

A MEETING ON THE ROAD

What was it like for Jesus's friends when he died? As we hear the stories of Holy Week we know how they're going to end; but, obviously, for the people who were living them seeing Jesus arrested and then killed on the cross must have been devastating! They had just come to realize fully that Jesus was God's special person, the Messiah, and now he was dead... did that mean that God's plan for the world had failed? What could they even think about God now? Some of them stayed in Jerusalem to try and figure out what to do next, but for others the only thing that made sense was to leave—to return to their old lives.

So Sunday morning saw two of Jesus's friends on the road from Jerusalem to the town of Emmaus, where they were from. It was a walk of a few hours, so as they went along they had plenty of time to talk about everything they'd been through in the last week. After a little while a man caught up to them and, after walking alongside them for a few minutes, asked them what they were talking about so seriously. They stopped, and looked at him in amazement. "Where have you been, that you don't know what just happened in Jerusalem?!" they asked. "You must be the only person who hasn't heard the news."

"What news? What's happened?" the man asked.

So they told him about Jesus. "He did amazing miracles and was a great teacher," they explained, before describing how the religious leaders had arrested Jesus and the Romans had killed him. "We had hoped he was the Messiah, sent by God to save Israel," they went on. "And now we don't know what to do."

"Come on, guys!" the man said to them. "Is it really that hard to believe what the Bible says?! Doesn't the Bible explain that the Messiah will have to suffer before he comes into Glory?" And, as they walked along together, the man explained to them how the whole Bible pointed to Jesus and God's plan for saving the world through him. They listened to him all the way to Emmaus.

When they got there it was close to dinner time, so they invited the man to stay with them at their house overnight, and share a meal with them. He agreed, and when the table was set he offered to say the blessing for the bread. Then he tore some pieces off the loaf and gave them to the two of them—and all of a sudden they were able to see that the man they had been talking to for the last two hours was Jesus! Then, as soon as they knew him, he disappeared.

"How did we not know?!" they asked each other, and one said, "I thought I felt something amazing as he talked to us on the road!" And they left the dinner table and headed right back along the road back to Jerusalem. They found the friends they had left that afternoon, and told them everything that had happened. "Jesus is alive!" they said.

"We know!" someone answered. "Peter saw him this morning!" And just as they were talking about it, Jesus was suddenly there in the room with them.

Wondering Questions

I wonder why Jesus's friends didn't recognize him as they walked along?

I wonder what it was like for Jesus to hear them tell his own story?

I wonder why, when Jesus broke the bread for them, they suddenly recognized him?