

Dangerous Journey with a Glorious Message

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Preacher: Rob Nicholson

[0 : 0 0] As we come to the teaching there. But we'll just pray. Our Father in heaven almighty God.! Lord, would you open your word to us this morning.! So Mel and I spend most of our Sundays travelling around Scotland.

I think, well I wouldn't like to say how many miles we've clocked up. Well I will say how many miles we've clocked up. I clocked up 19,000 miles last year in my poor little car.

Much to my delight and much to Tommy's in the Gordon garage. His delight as well because he services my car. So it's been a while since I finished my studies at the Theological College in Dingwall.

And for me coming here is like a home match. Because I live just down the road. We had to drive for at least two and a half minutes to get here. Last week I was in Keese and Cannes Bay.

Which is about a two and a half, three hour drive up north. And I was working out my mileage yesterday. It was like a 94 miles there and 94 miles back. A week before that I was in Hopeman.

[1 : 4 1] And in a few weeks time I'll be back over in Aberdeenshire. But it's a joy to travel to differing congregations around the north of Scotland. And we're used to travelling in the car together.

You know to set what temperature you set your side of the car on to what side of the car that they want. You know because I like a cool car. I like it about 16, 17 degrees. Okay.

It's good. Mel likes it a bit warmer. And she has her seat warmer on. You know we know what to play on the radio or on the CD player or on your iPod or whatever.

You know we can argue about that there but it's now normally Radio 5. We can guess at who will fall asleep quicker. And has the neck pillow available to her in front of the car.

We know where the baby wipes are. We know where the tissues are. We know where the sweeties are. We're used to each other on a road trip.

[2 : 4 6] You know we know the roads pretty well around here. We know where we need to take comfort breaks. But I was reminded of a story recently.

Because familiarity can breed contempt, can't it? I did hear a particular story not so long ago on the radio. Where a gentleman only realised that his wife wasn't next to him in the car when he asked her to pass a mint.

He had left her at the motorway service station. So familiarity with each other can breed contempt. But I want to consider this account particularly this morning in Luke's Gospel.

Where we read of two travellers. They're not the superstars. They're not known names particularly in the Bible. You know we just get one person's name in this which is Cleopas.

About how they travel together. Some folks have conjectured it is a husband and a wife. Returning from Jerusalem. Returning from the big festival.

- [3 : 53] Well you can imagine. Imagine Inver Gordon getting ten times bigger. For a few days time. With the influx of people. Because that's what happened at Jerusalem at that particular time of the year.
- The Passover feast. The amount of people in the city would grow by ten times. Because of all the visitors flooding in. All the worshippers there. And of course people come.
- And then they have to go home. So last week we celebrated Easter. The resurrection of Jesus. The first appearances. Of Jesus.
- Risen from the grave. And we know that God. Had said that his holy one. In the scriptures wouldn't see corruption. He wouldn't rot down.
- He wouldn't decay. Jesus was dead. But now by the power of God. He is alive. And we read it.
- [4 : 53] And we say it. But does it impact us? Luke in his gospel sets out with a clear intention. To complete a narrative concerning Jesus.
- If you want to know that. Read the opening verses. It just sets out what Luke is all about. Luke is a physician. He's a doctor by profession. He's a Gentile believer.
- And Luke also wrote most of the New Testament. That we read. By word count. He wrote his gospel. And he wrote the book of Acts.
- You know he gives us a bird's eye view. Of the 30 or 40 years. Of the ministry of Jesus. And the early church. He is meticulous.
- He paints a forensic picture. Telling us what's going on at this time. He interviews people. He gathers the evidence. To support his case.
- [5 : 51] And that he does. In his epistles. And what does Luke tell us. In this particular passage. Well he tells us one thing.
- If you're after a title for this morning's message. I'll call it. A dangerous journey with a glorious message. A dangerous journey. A dangerous journey. A dangerous journey with a glorious message.
- Firstly location. Location. Location. These individuals were on the road. From Jerusalem. To a settlement.
- Called Emmaus. We don't know where it is. We don't know if it's north, south, east or west. We're told it's seven miles from Jerusalem. A good three. Maybe four hour walk. On bad roads.
- With perils. Associated with travelling along such roadways. Thieves and robbers. You travelled in a group. Because there was always safety in numbers.
- [6 : 56] But here. There were only two. But here. We're told there were only two. Soon to be three.
- As I said. We're only told one of their names. Which is Cleopas. And as I said. I personally.
- Would like to think that they're a married couple. Returning from the Passover feast. And their conversation isn't about passing.
- The Ironbrew pastor. Their conversation is far more intense than that. They're going over. What's been happening over the last few days. Concerning Jesus.
- And his execution. And the reports concerning his body. And the resurrection. And angels. We're not told how they know Jesus.
- [8 : 01] Whether they had seen him. The week before his ministry. Whether they had seen him. Engaged in public ministry. In the preceding years. Whether they had been. Eyewitnesses themselves.

