

[Jesus Is Really Our Best Friend](#)

April 14, 2021

By Rev Canon Nigel Graham



Read Luke 24:13-35

A few years ago, when I was on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, we visited Emmaus. A couple of nights earlier, I had mentioned to another member of the group over dinner how much I was looking forward to this as I had always treasured the story of what happened on the first Easter Day on the road there. Somehow the leader of our group, a delightful Roman Catholic priest, heard and the following day very graciously invited me to lead the service in the chapel at Emmaus. You can imagine what a thrill it was to stand at the altar and lead this group of Christians in Holy Communion in that special place.

The story tells what happened to two people in the late afternoon on one of the strangest days either of them could remember. As they set out from Jerusalem that Sunday to go back to Emmaus, they walked silently, each lost in his thoughts. They hardly noticed this stranger catch them up and walk alongside. He caught sight of their sad faces and kindly asked why the long faces. They couldn't believe their ears. Was it possible for anyone to have been in the city and not to have known what was going on? If nothing else, the gossip groups had been talking about it non-stop.

Of course, not everyone knew the last little bit which made the whole thing even more difficult to understand. In the morning, some women had told them an astonishing tale. Then the stranger began to talk to them. Gently he explained the recent events and led them through parts of the Old Testament they

recognised. It was all bound to happen. The miles flew past and in no time, they were in Emmaus. Hospitality demanded that they didn't let the stranger go on as it was getting late. So, he came to join them for the night.

Except that the meal turned out to be even more curious than anything that had gone before. The stranger took bread and they realised that he was Jesus and, before long, he vanished, and they were rushing back to Jerusalem with the most amazing news that they simply had to share with the others.

It's a lovely story, in fact my favourite of all the Bible stories. There is so much to say about it, but I just want to focus on one of the most wonderful parts. When they reached Emmaus, Jesus didn't seek to impose. He waited to be invited. He had shared their walk, was that where it stopped? Had he done what was needed? He had given them encouragement and insight. Was that enough? Would they now say farewell?

He is invited in and he enters. Then follows a wonderful moment. It's not just the discovery of the facts of his death and resurrection. It's not about finding that they were right or that the facts were proved. It's the discovery that they now have a friend, a real friend for life. When they went back to their friends in Jerusalem, they had already met him and knew him. What was even more amazing was that their news matched what the others also had found. They all knew that Jesus was alive and was going to be with them for ever. As their lives would unfold, he would be a constant companion. They were finding what we know too for ourselves. It's not just an event in history to look back to and enjoy the story. It's a living person who is with us today.

As the old song puts it,

*"You ask me how I know He lives,
He lives within my heart."*

He is with us. He will be there in those times of sadness and anxiety and he will help us through them. He will encourage and he will support. And he will be so much more. He will be with us not only in times of sadness but also of joy. He will be with us in busy times and in quiet times. He will be with us when life is exciting, and he will be with us when it's dull. He will even be there in those moments when perhaps we might wish him to take an hour off, when we're angry or jealous or not very pleasant people. He's there with us wherever we go, and he will always be. It's what has resulted from the Easter story. It's about a Jesus who is alive with us in every part of our lives. It's what he promised and what we can find for ourselves.

The Lord go with you whatever you are doing.

(Photo by [Raimond Klavins](#) on [Unsplash](#))
