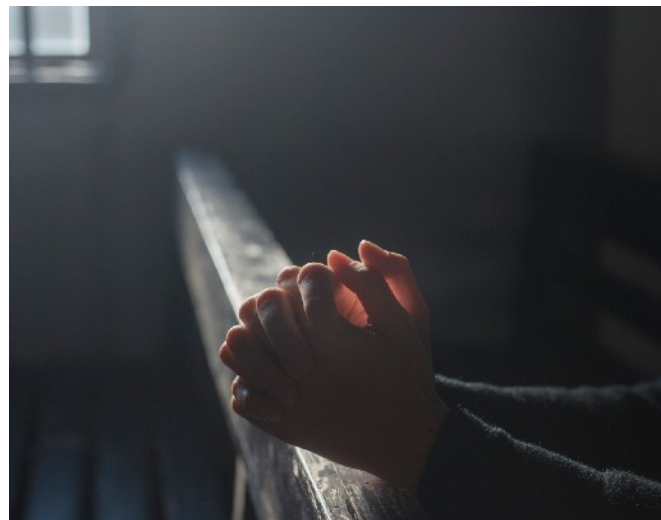
in this time together
in our imaginations
our story telling
setting ourselves free
at least here
to move
and meet
and encounter again

May we find this travelling place
the place to explore and retell our stories
to daringly recount the stories we know
yet leave space for them to evolve
and reshape us
finding ways to engage with each other
now the ground has shifted
as it had done for those first travellers
to Emmaus

a journey that never finishes being travelled
but is always travelled with you

It is such trust
we cling onto at this time
O travelling companion
who takes this road less travelled with us

*Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed by thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever. Amen*



Reading

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened.

While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognising him. And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad.

On the way

Faith is a story. Really that is all it is. And with a story made sacred in the telling, we can do one of two things.

We can preserve it. We can write it down and seal the words, we can have a definitive understanding of it, maintain and conserve how it shapes community, safeguard the way we do everything. We can secure it behind glass, place it on high shelves out of reach, so that it won't be destroyed.

Or, we can tell it, then retell it again, letting it evolve through every experience, exploring it, questioning it, travelling with it. We can pick it up, handle it, feel it, look at it different ways and see where it takes us.

And so the companions, when they speak to the stranger, imagine the story is fixed, but through the strangers eyes the words take on new life, it is heard afresh in old ears. And find one story invites another, then another, continually reshaping how they understand what happened. And so it is on the Emmaus road. It not a journey found on a map but a journey found in faith stories. Emmaus isn't a place. Emmaus is a way faith.

Reflective prayer

What have we missed?
In the confusion of it all
Even the disciples, those closest,
Did not fully understand.
What have we missed?
When we try to make sense of
The last few days, the loss, the grief.
What have we missed?
As our eyes are closed
And our hearts broken
On the road to Emmaus.

Reading

Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth. who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our



chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.”

Then he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?” Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

Travelling with strangers

This Emmaus road is a travelling road, not just for the feet, but for the soul. The road to Emmaus is a deeply spiritual road, and indeed many suggest Emmaus is actually simply a parable about faith.

Look where it starts: The travellers disappointments “but we had hoped”, “besides all this it is now the third day” as if it is now too late, Jesus is definitely gone. They are going back home, away from Jerusalem. The whole kingdom project is a failure. When you start out for Emmaus you start out with disappointment.

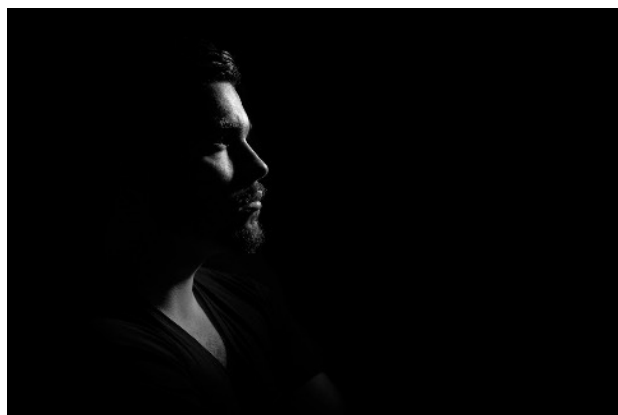
But this is the sacred way, where we find resurrection, but this is resurrection that slips in beside you. You don’t even notice it. The stranger joins them, and they talk, and he begins to persuade and encourage them, grounding their experiences in the promises of their tradition, he begins to find for them a new enthusiasm for hope, right there in the stories they thought were empty. Resurrection is almost a healing.

