

## Introduction

- Who are you?
- When we first meet someone, we want to get to know them, discover something of who they are:
- How do you introduce yourself?
  - maybe you start with your name - which, unless you've changed it by deed poll, doesn't on the surface reveal much about who you are;
  - except that your surname may reveal something of your family background; I am Colin Brough - if you knew my parents, you might begin to guess something of the kind of upbringing that has helped shaped me
  - maybe you'd start with your family relationships - husband or wife, parent or child, aunt or uncle, niece or nephew, grandparent or grandchild;
  - they say a great deal about who we value, care for, spend time with, prioritise
  - likewise, our friends
  - maybe you'd include your work or studies - mainly revealing what we do, but perhaps also saying something about who we spend time with
  - perhaps we'd include our "allegiances" - to football clubs, to pop groups, to particular interests - and very often we personify those allegiances: so the Man Utd fan has a poster of David Beckham on their wall, the S-Club 7 fan a magazine article about Hannah Spearritt...
- Very often a large part of who we think of ourselves as being is tied up with our relationships with others.

## On the Road to Emmaus

- That was certainly true of the two that we meet in the passage we read together earlier:
  - as we meet them, the only introduction that we get is that "two of them" were on the road;
  - two of who?
  - if you trace back to 23:49, the group referred to as "them" in v.13 of our passage are those known to Jesus and who accompanied him; in other words, those who had a relationship with him; two of the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth.

### But they have a problem with their identity:

- Jesus has been executed!
- their conversation in v.21 gives us the clue: "we had hoped"
- their identity had become bound up with Jesus, and in particular with their hope that he might be the Messiah... and now that hope was as dead as the corpse that had been taken down off the Cross 48 hours before.
- their hope has turned to despair, their future is now empty, their very identity is destroyed.
- They are asking the question, "now who am I?"
- Luke, the master story-teller, allows us to watch "over their shoulders" as they discover afresh their identity
  - the way he narrates the story is beautiful;
  - he lets us in on the secret - Jesus is alive - though he "keeps" the secret from the two disciples;
- Jesus coming up on the the two, them not able to see who he is (a reminder that we can't force people to recognise Jesus without his illumination), conversation struck up, their astonishment that he hasn't seen or heard what has been happening in Jerusalem...
  - Jesus isn't simply stringing them along here - he is inviting them to think, to clarifying what they know by expressing it...
  - in v.19-24, their accurate - but critically limited - description of who Jesus is;
  - the fear that their hope for who Jesus was (Messiah) had exceeded the reality (prophet);
  - they had hoped for a redeemer, someone to save, but a corpse doesn't save;
  - and the news of the empty tomb, their puzzlement - the sense that an empty

tomb meant to them an empty tomb, nothing more (not what we hear, a risen Lord!)

- And so we come to the heart of the passage, as Jesus begins to show them what has really happened, to show them who he really is, begins to reshape their very identities!

## The Lord points us to the Scriptures

- First thing Jesus does is to turn these foolish disciples to the Scriptures
  - *(foolish - he is as astonished that they can't see the truth of the necessity of his suffering as they were that he apparently hadn't heard what had been happening in Jerusalem...)*
  - three times over, in verses 25 and 27, Jesus emphasises that the whole of Scripture's witness is necessary (ALL);
- Notice some of the things Jesus didn't do:
  - he didn't immediately reveal himself to them...
  - he didn't even take them back to some of his own teaching from his earthly ministry.
  - rather he, the Living Word, takes them back to the Word written
- Jesus says we need to establish our identity in what the Scriptures reveal:
  - for we are his disciples, those in relationship with him;
  - and it is in the Scriptures that we find who he is.

### And so:

- we will study it, preach from it, set our priorities by what it reveals.
- we will be careful to look at the whole witness of Scripture, not only our favourite bits
- The Lord points us to the Scriptures, and we will follow his direction

## The Lord points us to the Cross

- But what and who is it those Scriptures reveal?
  - critically here Jesus shows that they point to a Messiah who had to suffer
  - that was the step of comprehension these disciples were failing to make; they still had in their heads the Davidic King returned, the conqueror on the white horse, the liberator from earthly enslavement
  - it was not that their picture was wrong, just off-balance, like a ship listing to one side...
- And Jesus allows them to begin to see that the events of the last few days were the fulfilment of those prophecies of a suffering Messiah
- These disciples thought Jesus had failed, that he was not Israel's redeemer:
  - Jesus shows they were wrong - he is redeemer;
- However uncomfortable it may have been for these disciples to realise that their cherished way of viewing the world was wrong, that God would endure the shame of such suffering...
  - however hard that was for them, this is where the Scriptures, opened up for them, illumined for them by the Lord himself, this is where it took them.
- And so, for us too, Scripture can bring us to uncomfortable places:
  - forcing us to change the way we live or think or act.
  - revealing sin in us;
  - prompting us to take steps of faith;
  - deepening our understand of the Lord and all that he has done for us, in a way that shows up the shallowness of much of our normal living.
- Here, the Lord points to the Cross, to the suffering Messiah, to the "stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles"

- and so will we, point to the Cross, and to **all** that Scripture reveals

## The Lord points us to Himself

- Up to this point Jesus has shared information with these disciples:
  - he is their **teacher**, their Rabboni, once again;
- But there is more to this passage than an education for some disciples, even a reminder of the central place that the Scriptures have in the way we think and act.
  - **for there is here an invitation**;
  - its not the explicit "**Follow me**" of the Galilean lakeside;
  - but that same invitation is there:
    - **how will you respond to me? do you want to have me around? will you build your life around me, or not?**
- Jesus does not force himself on these disciples;
- and He does not force himself on us:
  - he gently draws us, all the while exposing himself again and again to the risk that we might reject him, whether outright or partial
  - he would have gone on had they not invited him in.
- And it is as they invite him in, as he is welcome at their table, in the heart of their lives, their **reality is finally transformed**, the culmination of the revelation they had received on the road, and Jesus allows himself to be recognised by them.
- Jesus is no longer for them **Jesus of Nazareth** - he is "**the Lord**" - and the risen Lord at that!
- And so it is the risen Lord, the suffering Messiah revealed in the Scriptures who invites a relationship
  - a relationship that desires to tell others
  - with the exuberant joy of the newly engaged!

## Conclusion

- So how were these two disciples able to answer the "**who am I?**" question?
- Who are they now?
  - they are no longer merely disciples of "**Jesus of Nazareth**, a prophet powerful in word and deed before God and all the people";
  - no, they are disciples of the **Risen Lord**, the promised Messiah, the Son of the Living God;
  - they are those whose **mourning** has been turned to **joy**;
  - they are those whose **despair** has been transformed into **hope**;
  - they are those whose **hearts burn** as the **Scriptures come alive** for them;
  - those whose joy is such that, towards evening, tired, apparently without even finishing their meal, with all the dangers of the road, they retrace their seven mile journey to Jerusalem so that they can **share the joyous news**:
    - **Jesus is alive!!**

### Who are you?

- Where do we root our identity?
  - whatever road lies ahead, who are you?
  - one who has let the Lord walk by?
  - or one whose life is rooted in a relationship with Jesus Christ, with the one who the Scriptures reveal, with the one who died for you?