

Jesus Among Us 4-30-00

I think we all look forward to seeing Jesus when we graduate from this earthly life. I've always wondered what it would be like to look into His eyes. The eyes are the windows of our souls, so to gaze into Jesus eyes of agape love would be an incomparable experience. Then to see the love scars, the marks that purchased our redemption, that will be overwhelming. And surely there is nothing wrong with the longing to see Him or to hear his voice clearly. How that would spur us on to gaze on the face of our Savior and see the wounds He suffered in our place. For our desire is toward Him.

But for now we have to content ourselves with faith, for if He was here the Comforter could not come. It is better for the Comforter to be in us than for us to gaze on Jesus physical being. Someday though, as the song says, "We shall see the King, someday!" But for now faith brings us a greater blessing, as Jesus said to Thomas, "more blessed are those who do not see, yet believe." We do not walk by sight, but by faith. The Lord knows the sight would interfere with our faith and so He graciously withholds the sight or audible voice until the right time. But that does not keep me from looking forward to that day!

The Spiritual visits of Jesus are more than sufficient substitutes for His physical presence. We should discern that presence in communion. There is a discerning of His presence as we share what the Lord is doing in our lives and speaking to us. There is nothing that the physical presence of Christ could give to our spirit that the spiritual presence does not give us. But to realize and experience that to the fullest we must exercise our faith in the actuality of Jesus in our midst. He said, "I am with you always."

As we read the story of the two on the road to Emmaus get the feel for what is happening here. You know Jesus had a lot more followers than the twelve. These two are on their way out of Jerusalem. Now they are walking away from the 11 remaining disciples and others, so I wonder if they are on their way back to whatever they did before they met Jesus. After all, He's dead! The last few days had seen their hopes and dreams dashed to pieces. Has that ever happened to you? Now let's listen in on the conversation – Lk 24 starting in verses 13 – 16.

Has that ever happened to you? I guarantee it has. You just didn't recognize Him. He was in your friend, your mate, even a stranger. Now don't think – oh you mean in their heart, like its not the same as what happened to these two men. He's as real and as powerful – as wise and as loving in a person yielded to Him as He was on that road. You are just kept from recognizing Him. Just like these guys – you can't see Him but He's there. The once dead, now alive forever, conqueror of Death and Hell, King of the universe, your Creator has walked and talked with you. But you usually know when the Lord was speaking to you through that friend. You just didn't take it as real as it is. Next time you get that check in the Spirit that the Lord just spoke to you through your friend or the Word as you read it – think about these two men and Jesus right beside them.

Verse 17-21 But we hoped... They hoped Jesus would redeem Israel in a physical way, but He did something a million times greater than that, He redeemed all who would come to Him by faith through out time. He conquered the up until then undefeated enemy of man throughout time – death. He ripped the prison bars of Hell right out of the wall and rapped that ol' Serpent the Devil upside the head with `em, and said, "These prisoners are free, bought and paid for with my blood. You can only have the ones that wont accept the gift of my atoning blood – THAT'S ALL you get PERIOD! Understand? And the defeated foe, angry as sin, but shaking in his socks – said "yes Lord of lords and King of kings."... "And we hoped He would redeem Israel" Now do you see how out of touch with reality these two downcast brothers are? They wanted so little and got so much. You know what? We are just like these guys.

How many times have you been disappointed and later the realized the Lord spared you from something that could have been horrible and gave you something much better later? Sometimes we don't see it, or don't pay attention but if you do – you'll see it all the time. He loves you so much He isn't going to give you what you are hoping for. He is going to give you something a million times better. They were hoping for physical freedom from the taxes of the Roman Empire and a restored king of the line of David. Instead Jesus gives them a seat with Him at the helm of the universe. Eph 2:6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus. Don't be disappointed when you don't get the physical things you were expecting. Look at the spiritual reality of what is really happening and that God has something much greater in mind for you. If He withholds your request, it is because He loves you and has something much better. Don't doubt his love because of some physical thing, whether illness or lack of material blessing, or even lack of apparent need. Sometimes through the darkest times – like Cleopas and friend were having – something wonderful is happening in the unseen realms.

You don't think that is as real as the physical – ha! It is forever and this stuff you can see is passing away. Your house will be old in 30 years, your car in five, your computer in one, and young people, your boyfriend or girlfriend maybe the old one next week. Don't get all wrapped up in the material world. A person's life isn't made up of what he has in the physical – but Who he knows in the spiritual. Lay up your treasures in heaven. How big is your heavenly treasure chest?

Don't you love the way Jesus runs to meet the downcast? He rises from death and first goes to crying Mary Magdalen, then to Simon Peter, then to these two and finally to the eleven all on the first day of his resurrection. He wants us to know as soon as we can handle it, that He has the victory! Death is conquered! Of all the above characters only Mary was looking for Him – and she was looking for a body. Still He seeks us out in our depressed state to tell us the good news. Is He any different today? If He would come to these who deserted Him, who would not believe his word, why would He ever hesitate to come to you who seek Him? Unworthy as we all

may be, if you are seeking Him, He will come to you. For He is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Lets go back to Cleopas and friend verses 22-24 Now wait a minute. Jesus already told them after He rose from the dead to meet him in Galilee. The women told them the angel said to meet Him in Galilee. These guys are going the wrong direction. How many clues do you guys need? Sometimes the Lord gives a bunch. We read it in the Bible, the HS gives us a check in the Spirit, and we head for Emmaus. But that has never been any of you. Right? Where are you going right now? I sure hope it is to Galilee and not to Emmaus.

