

# Easter 2024

## Lightbulbs - Luke 24 verses 28 to 35

After the unrecognised Jesus has walked and talked with Cleopas and his friend on resurrection day evening, Jesus makes as if he was going on (v28). He has opened up the scriptures and pointed these two disillusioned disciples at the passages which point to the coming Messiah. Their version of Messiah is the political emancipator who will rid the Jewish nation of the occupying Romans but Jesus points out their error on the basis of scripture.

They have heard the Jerusalem rumours. Talk of the women at the tomb as well as other disciples seeing the empty tomb has reached their ears. But they're still walking away from Jerusalem on resurrection day. They think it's all over.

1. How possible is it for people today to have enough evidence to become believers yet they don't make any commitment?  
Talk about people you know who have heard the gospel but remain doubters.

Even though God has closed their eyes to the identity of Jesus, there is something about him that makes them want to spend more time with him. It's the end of the day (v29) and it would have been customary to offer hospitality so they ask Jesus to join them. Clearly, they have been attracted by his message.

2. Is it possible for us to underestimate the attractiveness of Jesus?  
Many of us were attracted to the Saviour by someone who communicated the truth to us.  
Should we have more confidence in telling people about Jesus?  
If it is life changing, why do we hold back?

Jesus shares a meal with his two hosts. It was a scene reminiscent of the Last Supper and they were almost certainly sat around a reclining table. Jesus seems to care for these two people just as he had done with the twelve at their last meal with their master. They want to stay close to Jesus because they sense he has something to offer them.

3. Should we have that longing to stay close to Jesus to hear his every word?  
Clearly, we can't eat a meal with him so how can we achieve that level of intimacy?  
Talk practically about how we can be close to Jesus.

Jesus takes the bread, gives thanks, breaks it and gives it to them. In the rush of the narrative up to now, there is something calming about this scene. In the breaking of bread Jesus is revealed – they have been spending time with the one they have been discussing. God has opened their eyes.

4. Does this change our view of the communion service?  
How does the breaking of bread reveal Jesus in our context?  
Are there dangers that we treat communion as a ritual rather than a meeting with the Saviour who died for us?

Perhaps surprisingly, at that moment, he disappears but not before they recognise him (v31). Resurrection bodies seem capable of doing things we cannot do. Luke records their emotions after he's left the scene - their hearts 'burned within them' as they 'talked on the road'. Word and sacrament have revealed Jesus to a pair of discouraged followers.

5. Should we expect this kind of reaction when we encounter 'word' and 'sacrament'?

Has our excitement been dimmed by familiarity?

Do we need help if our hearts do not burn within us?

Should this be a regular occurrence when our hearts are stirred by words of the gospel?

Their next action is to leave the table in their home and rush back to Jerusalem. There is real urgency to return to the group of disciples to add their experience to the sightings of other disciples.

#### **Where is Emmaus?**

The site of the village has proved very elusive. At one point most believed the village was around 7 miles from Jerusalem but there is no archaeological evidence to place it there.

A quick use of your search engine will reveal others believe they have found the site of Emmaus at 11, 12 or 20 miles and that was only on the first page of my Google search.

Christian tradition has Ein Karem as the birthplace of John the Baptist – a town 'in the hill country of Judea' (Luke 1:40). Some believe this may be Emmaus.

The best conclusion is probably that it is difficult to be certain.

One writer even suggested that there was no real place with that name.

They are keen to tell everyone about their road encounter with Jesus and how he revealed himself at their table. The key phrase is 'it is true, the Lord is risen' (v34) and they were all saying it. This became the core message of the church after Pentecost when the disciples were emboldened to speak having received the Holy Spirit.

6. What lessons can we learn from their new found passion to talk about Jesus?

- They listened to the word of God
- They met with the son of God
- They spoke about his resurrection

How can we follow their example?