

Reading: Luke 24 v 13 -35

'Last week while I was trying to enjoy a manicure I watched in horror as the two women across from me talked on their phones the entire time they were getting their nails done. They employed head nods, eyebrow raises and finger pointing to instruct the manicurist on things like the length and polish choices. I really couldn't believe it.

I've had my nails done by the same 2 women for 10 years. I know their names (real Vietnamese names) their children's names and many of their stories.....when I finally made a comments about the women on their cell phones they both quickly averted their eyes. Finally in a whisper the manicurist said, 'they don't know. Most of them don't think of us as people.' **Brene Brown. Daring greatly (*read it*) People who see but do not see.**

It is the day of resurrection and these two walking disciples have had enough. They have been delighted to follow Jesus but he has been put to death. They waited to see what would happen. Now rumours are starting to spread that he is raised and that is the last straw. They leave the city. They are going back home to Emmaus.

The writer of Luke/Acts loves a road. It all starts with Mary and Joseph travelling to Bethlehem. The story of the Good Samaritan is on the road. It a road that leads the prodigal back home to the full loving embrace of his father. Jesus sets his face towards Jerusalem and travels that road. Then into Acts we have the story of Paul encountering the risen Jesus on the road to Damascus. 'There is something about travel that evokes Luke's literary and theological imagination. There is something about roads, the way roads bring us together, the way roads can pose a danger to us all, the way roads become a symbol of a faith on the move'. Eric Barreto

It's a strange time when the daily walk has become a thing. Like we were all dogs on leads. For some being able to walk for 10,000 steps would be a pipe dream. For others a pathetic shadow of their regular exercise. For some it is the escape clause from the flat. And for others it is part of how they are manging their mental health. What about you? What are you doing on your daily walks? What do you see? Who do you talk to? Or do you not take the walks because physically or psychologically it would be too risky. Who knew there would be so much talking about walking and walking etiquette as well?

On the walk to Emmaus two disciples walk with Jesus and do not recognise him. Literally they are 'held back' from recognising him. What stops them from seeing? We are not told whether it was psychological an affect of the trauma or the direct intervention of God. The horror of the last few days has sapped their energy. They stand looking sad. The word for sad could also be translated angry. Redeeming Israel could mean setting the nation free from the Romans but it could also mean fulfilling of much more far reaching hopes.

Anyway who cares! Its all lost now. They slump and continue walking.

Have you ever been too close to see? Loads of people have that experience. People who have suffered and as they reflect upon losing limbs or living with disability can say it has been the best of things in the way that those of us who have had no such experience find it hard to believe. What we see immediately is not what we see when we have a bit of distance. What we see of an experience from one angle is not what others see from theirs.

Annie Lennox 'when I was younger I wish I'd known that what often seemed to be 'the end of the world' often turned out to be a positive and transformative experience'

Back to the walkers. This unknown person who turns out to be a walking teacher joins them on the road. He takes their isolated beads of knowledge and strings them together. Puts the jigsaw into place. Piece by piece. Explaining each piece as he does so. He shows them the pattern they could not see. Their hearts burn within them as they listen to him. Their situation is transformed because of the way he deals with the knowledge but also because of their own generosity. They would not have had their eyes opened if they had not invited him in.

It's not the teaching that opens their eyes. The teaching means they invite him to stay. They walk together on the road Jesus expounds the scriptures- nope they still do not see. It is when he takes the bread and blesses it. The ordinary grace. He gives thanks and they see him. Blessing of bread at an ordinary meal table and they see. Eating with others is the most powerful of things. When you think of Jesus and the stories of his life do not meal tables stand out? The wedding feast at Cana. At the table when the woman came in to anoint him. The last Supper. The arguments about eating with sinners. The accusations that he was a glutton. Jesus took time to eat with people. For me it is one of the things that Kingston United Reformed Church has gained from the world church. The importance of taking time to eat with people. That is where relationships are built and truth that really matters is shared.

When you eat with people you slow down enough to see them. Too often we are interacting with people without seeing them. One of the things about this season that we hearing is the new delight isolating families are finding in eating together. People taking time to cook and share round the table. For some of course it just underlines their isolation. For others thought it is time to see people, time to talk and to listen to their stories.

When this is over whose stories will we give the time to? The medics. The bereaved. The survivors. Yes of course. But the others too. Someone was telling me about receiving a home delivery of food. In the early days and only half of it was there. Ho hum said this fit man. The delivery driver though told him about how he had delivered to someone else earlier who lived with disability. When only half their shopping was there they broke down because there was no way they could manage. How will the delivery man cope? He is not trained as a therapist. He is doing the job because he is physically strong and can drive. He will have a story to tell. And it will be the job of some to listen to him. In the process of listening well we will see him and we will see Jesus.

