



Sermon: Week 3 – Journeying: The Road to Emmaus

2 Corinthians 1:3-7; Luke 24:13-35

The word 'paraclesis' can be translated to **consolation**, the opposite of which is **disconsolation**, which has to do with loss, grief, sorrow, disappointment. What is shown in the journey on the road to Emmaus is how Jesus came alongside two disconsolate disciples to bring them consolation.

The first thing he did was to connect with their story. They'd just seen Jesus die on a cross and be buried in a tomb. They were trying to make sense of what had happened and were playing things over and over again in their minds. Jesus allowed them to talk out their inner monologue, by building rapport and with his quiet, calm, soothing presence. Even though he knew exactly what had happened, he asked them an open question: 'What are you discussing?' (*Luke 24:17*)

It takes time to let someone tell their story and unburden their heart. So Jesus didn't cut the disciples short but he listened to their story. Having taken time to understand, feel their pain and show respect, Jesus earned the right to speak. He started, not by giving them a solution to their troubles, but by helping them to

understand the reality of their circumstances, using something familiar to them: scripture declared by the prophets (*Luke 24:25*). This linked the disciples' story to Jesus' own story: God's story.

But still they didn't recognise Jesus. It was only when he took bread and broke it, that they realised it was Jesus there with them. And it's this realisation that they then wanted to take back, as a gift, to those other disconsolate people back in Jerusalem. Two disconsolate men were transformed by the power and presence of Jesus in the process of a journey. This is paracelsis in action.

Jesus is the centre of this story, just as he is in our stories. He has set us on a journey, just as the disciples were set on a journey back to Jerusalem, to come alongside others with the gift he's imparted to us. This gift might take on all sorts of guises: someone else giving encouragement; a bible verse or passage; a piece of art, or music; some practical help provided; an animal or a plant seen.

This is the model for journeying, Jesus style, and it's what Paul was talking about in his 2nd letter to the Corinthians: *'He consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God.'* (2 Cor. 1:4). This is what we're asked to do too. When God comes alongside, He always gives us something for us to use in coming alongside someone else on their journey. This is the gift of our life experiences.