



DAILY READINGS

MAY 27 - 31

the road to

EMMAUS

Day 1 – The Power of Staying

Silence, Stillness and Centering before God (2 minutes)

Scripture Reading – Luke 24:29

How would the Emmaus story have been different if the two disciples and Jesus had parted ways at the end upon reaching the town, Jesus continuing on his way while the disciples went to their lodgings for the evening? How would that change the story? So much has already happened on the road, so much has been revealed and explained by this wise and knowledgeable stranger, and yet with all that has been shared, there is still more – perhaps the most important part! – to come. But that part doesn't happen if they part ways now. They needed to stay together, all three of them, companions and stranger, in order to truly experience the presence of Jesus.

Staying is counter-cultural for us. Remaining where we are is not something that our society encourages us to do. We are transient people, always on the move, always looking to climb further up the company ladder, to move to that better neighbourhood, that bigger house; moving on from each other and our families when the going gets tough or when we spy someone we think will be better for us; leaving behind that old church, that old congregation that we disagreed with to look for something more amenable to our way of thinking. But discipleship requires stability. It requires the ability to stay with a set of relationships, to allow others to speak into our lives as we do into their lives, for that is so often where the presence of Jesus manifests itself: when we gather in his name and his Spirit is free to move among us. But like the disciples we must risk staying together in order for this to happen.

Questions to Consider

Who are the people you are 'staying' with? Why are you staying?

Prayer

Lord God, thank you for calling a people. Thank you that we don't have to do it all on our own, but with the people you call us to. Amen.

Conclude with Silence (2 minutes)

Day 2 – The Power of the Table

Silence, Stillness and Centering before God (2 minutes)

Scripture Reading – Luke 24:30

The two disciples sat down at the table with a stranger – they got up again having encountered the Risen Jesus. It was just a simple, ordinary meal, but through it something extraordinary happened. Who we eat with matters. As Simon Carey Holt says in *Eating Heaven*, “[I]t remains my conviction that the table is sacred space and that what we do there is spiritually significant....What we do at the table expresses most tangibly what we believe, what we value and how we understand ourselves in relation to the world around us....eating is a social and political act of profound consequence, one that expresses tangibly our community identity and citizenship. And as one of the most routine activities of life – one that marks the rhythm and flow of every day – eating is embedded at the heart of what it means to be human.”

And Henri Nouwen also comments: “When we gather around the table and break the bread together, we are transformed not only individually but also as community. We, people from different ages and races, with different backgrounds and histories, become one body. As Paul says: ‘As there is one loaf, so we, although there are many of us, are one single body, for we all share in the one loaf’ (1 Corinthians 10:17). Not only as individuals but also as community we become the living Christ, taken, blessed, broken, and given to the world. As one body, we become a living witness of God's immense desire to bring all peoples and nations together as the one family of God.”

Questions to Consider

When have you experienced a time when the presence of Jesus turned an ordinary moment into an extraordinary one? How did it happen?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, you are present to us in every moment of our life, if only we are open to looking and awake to notice you. Help me see you. Amen.

Conclude with Silence (2 minutes)

Day 3 – The Moment of Recognition

Silence, Stillness and Centering before God (2 minutes)

Scripture Reading – Luke 24:31

Remember back to verse 16, when “their eyes were kept from recognising him.” That’s where these two disciples started from, when they first encountered the stranger on the road. Now, at the breaking of the bread, “their eyes were opened and they recognised him” (verse 31). The Emmaus Road encounter can be summed up in one word: discernment. For these two disciples the question wasn’t whether Jesus was with them or not – we can see obviously he was. The question was whether these two disciples had the ability to recognise him. Initially they did not, but as the day progressed, and their journey continued, they eventually saw who he was. Looked at from their perspective, as Ruth Haley Barton says, “First they saw him as a stranger, then as a traveling companion, then as a teacher, then as a guest, then as a host, and finally as their Messiah and resurrected Lord” (*Life Together in Christ*, p.141).

