

Alleluia He is Risen

stopping you being like Peter after Jesus' resurrection?



In this weeks musings I have suggested that we all behave at times as if we are on the road to Emmaus ~ and yet we declare that we are Christians. In faith we should be able to be like those on the journey once Jesus had broken bread for them and they realised who He was in their midst. ~ They returned Jerusalem to share what they knew to be true ~ they did not wait until morning, they did not consider their tiredness or the danger on the road ~ their message was too important ~ they had to go and encourage others.

I. What will you tell others about how you recognise Jesus and know Him to be present with you?

Sometimes you and I can feel really isolated and ill equipped to share our faith ~ no one denies that. As a church at Immanuel we want to be equipped to share and we often acknowledge that we cannot give what we do not have. This morning we are launching our Welcome Bags. It is a long time since we had an information pack for everyone who chooses to worship here and that has meant that you have not been offered the information that you need to understand how we are part of the family of God here ~ the Body of Christ in this part of Streatham ~ so there has been a lot of prayer and hard work to create these bags so that we can continue the journey of **knowing Jesus and making Him known** so now we are going to share this treasure and pray it is a tool for us to use to God's glory. Amen.

Is it any mistake that on our APCM Sunday this year we hear, in the Acts of the Apostles, that Peter in addressing the crowd told them the Truth of Jesus Christ as Messiah and made it clear that the people needed to repent of ignoring what God desired for them and their actions that had crucified Jesus. We are told ~

'With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptized,'

Each of us as Christians today need to take heed of that warning. We may have been Baptised but do we live by the promises we made or had made for us? If we do then they should be reflected in all we do. What will that look like? In the 1st letter of Peter he tells us not only how it should look but why:

'Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart. For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.'

Yet still many of us behave as if we were on the Road to Emmaus and yet to encounter the love of our Lord and understand something of its depth and breadth! Two followers on a journey, disillusioned and traumatised by their experiences, are met by a third person who patiently challenges their downhearted attitude and eventually they come to understand and recognise their companion ~who promptly leaves them to it ~ disappearing from their sight!

Today it is our responsibility to break bread so as travellers we have the opportunity to meet afresh with our Lord ~ but it is the work of the Holy Spirit to enable our eyes to be opened to God's work in this place and to respond to it by seeking to work with Him ~ thus our Vision and Mission statements and our trying to learn how best we can continue on our journey**Knowing Jesus ~ making Him known**



Acts 2: 14a, 36-41 NT page 115
1 Peter 1: 17-23 NT page 230
Luke 24: 13-35 NT page 86

I have some questions for us to consider this morning ~

- I. When did you first have faith in Jesus explained to you so that you understood that it was different from having faith in anything or anyone else?
- II. Have you ever had the opportunity to explain faith in Jesus to someone else so that they could understand too?

The questions are not to catch anyone out or to judge in any way ~ they are a part of our exploration of our faith and what Jesus might want of us. Not everyone feels that they have the words or the confidence to speak about their faith and I wonder how the two questions make you feel? Listen to them again and then take a few minutes to think and share your thoughts with the people around you

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Come back together ~

- I. what did you discover about yourselves?
- II. Did you feel challenged?

This morning in our reading from Acts we continued to hear about Peter, in the company of the eleven, raising his voice and speaking to the crowds; not just one to one, but to hundreds of folk gathered around and his message was challenging!

Peter spoke of the life death and resurrection of Jesus and how that had all happened to change people's understanding and relationship with God and as he speaks he invites those listening to repent and save themselves from the corrupt generation that they are living in.

This is Peter that we are talking about ~ Peter who walked on

water until he thought about what he was doing and then sank ~ because he took his eyes off of Jesus ~ stopped trusting completely and let doubt in! Peter who wanted to be washed from head to toe when he grasped what serving Jesus was about when seconds earlier he had told his Lord that he would not allow him to wash his feet! Peter who was upset when Jesus challenged him 'Do you love me' as he began to learn what love meant and Peter who despite loving his Lord denied Him three times when Jesus was arrested and tried before being sentenced to be crucified!

It is this Peter who after Jesus' death and resurrection stands and shares about the new faith Jesus offers! This is the Peter who we have seen to have no confidence, no courage and lose trust! ~ Does that sound familiar when you are asked how you live your faith or have you shared your faith? It should do because if we are honest we have probably all behaved like Peter somewhere on our pilgrimage!

Peter ~ the rock ~ became both Bishop of Rome and Bishop of Antioch ~ he knew about persecution and wrote to people who experienced oppression and persecution. In his first letter he encourages his readers live their lives in reverent fear, wherever they reside and whatever opposition they encounter ~ He does this because of the faith they declare in God the Father who judges each person impartially and whom we know through Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit at work in us. Living our lives in reverent fear shows in our sincere love for each other, a love that comes deep from the heart, because we have been born again ~ that is we have received that deep love from God ourselves and that love does not perish as God's Word reveals to us.

So some more questions to reflect on ~

- I. How do you journey in faith?
- II. Do you recognise times when you behave like Peter?
- III. What do you do about times of doubt or denial?
- IV. If you can be like Peter before Jesus' death ~ what is