Verses 25-27 OW! Rebuke time. Jesus says, Come on guys, aren't you in the Word. Why does it takes so much for you to believe? Look at that word "all" in verse 27. Did you know your whole Old Testament is about Jesus? He shows up in prophecy, He shows up physically, and He shows up in types and shadows. He is everywhere in the Old Testament. Pick an Old Testament character – and you'll find something about Christ. Why are we are so slow to see that everything is about Jesus? We shouldn't be surprised because it is Jesus that pleases the heart of the Father. It's Jesus that is summing up all things.

Verses 28- 31 Don't you desire to be with someone who knows the Word? When they show you in Scripture what is going on, it's so exciting and you just want to hang out with them and glean bits of insight. These guys were hungering and thirsting for the Word and they didn't want Jesus to leave, even though they did not know who He was, they knew He knew the Word. So they say, Don't go, have dinner with us, anything to keep Him around. Is that how you feel? Is that how you are toward the Holy Spirit, because He is the One who illuminates the Word. He can show you Jesus in ALL the Scriptures. Are you hanging with Him?

See what happened when He broke the bread? Oops, as He passed the bread they saw the nail holes. Suddenly their eyes are open. You know, sometimes we have to see the nail holes before we recognize Him. See those love scars made for you? Then you can recognize Him. We recognize Him in communion. When He passes the bread, our eyes are opened. The bread is his body that He gave for the life of the World. Christ in our brothers and sisters causes them to do the same and walk around as living sacrifices, giving up their own way, dying to their own desires so the resurrected Lord can use their body as broken bread to minister to a needy world. Are your eyes open yet? See their sacrifice? Now are your eyes opened? I would pray that we could see Him right now, that He would appear in our midst, but some of you are already looking upon Him. If He were to manifest his physical being, you would be distracted by it and not see Him so clearly.

Verse 32 –34 Let Him open the Scriptures to you. When you sit down to feed on the Word, pray for Him to open your understanding. As He does you will feel what these men felt. It's for today! Not just back then. It happens everyday all over the world. People sit down before the word and as He opens the Scriptures, their hearts burn within them. Open my eyes that I may behold wonderful things out of your Law.

Spurgeon wrote, "...when Jesus takes the Book, He looses the seven seals thereof and with His finger lights up every line, and bids you look, if you will, through the hole in His hand and read the promises in that fashion. Ah, how they glow and glisten! Then the Book talks with you, and you detect the voice to that of the Beloved Himself...The more light a man has directly from the Spirit in the word, and the more truly he gets into communion with the unseen Christ, the more does he delight in the truth as revealed to him in the pages of inspiration. May we know Christ's presence by that sign and token this morning."

Now - they are going the right way. Once you meet Him and He shows you the Word, you decide to obey what He already told you. They are headed back toward Galilee, back to serve the Master.

And what if, this morning, Jesus was to physically manifest himself? I won't say I wish He would for we have seen that it would distract us from the reality of His spiritual presence in the body. But if He did, I think some of us would tremble, most of us would be on our knees in awe, some of us on our faces on the floor. We would be having a preview of heaven and I'm not quite sure we could say anything, but just adore Him. But if you could speak what would you say to Him? Would you express your gratitude for what He did for you, and how He continually pours grace into your life? What overflowing love He should receive from us. How our hearts would melt at the sound of his voice.

HE IS HERE. Let that love pour from your heart right now. Express your gratitude to Him, adore Him right now, for HE IS HERE! Would you tell Him your burden and seek His gentle touch? Do it now. And when you go home you won't talk about a preacher, or sermon but about the Lord Jesus Himself and how He stood in our midst and spoke to us, and his voice was so beautiful.

His presence may cause you to think of your stewardship of the gifts that He has given you. You may think how you have taken so much but given so little and seek forgiveness and a great change in your way of life. You can do it now. He is here.

Some one would say if He stood here right now I would pledge myself in tireless commitment to His service. I would tell my neighbors and friends of his beauty and love. I would be His in life and death. HE IS HERE. Pledge yourself now.

One of the great gifts Jesus gave these two men was a realization of His person. They had no more doubts as to a risen living Savior. You have read about many people in history but you have not realized them as you do an acquaintance. The disciples realized the resurrected Lord, and you too, should you open yourself to the very real overshadowing of His presence, can realize His person. That gift will change the way you live, for it changes your understanding of reality. And then I would challenge you to continue to walk in that reality. To know He is with you, and in you in just as real a way, as you know He is in those times of revelation and clarity. For He said, "I am with you always."