

Jesus has risen!!!

As we read the Gospels, to be quite frank, the disciples, — at times they come across as being ‘quite daft’. They just don’t seem to get it. And even in today’s reading, Jesus said “**O foolish ones, and slow of heart...**”

But it appears there’s **2** reasons why everyone (including Jesus' disciples) misunderstood what Jesus was about.

1. The first reason is because “It is natural, to always look for the Grand Finale”.

And all of the hopes and dreams and expectations, were for the Grand Finale to happen when Jesus entered into Jerusalem. (we talked about that on Palm Sunday)

2. And the **2nd** reason that they didn’t ‘get it’, is because, for God’s purposes to be fulfilled, He hid it from their eyes.

There was a super-natural blinkering going on – they just couldn’t see it.

And so when Jesus rose from the dead, He had to undo all this – He had to get His disciples to understand what had happened. I mean, if the disciples didn’t understand the crucifixion and the resurrection, then what hope would we have, of the Gospel ever being preached.

And so He turned the disciples thoughts back to the Old Testament prophecies. He opened their eyes to what the:

- Book of the Law said about Him;
- Psalms; and
- Prophets

and He explained it all.

And so, when He came up beside those disciples on the way to Emmaus,

²⁵ And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!
²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

And to the Disciples back in Jerusalem, when Jesus appeared to them, the **first** He had to do, was to prove to them that He truly **was** alive – that His body had **indeed** risen.

And His resurrection body was similar, but different.

- He had substance to Him.
- He wasn't merely an apparition (an image or a ghost or whatever); and
- He still had the **wounds** of the crucifixion, but He wasn't dead.
- He could eat food, without it dropping through Him onto the ground.

But it wasn't a normal physical body either.

- He could appear and disappear.
- He could pass through locked doors.

His resurrected body had substance, but it was different.

But the main thing is, He was truly alive.

And after He had proved that He had truly risen:

⁴⁴ Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, ⁴⁶ and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, ⁴⁷ and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

Jesus had to suffer all these things, for His glory to come. It was prophesied: e.g.

- didn't the Prophet Isaiah talk about the suffering servant, who was cut off from the land of the livingⁱ? JESUS
- didn't he talk about how the Lord laid on Him, the iniquity of us allⁱⁱ. JESUS
- didn't Isaiah also go on to speak of the resurrection when he said that this Suffering Servant, even after He's died,

will go on to see the salvation that His death achievedⁱⁱⁱ??? (Dead people don't see stuff)

Alright, that's just an example from **one** chapter of **one** Prophet.

And so Jesus opened their minds, to understand the Scripture. It had been there the whole time, but they had been spiritually blinkered – they couldn't see it, until Jesus opened their eyes...

He had to suffer and on the third day, rise again... Why???

Because that was the path to salvation. On the cross, Jesus the sinless one, became the suffering servant who took our sin/iniquities upon Himself. That's why He had to suffer and die.

But why did He need to rise again? To fulfill His mission, of course. The whole point, was for Jesus to be "Saviour" – for Him to reconcile filthy sinners (like you and me), to a Holy God – to reconcile us to Himself... – not to a dead god, but to the Almighty God who **lives/reigns**.

Through the cross, and through faith in the one who was crucified, our sins are put to death, and we are set free from sin. **And** through the **resurrection**, we have eternal life. Jesus was the first to be raised to eternal life, and those who repent and believe in His Name, will follow.

This is the Gospel we proclaim.

But for many, they still cannot see it – to them it remains hidden.

Just like before Jesus was raised, even the disciples were spiritually blinkered, many today, are blinkered in the same way. And in the case of the Disciples, it was God who took the initiative, to open their eyes, so that they could see.

And so, it seems to me, there are 2 barriers to faith at play here:

The **first** barrier is to not have heard

- To not be told
- To not have someone proclaim that it was necessary for Christ to suffer and die, and on the 3rd day, to rise; and
- To not have someone proclaim to us the need for “Repentance for the forgiveness of sins” in the Name of Jesus.

So, that’s the first barrier – to not hear the Good News.

The **second** barrier, is to be spiritually blinkered, so that no matter how much one hears the Good News, and no matter how much it’s explained to them, they just can’t see it...

And so, for those to whom we witness, we pray, “Lord, open their eyes, take their blinkers away – help them to see...”

And if **those** two barriers are removed, so that a person **does** hear the Gospel, and it's **not** hidden from them – they **do** see and they **do** understand – if those 2 barriers to faith are removed,,,,, the only thing that is left that causes a person to reject our Saviour, is “hardness of heart”...

And so, as Disciples of our Risen Lord Jesus Christ, we don't save anyone – we're not able to. But we:

- proclaim the Death and Resurrection of Jesus;
- proclaim the repentance for the forgiveness of sins, in His Name; and
- pray, that the Lord would open spiritual eyes, to see and know and understand the Gospel.

And we pray, “Lord, soften hearts of stone, that are continuing to reject you, that they would repent and believe in the Name of Jesus, and follow Him.

- Have you heard it?
 - that it was necessary for Christ to suffer and die;
 - that it was necessary for Christ to rise back to life;
- Have your spiritual eyes been opened, so that you understand the necessity of the death and resurrection of Jesus?; and
- Have you repented for the forgiveness of sins in the Name of Jesus?

If you have not, you are the person I most desire to talk with after the service. You are here for a reason. And I urge you, “Do not leave this place, until the resurrection of Jesus, is what defines your life.”

Happy Easter everyone. And may the life of the Risen Crucified One, be in us, as we proclaim Him to the Nations.

Amen.

ⁱ Isaiah 53:8

ⁱⁱ Isaiah 53:6

ⁱⁱⁱ Isaiah 53:10b