

**SERMON: EASTER 3: GEOFF CHADWICK:
LUKE 24:13-35**

RECOGNITION ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

"Their eyes were kept from recognising him." Lk 24:16, NRSV

"Their eyes were opened and they recognised him." Lk 24:31, NRSV

These verses from Luke 24:16 and Luke 24:31 tell us something about the word *recognise*.

Recognise actually means to *know again* or to *see a second time*, To *re-cognize*.

The story on the road to Emmaus is one of those fascinating stories full of rich meanings.

We've got:

- blinded disciples
- enlightened disciples
- an appearing and disappearing Jesus
- a Bible study to end all Bible studies
- heartburn
- exhilaration
- and Eucharist

So which of these meetings should we dwell on today? Well I'm drawn to the word *recognising*.

In verse 16 *their eyes were kept from recognising* recognises a word we can easily gloss over.

In fact, seeing it we may not recognise the word *recognise*!

Recognise literally means to *know something again*. It's more than just saying *That looks familiar* or *I've seen that before*. It's about *re-cognition*. To know something again. To know something in the sense of apprehending it, of being captivated by it, of letting its meaning sink into your soul.

And so, here we have two travellers who fail to know the significance of the reason Jesus is in their midst. They have not apprehended what the appearance of this traveller means - the traveller who arrives in the midst of them. They have not yet allowed the risen Jesus to sink into their being. There is no *recognition* here- at least at the beginning of the story.

And so, the task of recognition begins.

Jesus must re-show himself to the travellers. They had been blinded-maybe by grief or disbelief- but an *eye-opening* activity is what the Lord must do. And being a good Anglican (which of course Jesus wasn't), Jesus uses the tools of word and sacrament.

Word

Beginning with Moses and all the prophets he *interpreted to them in the scriptures the things concerning himself*. (Lk24:27, NRSV)

This is no instant recognition. To know again is not always that simple. Old cherished ideas need re framing, new information has to be processed, and confusions need unravelling. In short, we must see the old in a new way.

We've all had that in our lives. Something that once never made sense becomes clear and obvious. And so start with the scriptures. In the light of the Risen Jesus we see them in a new way. We meet our old friends, but there's something new about them. This is *re-cognition* and as we *re-cognize* (know again) the scriptures, so they *recognise* us!

It's an interesting idea to imagine the scriptures meeting us a-new each time they come to us. I wonder what Luke's gospel said to you this morning when it met you again for the first time?

Sacrament

On the road to Emmaus the simple act of breaking bread is recognised in a moment of enlightenment. The travellers re-learn the meaning of the broken bread. Suddenly all those earthly meals with Jesus, the 5000 fed, that Last Supper, all those meals explode into new meaning!

Broken bread, a broken Christ, and a broken spirit give us food for the journey. When we see broken bread in a new way, when we *re-cognise* it, then we find the Risen Lord.

As with the scriptures, I invite you to imagine the broken bread coming to you. How might this bread be recognised as it comes to you. Would the bread say "I know you, but now I *know* you!

The disciples' journey starts with *non-recognition* and then travels towards *recognition*.

From no knowledge to reinvigorated knowledge. The journey however never ends. For just when we think we've got our knowledge of Jesus all sorted out, we are ripe for *re-cognising*.

Whether it's by word or sacrament, or the presence of a companion, we await those times of *spiritual heartburn* when we can say *Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road*.

I think we live in an age where Jesus needs to be recognised- that is to be *re-cognised*. To be rediscovered. To be known again.

When I was chaplain at the Grammar School I met many students who had some vague idea about Jesus. Yet for so many of them who came from non church families, their knowledge of Jesus was scared indeed. So one of my challenges at the school was to get them to recognise Jesus. To re-cognise him. To think about him again. To meet him again for the first time! To meet the man behind the sugar coated sweet Christmas cards.

I came to realise that the task was simpler than I first thought.

There are three tools:

- companionship
- word
- and sacrament

How fascinating it is that the Emmaus story models the way of recognition in a world where Jesus is not known or is misunderstood!

We are called to travel alongside the sojourners of life; to tell them the story of Jesus; and to offer the breaking of bread- the breaking of the bread of life!

This is a calling for all of us!

Re-cognition is our business!

The Lord be with you.