And once more the gospel surprises us in how it speaks of resurrection. There is no Easter fanfare, no pronouncement, no choir of angels. Resurrection slips in on a whispered conversation and you hardly notice. Resurrection is found in the storytelling between friends and a stranger. Resurrection is a way to see and hear God in the world again. Because resurrection is a relationship.

The travellers start out saying, “We had hoped the story was bigger”. And the stranger replies, “It is my friends, it is.” And when we let the guest become our host, we will see.

Reflective prayer

What have we missed?
By not recognising
Who is travelling beside us
At all times and in all places.
What have we missed?



As we retell the story
To an apparent stranger.
What have we missed?
As we encounter new ways of being
Reaching out to each other
In recognising who is always with us.

Reading

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them.

Invitation

Come and join us
Come and break bread

There is the gospel

Come and continue the story
Come and keep this shared experience going

There is the life

Come whoever you are
stranger, friend, companion

There is the belonging

Come let us not break this community
let us commune further

There is the invitation

Come to the table with us
we have space and there is still further to travel

There is the truth

Come the words have not yet run out
the story has more to give

There is the faith



Come for where two or three are gathered
didn't he say he'd be there?

Reflective prayer

What have we missed?
When we saw the bread and wine
But did not understand
Its importance staring at us.
What have we missed?
When we fail to recognise
The worth of every person.
What have we missed?
If we remain blind to God's love
Before us, behind us, beside us
And forget to share with all.



Reading

When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?"

Communion

Hearts burning, the words were alive.

The gospel moment here is not recognising Jesus. Yes, the gospel is found in NOT recognising Jesus but sharing with a stranger, offering hospitality, a table, loving your neighbour whoever she or he may be. That's the gospel moment because every stranger is Jesus. He always said that was how it was going to be. Hospitality, generosity, inclusion: these were the gospel long before belief became the gospel. Gospel is relationships. Resurrection is relationship and in inviting that relationship, in sharing with the stranger, in loving neighbour which is the Emmaus story, you can't help but see, in fact it pounds in your heart it is so clearly the case, that Jesus is among us in generous hospitality to the strange.

Holy, holy holy
God of power and might
heaven and earth are full of your glory
hosanna in the highest

blessed is the one who comes in God's name
hosanna in the highest.

So we take bread
how simple it is
yet it contains the whole of heaven
each crumb the entire gospel
and at our Emmaus tables
wherever they are
we join each other
within this story
round one great table
across isolation

one table
between us
reducing the social distancing

one humble table
in many guises
coffee, dining, bedside, hospital



it is one table we gather round
and break this Emmaus bread
and share this Emmaus cup

Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world
Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world
Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world
grant us your peace

Let us break and share
and know
through this invisibly connected community
we share in the presence of Christ

Taste and see
Taste and know
Taste and believe
the love of Christ
is present
and binds us together as one

Share bread and wine in your own place

Were not our hearts burning within us
Peace be with you

On the way back

But we cannot remain here
we cannot hold a story like this
and keep it to ourselves

Let us return from our Emmaus
of our imagination
those uncertain and liminal places
that feel all too real now
and one day return to our Jerusalems
our New Kilpatrick's
our familiar faith places
but reshaped by the experience
renamed by the truth
found in these less travelled places
as we travel
with the stranger
who joins us
on the road.

Reflective prayer

What have we found?
That our hearts are lifted
That our eyes are opened
The love of God reaches out.
What have we found?
We are humanity and
Christ is for everyone.
What have we found?
In the breaking of bread
The good news is shared
Without exception.

Prayer

Emmaus God
meeting in the liminal places
between disappointment and hope
worry and relief
searching and discovery
it is the very place our world finds itself



and so we bring it to the table
and there in what is broken
break open a new relationship with the future

So at our table
we place those who worry and grieve
those who lead and take decisions
those who work to keep communities going
for health services and staff
to medics and researchers
from community workers and agencies
to neighbours and volunteers

And for families and friends
anxious and hurting
concerns with coping in strange
times
now expectations
from everyday encounters
to services and funerals
have shifted
we pray into the journey
back from Emmaus
to our familiar Jerusalems

May we carry the hope
the daring faith
that soon we all see
a resurrected society
a new relationship
with life, each other, and our future

So be it
Amen



Benediction

Go in peace
to walk the way
and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
The Love of God
and the Commonwealth of the Spirit
Be with us all
Evermore

Amen

Thank you for the invitation to join you today. We are online always at nkchurch.org.uk where we have daily prayers for the journey, videos, zoom rooms, two appeals for food banks and Malawi. While the building is closed for worship, the church is open as it hasn't been before. So let us journey together, stranger and friend. Take care.