

[Plodding Along With Jesus](#)

May 3, 2020

By Rev Paul Graham

Read Luke 24:13-35



Our reading this morning takes us back to Easter Sunday, late in the day, when people are completing their daily tasks and looking towards the evening ahead. We join our travellers as they make their way home after a momentous day. How much of it they've been able to absorb, we don't know; we are eavesdroppers on context if not content.

On the way they become aware that they are not alone; a mysterious stranger walks alongside them. They quickly ascertain that the events concerning their little band hasn't resonated as far as they had anticipated, as their companion seems ignorant of all that has been dominating their previous few days.

Perhaps unwilling to revisit the gory events of Friday, they sketch the journey that they've made from the bleak valley of grief to the fog-shrouded mountain top of resurrected life; so many questions and so few answers even with the evidence of their own eyes. It's hardly a surprise that when they find this stranger a willing listener that they pour out their confusion. And as he talks to them, the clouds of uncertainty begin to thin out. They begin to understand that their story is a part of a much broader narrative, like a section of a jigsaw puzzle that seems complete but has to find its place in the bigger picture to make sense.

When they arrive at home, they implore their new friend to join them, interrupting his journey as they complete their own. They go inside to investigate the contents of their larder and scrape enough together to make a scratch meal. It is only when the bread is broken that enlightenment comes; this is Jesus who walked with them.

We could spend too long speculating about what it was that finally convinced them that it was their risen Lord who had been with them on the road. Was it the scarred hands that gave them the bread? Or was it the remembrance that the last time they had broken bread their hearts had also been broken? Broken, but now healed.

But put to one side the end of the story and return with me to the road.

We are also travelling on a road. For us, the road is marked with isolation and fear; concern for others as well as ourselves. We may be travelling in sunshine, but the world around us feels gloomy and there's the threat of a storm in the air.

We may be used to travelling at a thousand miles an hour, trying to achieve everything, meet everyone and be everything that we can possibly be. We may now be limited in our movement to our homes, our gardens (if we're lucky enough to have one) and our daily exercise (as long as we're sensible). For many, our pace of life has slowed so much that it feels like a snail could outpace us.

There is an imbalance to this; for many the pace of life has slowed to such an extent that we really can watch the grass grow, whereas for others their lives have become far more complicated, or stressful, or just downright dangerous. They might not be the majority, but their journeys are arduous for different reasons, possibly more so than those who lose track of which day it is today (it's Sunday, by the way).

Something else is significant about this reading. Just like those two on the road to Emmaus, we're also on the road in the company of Jesus. Today, most of us are plodding along with Jesus. We might be used to a faster pace, or more diverse company, or a more interesting destination than the sofa, but still we're plodding along with Jesus. It's not the speed that matters, it's the company we're keeping.

But here's the interesting part - we also might not recognise him. Our eyes may see but not spot him as he ministers to us, brings light into our darkness and offers hope in the midst of our hopelessness. Jesus is with us through his Holy Spirit and through those who are supporting us.

And as much as Christ is shown to us by the love we receive, so we also share Christ with others. We might not realise that when we pick up the phone and call someone to ask after their health and well-being, we're playing the Jesus role. We join with others on their journey and bring something of the Good News of Jesus Christ to them. We can show and be shown that his love is eternal and this crisis (like all things on earth) will one day come to an end. We can love our neighbour and allow our neighbour to love us.

The words below attributed to St Patrick resonate so clearly at this time as both a prayer of hope and of reality. You may know the first few lines, but the last part offers something to us today, in many ways, much more than ever before:

St Patrick's Breastplate

*Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me.
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,*

*Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.*

As we plod through this crisis with Jesus, keep looking out for signs of his presence, wherever he may be found.

Amen.

(Photo by [Tegan Mierle](#) on [Unsplash](#))