

Dear Friends,

LUKE 24: 36-53

A few weeks ago, we looked at the story of the two friends who met the risen Jesus on the road to Emmaus. That ended with Jesus revealing himself to them as he broke the bread. As soon as they recognised him, he vanished from their sight. They rushed back to Jerusalem where everyone was buzzing and saying "The Lord has risen". That's where our passage for this week picks up the story.

Jesus appears amongst his friends and says, "Peace be with you". They are terrified. They think it's a ghost. One moment they are celebrating the good news that Jesus is risen, then he actually appears and their hearts are filled with doubts. Sometimes you can believe that something is true or you can recognise that it can be real for other people, but you can't quite accept that it can actually be real and true for you.

Jesus says "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?" He shows them his hands and feet where presumably they can still see the wounds from crucifixion. He points out that he has flesh and bones. He eats fish. He is giving them the evidence that he's not just a ghost. He is however not like he was and not like we are. He has this disconcerting ability to suddenly appear and then just as suddenly vanish. What matters is that it really is Jesus. He says, "See that it is I myself". The one who died is risen again.

On the road to Emmaus the friends went from having slow hearts to having warm, burning hearts; from closed eyes to open eyes. In this story it's their minds that are opened as Jesus teaches them and they come to understand the scriptures. He sends them out with a message of repentance and forgiveness that is to be shared with all the nations. And he promises that they will be clothed with power from on high. This power is the Holy Spirit who Luke tells us is given on the day of Pentecost. Luke writes about that in part two of his work which in the Bible is called The Acts of the Apostles.

His gospel is nearly finished. All that remains is for Jesus to be carried up into heaven. We will look at that on Thursday.

God bless you,

Tony