

Pastors Corner April

“On that same day, two disciples were traveling to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking to each other about everything that had happened. While they were discussing these things, Jesus himself arrived and joined them on their journey. They were prevented from recognizing him.” Luke 24:13-16

The Emmaus Road experience is one of the most provocative scriptures we have to study, ponder and eventually have to deal with in our spiritual journey. It provides us with several motifs to dig deep into. For me, the more I read it and meditate on its depth, it becomes a perpetual learning journey. I will try to just scratch the surface of a few of the points that have had significance on my journey.

Instruction: When Jesus mysteriously appears at the side of our distraught travelers, and learns of the reason for their downcast attitudes, he doesn't berate them or belittle them, well just a little, he does something entirely unexpected. Jesus reaches deep into the scriptures and instructs them on the benefits of staying in devotion to God by meditating on the Holy Word of God. As Pauls will one day instruct Timothy they are reminded there is much to lift us up and learn by keeping focused on the Word of God. It doesn't hurt that the living Word of God is their companion. We remember that Jesus walks with us too as we try to discern what the scriptures might impart to each of us every day. Gods Living Word, Scripture, may be one of the best traveling companions we can ever have.

Communion: Cleopas and his companion finally recognize Jesus in the breaking of the bread. The ultimate communion experience. Is this not what we come to the table week after week to receive. Symbolically we receive the physical bread and the liquid of the cup. Jesus instructs us to do this in remembrance of him. What we really receive is an opening to allow Gods Spirit to enter the chambers of our hearts. This is the very thing mystics call the thin place where a symbiotic relationship is manifest between us and Gods Spirit.

Fellowship-welcoming: In the time of Jesus it was expected you would invite a weary traveler into your home for food and rest. We might do this in our modern world if we spent enough time with someone to fully trust them. Our world is fraught with dangers. Most of what we would rather keep further away than up close. However, with caution, we deprive our selves and others of the gift of conversation with others. What have we been told? We might be entertaining angels.

I will end with a story I've told time and time again, but it's true and it's relevant to what I'm talking about here. It changed my life. What we seem to have lost is taking the time to talk to people we don't know who might even scare us a bit. So right now I'm talking about the endless labyrinth of homeless people we have begun to see more and more on the streets of our cities and towns.

When Ruth and I owned and rock and jewelry business in Quartzsite, AZ we had many transient folk who came to find refuge for the winter or to participate in the rock shows Quartzsite is famous for. Our business was right on the main loop. We met many wonderful people from all over the world and a few that were not so wonderful. Everyday was a world of wonder and caution. At the time of this story our shop was on an acre of land with double wide gates at each end to allow RVs the opportunity to pull through when they stopped in. Each morning I would start at one end, unlock and swing wide a set of gates. Then I would walk to the other side and repeat the procedure. Now we were open for business. During one winter during the peak season a strange activity occurred. One of the more colorful characters was a woman who would walk up and down the street by our shop muttering to herself and punctuating her conversation with unintelligible shouts. She was giving a wide birth by most folks who were also walking down the street. Not only was her conversation somewhat strange she wore a full length mink coat no matter if it was a cold or a hot day. Her disheveled hair and wild eyed appearance kept most people at a considerable distance.

Then one day an unusual thing began to happen. Ever morning at the exact time I went out to open up my shop, there she would be, standing by the first gate I always opened. I began to timidly walk kind of side ways out to the gate with my hat pulled low as if I didn't see her. As she muttered and mumbled and shouted I would walk, with great haste, get that gate open and practically run to the other side to open the other gate. Mission accomplished. I felt pretty good of my self that I had once again escaped having to recognize she even existed.

One day as I began my crablike walk to get to the gate with our her noticing me the Holy Spirit spoke to my inner ear with a very loud proclamation that I needed to stop acting like a jerk and go up and talk to this lady. Very much like Moses I argued with God that God must be talking to someone else and I just intercepted the wavelength. No! Gods Spirit was persistent and this was something I had to do. So trying to stand a little more erect I opened the gate and walked right up to her and asked her how her day was going. To my amazement she turned to me, looked me in the eye, and told me she was doing fine, and what a beautiful day it was. So for a few minutes that strange morning we had a wonderful conversation of pleasantries and small talk. It was all very coherent and in the most pleasant tones.

To make this long story short, I never saw her again.

You never know when you are entertaining angels.

Blessings and Peace to all, Pastor Bob