If it seems strange – or even spiteful – that it’s at the moment of recognition that Jesus disappears, we must remember that part of what the disciples still had to learn was that, as much as Jesus was alive again, their relationship with him was going to have to continue in a new way. They would need to learn to discern the spiritual presence of Jesus with them, through his Holy Spirit. They would need faith that had moved beyond sight. They would need to trust that Jesus was with them always, and discern where he was moving and where he wanted them to go too.

Questions to Consider

How were things to be different for the disciples after the ascension? What was the contrast between their relationships with Jesus before and after?

Prayer

Almighty God, help me with discerning your presence in my life in those moments when it seems you are not there. Remind me of your goodness and faithfulness in those moments of absence. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Conclude with Silence (2 minutes)

Day 4 – A New Direction

Silence, Stillness and Centering before God (2 minutes)

Scripture Reading – Luke 24:32-34

An encounter with the risen Jesus can completely change the direction you are headed. It can utterly transform the journey you thought you were taking and the reasons you had for embarking upon it. When Cleopas and his friend left Jerusalem that morning they were in despair, grieving the loss of their friend and teacher, and (quite likely) heading back home, as they may very well have believed that there was nothing in Jerusalem for them anymore. Now, here they are returning to Jerusalem at full speed, in the middle of the night, all thoughts of a bed and a good night's sleep forgotten, as they hasten to find their friends and share their experience with them. What they have experienced on the road and around the table has completely upended the day they thought they were going to have and the future that they now can have, the new life now lying ahead of them. Suddenly, all things are possible again.

The Road to Emmaus is the story of two disciples discovering that there is no story, however presently dark, however seemingly unchangeable, however impossibly predetermined, that God cannot utterly transform and turn around. Yet note that this 'turning around' for these disciples was not necessarily a return to where and how they were before, or a restoration of all that they previously had. God is doing a new thing in their lives. They return the way they came as new people, with new faith, a new experience of Jesus, with new things before them, a refreshed and refreshingly new calling to follow Jesus – a calling that could now take them anywhere.

Questions to Consider

How has Jesus taken you in a new direction? How has his renewed call to you opened up previously impossible avenues in your life?

Prayer

Lord God, you are the God of the impossible. Help me see the times of darkness and desolation and uncertainty as times of opportunity for you to work in me and in my life. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Conclude with Silence (2 minutes)

Day 5 – The Tale of a Transformed Life

Silence, Stillness and Centering before God (2 minutes)

Scripture Reading – Luke 24:35

“If the Emmaus Road story tells us anything, it tells us that our own transformation in Christ’s presence is what prepares us to have any kind of good news to share with others. In fact, evangelism is an invitation to spiritual transformation offered by someone who can bear witness to that transformation in their own life. When this kind of life-sharing bubbles up from our own experience, we don’t need a pamphlet or a tract or special training; evangelism becomes simply telling what has happened to us on the road and how Jesus has been making the ordinary extraordinary through his presence in our lives. When we share the story of how we have encountered Christ in a transforming way on our own road between the now and the not yet, evangelism becomes so much more than selling an insurance policy regarding life in the hereafter. It becomes an invitation to the kind of deep and lasting change we are all longing for. We are inviting others into the fellowship of burning hearts, where Jesus’ transforming presence starts to make sense of everything.

As Dallas Willard states, when the identified people of Christ reach a certain level of growth and don’t go on, they limit their evangelistic potential. Why? *Because the witness of the identified people of Christ to the reality of God in their own lives is weak and becomes a testimony to the contrary.* To have earthshaking evangelism, you have to have a different quality of persons, and that is what spiritual formation is all about.”

(Ruth Haley Barton, *Life Together in Christ*, pp.153-4.)

Question to Consider

What is the story of transformation that you have to tell others about?

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank you for transforming me and my life into a good of your hands, and a sign of your love to me and others. Amen.

Conclude with Silence (2 minutes)

Saturday/Sunday Notes



*“Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us
on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”*

-LUKE 24:32

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