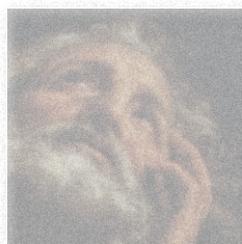


And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. And they were talking with each other about all these things which had taken place. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus Himself approached and began traveling with them. But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him. And He said to them, "What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?" And they stood still, looking sad. One of them, named Cleopas, answered and said to Him, "Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?" And He said to them, "What things?" And they said to Him, "The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to the sentence of death, and crucified Him. "But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened. "But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning, and did not find His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive. "Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said; but Him they did not see." And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.



"Were not our hearts burning...?"

IT IS THE LORD!

Day

after day we plod along, trying to work things out for ourselves, befuddled by events and frustrated by our inability to understand the mysteries of life. We are sometimes blind to the presence of Jesus, thinking we're doing things on our own when, really, He's been a part of it all along.

When we finally see that someone, or something, is there helping, we imagine that it's only our own wisdom masquerading as a stranger. Something deep inside us whispers that it is really the Lord, but we push aside the idea. It can't be Him; surely we can work out the smaller things for ourselves.

But the Lord says "What things?" So we do our best to explain, stumbling and tripping over our tongue, our reason swathed in thick cotton, like trying to explain the clarity of nocturnal imaginings with clouded memory, a sleep-masked brain, and a tongue formed from the bottom of an old shoe.

But He listens, kindly, until even *He* loses patience with our slow-headed obstinacy. And, good friend that He is, Jesus takes us to task: "You're being foolish! You should know this by now! How long will it take? Listen to me, let me explain again how it all works together..."

So we listen, but the dim bulb only begins to glow a little brighter, not yet to full wattage. Recognition comes, but slowly. The many layers of human reason cling stubbornly to us, loathe to give way to the light of the eternal.

After a while, though complete realization is still outside our grasp, we invite Him to stay. He's a pleasant enough chap, good company and, anyway, who knows—He just might contribute something to the after-dinner conversation.

So the table is spread, dinner is served. We take our places around the table and, because we're polite, we invite the wise stranger to say grace. As He lifts His gaze heavenward and gives thanks for the bread, the bulb finally comes to full glow: *It is the Lord!*

It was Him all along! It was Jesus listening to our frustration, our confusion and misgivings; it was Jesus patiently explaining what we now see was the truth; it was Jesus who walked beside us, shared our weepings and our joy, who took hold of our hand, who picked us up when we fell. It was Him all along!

The Personal Touch

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.

1 Corinthians 15:3-8

Modern technology is a wonderful thing. A satellite can be launched and positioned in a geosynchronous orbit (always over the same global location) 23,000 miles above the earth. This satellite receives digital data from a location in the United States, then sends back that digital data over the entire country. I can mount an eighteen-inch metal dish on the roof of my house that will receive that data, and in my living room I can then view a television picture that has traveled more than 46,000 miles, yet is sharper than the signal I receive by antenna from a city only 30 miles away.

We have satellites up there that use optics so sophisticated they can photograph any spot on earth, revealing objects as small as a person. Intelligence groups can conduct covert operations in the dead of night, from the opposite side of the world, and watch the whole thing take place in real time from the image sent to them by a satellite orbiting thousands of miles in space. Modern technology is certainly a marvelous thing.

It is also quite ancient.

God has been using it since the beginning of time.

From the infinity of heaven, the Son of God painted all of creation into existence. Galaxies and nebulas, stars and planets, orbiting moons and rocky satellites—all were breathed into place by the all-powerful, utterly holy God. By simple will, this great God created man and woman, then caused them to multiply. As mankind spread across the globe, the Godhead manipulated whole nations of people, as if they were figures on a chessboard.

Yet this same God—too utterly pure for humans to bear His presence—has many times stooped to personally deal with individuals in their moment of need.

When the long-patient Abraham needed encouragement regarding God's promise of a son, the pre-incarnate Son visited him in person at the oaks of Mamre.

When Sarah's Egyptian servant, Hagar, was driven into the wilderness by her mistress, the angel of the Lord came to her in her distress.

When Lot and his family needed rescue from Sodom, the Lord sent two angels to physically lead them out by the hand.

And when every individual in the world needed salvation, the Lord God sent His Son in the person of Jesus, to be sacrificed upon a cross.

Man cannot create a lens that will read the condition of a human heart from the infinite height of heaven. But God performs this feat countless times every day. He is a God of the heart, a personal God. He cares about every individual under His care—just as Jesus cared about the bruised hearts of His friend Peter, and the two followers who met Him on the road to Emmaus.



And they approached the village where they were going, and He acted as though He were going farther. But they urged Him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is getting toward evening, and the day is now nearly over." So He went in to stay with them. When He had reclined at the table with them, He took the bread and blessed it, and breaking it, He began giving it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight. They said to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?"

Luke 24:13-32

Faith is not the holding of correct doctrines, but personal fellowship with the Living God... What is offered to man's apprehension in any specific revelation is not truth concerning God, but the Living God Himself.

William Temple