

# SERMON NOTES Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2023

## sunnysidechurch

Theme: **The Road to Emmaus**

Passages: **Luke 24:13-35, Acts 2:14a and 36-41**

**Some of the main themes from the sermon referring to the great Easter hymn 'Thine be the glory, risen, conquering son'.**

### **Lo! Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb**

I love this story. I love the way it makes me feel. I love the transformation in Cleopas and his companion (probably his wife, Mary). I love the way they don't recognise Jesus at first and then they do. I love the way their simple act of hospitality leads to a revelation that enriches their life beyond measure. I love the way Jesus blessing the bread for their simple meal opens their eyes to the fact that it really is him, risen from the tomb.

### **Lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom**

Cleopas and Mary were sad and lost and angry. They had had such high hopes of Jesus. Their hopes had died with him on Good Friday (v19-21). They had heard the rumours that Jesus might be alive (v22-24) but it made no sense to them. Why should it? It was completely beyond their experience and expectation. Like all devout Jews, they were expecting a general resurrection of the dead at the end of time but nothing like what they were about to discover.

### **Bring us safe through Jordan**

Jesus explains on the road to Emmaus, how things had to unfold the way they did. His crucifixion was not the defeat that Cleopas thought it was (v21) but God's chosen way of redeeming his people. A new exodus, even more far-reaching and potent than the release of God's people from Egypt and into the promised land, all those centuries ago.

### **For our Lord now liveth, death has lost its sting**

The real enemy, more pervasive than the Egyptians in BC 4000 or the Romans in AD 30 was death, the result of human disobedience to God and the tool of all oppressive dictators. Jesus' resurrection demonstrated that death was not, in fact, the end. Jesus' death was the gateway to new, resurrection life for him and for his followers.

### **Endless is the victory, thou o'er death hast won**

As Jesus blesses and breaks the bread at the simple supper he shared with Cleopas and his companion, they suddenly realise that it is him (v30-32). Maybe

they remember other meals when he did the same. The feeding of the 5000 and the 4000 perhaps, where Jesus blessed the bread in the same way. It seems he had a characteristic way of giving thanks and sharing bread.

This meal also echoes back to other important meals and would have stirred the memory and emotions the disciples when Cleopas told the eleven (v 33-35). The Last Supper (Luke 22.7-23), the Passover meal, when the Jews celebrated their release from slavery in Egypt and the very first meal in the bible, when Adam and Eve ate the apple 'and their eyes were opened...'  
At last, the damage done by that first meal was being repaired, fully, completely and for everyone.

### **Our own Emmaus Roads**

Jesus met Cleopas and his companion, confused, lost, angry that their hopes had been dashed. He walked with them and showed them a bigger truth than they could imagine. He showed them that he was the answer to their deepest longings. He was there for them and in a simple, evocative meal, opened their eyes to God's love for them and His purpose for their lives. Jesus meets us too on our way.

### ***Some questions for thought and discussion this week:***

- 1. Read Luke 24.13-27 slowly with pauses after each paragraph. Imagine yourself on the road to Emmaus. What questions would you ask Jesus as you walked?*
- 2. Read Luke 24.28-35, again, slowly. Were you pleased to invite the stranger to join you (v28-29) or did you just want to be hospitable?*
- 3. How was it that the penny dropped and you realised that it really was Jesus that you were with?*
- 4. Talk about times in your life when you have needed Jesus to walk with you? How has his presence helped?*
- 5. How important is mystery in your own walk with Jesus?*
- 6. In what ways does Holy Communion help you in your faith?*