

Called to Take the Road Again

(Sermon by Cheryl Williams, preached at Footscray Baptist on April 19th, 2026 – Luke 24:13-35)

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Cleopas and his mate or maybe wife, are trudging back home, despondent, deeply sad, going over and over the events of the last few years, but particularly the previous week, trying to make sense of a tragedy, hopes dashed, traumatised. Reliving it all again and again in their minds, grief stricken.

These two disciples have been to hell and back in the past week or so, they have lived the highs and lows of following Jesus, they have experienced the adulation of crowds but also a corrupt legal system and watched their friend die the most horrific of deaths.

We know this story, maybe it is our story. Maybe we are Cleopas' companion, maybe this story is a metaphor for us, for faith in the Risen Lord.

Making their way back home, sad, wondering, trying to make sense of it all and thinking about what they need to do next. These two meet the Risen Christ on the road. As events are discussed, meanings sought, scriptures searched and in the sharing of bread, they encounter the Risen Christ. As they discuss events and pour over the scriptures they begin to see events in a new light. They begin to re-member, they begin to put the pieces of the puzzle together.

They begin to remember as bread is broken and hospitality shared. As the penny starts to drop their sadness turns to joy, hearts are burning and then he is gone, as quickly as he appeared.

Notice what Jesus does in this encounter on the road. First, as he draws alongside them on the road the first thing he does is listen. He listens to their take on the events of the past week, he listens to them as they share how their hopes and dreams were shattered, he listens to their pain, disbelief and maybe even anger. He doesn't try and fix it; he just listens to them tell their story. Secondly, he joins them on their journey, walks with them, talks with them. Then he astounds them – having listened and walked and talked, he now speaks and cannot understand how or why they have misunderstood everything so badly. He then explores the scripture with them and helps them see all the past events in a new light, in a new way, with a greater clarity. He then accepts their offer of hospitality and as they break bread together, they continue to remember. Then he disappears as quickly as he had appeared, as if he was saying, 'well my work here is done'.

In the midst of their turmoil, they have encountered Christ.

And their response?

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Initially – how could we have missed it? Our hearts were moved as he helped us put everything into context and maybe put our hopes and dreams back on track.

More importantly, it changed them. They forgot about being back home, they take to the road again and go back to where they have come from, back toward danger, back to their friends, back to community where they all share their stories and new understandings, their experiences.

This is resurrection, hearts burning, the puzzle put together, hopes reignited and back on the road.

The Emmaus Story is our story both individually and as a community.

Encountering the risen lord in the journey of life, in the mist of pain, of broken hopes and dreams, as we share the word together and listen to each other, share in hospitality with one another, as we re-member the story, as we re-member the Lord's supper.

As it changed Cleopas and his companion, it will change us, lead us on, call us back to the road again to share it all with others.

This community's home is on Paisley St, but are we being called to take to the road again, to share what we have learnt and experienced of Christ in our midst. To share the joy, the love, the compassion of God, with those in our community in new and different ways. Maybe that is what the social housing project is offering us – a new way to share the love and hospitality of God. It will mean taking risks, we might even find ourselves heading back into danger, but like the two on the road we have no choice, this is resurrection life.

Since Easter we have been using the words – Christ is Risen, Risen Indeed, Risen for us and in us. Christ risen for us and in us will change us, it will lead us out onto the road to listen to the stories of others, to share their load, to offer clarity where we can and to share hospitality. In so doing, maybe those we are called to work with might just catch a glimpse of the Risen Christ in their midst.

'Resurrection matters most when it stops being about one body long ago and starts becoming a pattern we live today.'¹

'Seeing God means being ready to see him in unexpected people, places and ways. It means living with our eyes and our hearts open. Because wherever you are, there is your Emmaus.'²

¹ By Rev. Dr. Mark Sandlin

² By James Martin S.J.

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Let me conclude with some words from Archbishop Jeremy Greaves³

"The risen Christ is not encountered only in texts or ideas, but in relationship, in invitation, in the risky grace of making room for the stranger. Emmaus is always happening whenever strangers become guests, bread is broken, and hearts begin to burn again."

³ Archbishop Jeremy Greaves [#sundayiscoming](#) - my short reflection on the Gospel set for Sunday. Anglican Archbishop in Queensland.