Of his healing. And deliverances. But they were impacted. By his teachings. It appears that this.

These two had access. To Jesus. His inner circle. They certainly knew who they were. You know.

They actually detail. Like in verse 24. Some of those. Who went to the tomb. With us. Or some of those. Who were with us. Went to the tomb. And found it.

Just as the women had said. So there's a closeness. There's a connection. There's a connection. There's a connection. There with them. They too had heard.

[8 : 59] The testimony of angels. They'd been told. By the others. That there'd been. An angelic encounter. Now for a community. Of believers.

We would hope. That if you had known. That Jesus was risen. From the dead. That there would be. A rise in faith. Wouldn't we? So why were these folks.

Going the other way? Why were these folks. Going the other way? We would hope.

That there would be a rise. There'd be a coming together. There'd be a unity. There'd be an excitement. There'd be a yes. There'd be a joy.

Of knowing that Jesus was alive. That these folks. Were going. The other. Way. Don't you believe it?

[9 : 59] Can't you see it? Don't you know it for yourself. That Jesus is alive? The tomb is empty. So what?

They were homeward bound. Their world view. Wasn't yet altered. We can make all sorts of excuses for them.

But they had missed it. What does it mean? It means that their grief. And their disappointment. Had overwhelmed the testimony. Of those that had witnessed.

The resurrection. They were close to kingdom people. But not yet themselves. Kingdom people. It's like coming to church.

And not knowing the joy. And freedom. From sin. And shame. That Jesus gives us. And the joy of following God. And the fullness of the spirit.

[10 : 58] We too can find. In our own circumstances. Of life. That we've heard the gospel. We've heard the good news. Of Jesus. But it doesn't change us.

Or alter us. We can continue. In our day to day lives. And miss out on everything. That God has. Provided for us. In Jesus. And in a sense.

They went back. To their old lives. And their old disappointments. But importantly. For us this morning. Jesus himself.

Would walk with them. But they were kept. From recognising him. When they are questioned.

By Jesus. Their world view. Is exposed. What they believed. In verse 21. We read. But we had hoped. That he would be the one.

[12 : 00] To redeem. Israel. It was only a redemption. Of Israel. It wasn't. Redemption of the world.

It wasn't necessarily. Kingdom orientated. That's to say. It was a religious. Geopolitical. World view. The Romans. The Romans were in charge.

And we don't want. The Romans here. And for them. The hope was over. They couldn't see.

An alive leader. Despite the testimony. Of others. Their understanding. Of the crucifixion. Wasn't that it. What dealt with. An atonement. Of sin. Of being put right.

With God. That Jesus. Was God's lamb. Whose death. And whose blood. Shed for us. Cleanses us.

[12 : 58] And cleanses. Humanity. Or those. Who follow him. From their sin. And they describe.

Jesus. To Jesus. A man. Who was a mighty prophet. In deed. And word. Before God. And all the people.

Imagine that. You're telling Jesus. What he was like. But again. They didn't have. The full picture. Like many folks.

They don't know. The saving power. And grace. Of Jesus. For themselves. They only have. Part of the picture. It's like seeing things. In two dimensions.

Rather than three. They continue. The journey. In the dust. The life is fading. The temperature. Is dropping. And the stranger. Then asks them.

[13 : 55] About himself. And Jesus. Tells them. About himself. You see.

Cleopas. You've only got. Half the picture here. You're not seeing. The bigger picture. And a rebuke. Falls from his list.

From his lips. Oh you foolish one. How dull. Are you. Slow. Of heart. The CEV.

Translation. Renders those words. As why can't you. Understand. How can you be. So slow. To believe. All that the prophet. Said. Don't you know.

That the Messiah. Would have to suffer. Before he was given. His glory. Why don't you get it. Why don't you see it. Why don't you understand.

[14 : 52] Why don't you understand. Remember. Our cultural context. Our worldview. For the Jew. This morning. That Messiah was coming. The scriptures.

Were ingrained with it. You knew the scriptures. As a good Jew. Inward. Outward. And sideways. You could recite them.

They were taught to you. From. As soon as you were a baby. The songs. You would sing. That were your music book. You knew what the prophet said.

You knew what the psalm said. You knew the proverbs. And yet Jesus himself. Comes alongside them. And begins to unpack.

The scriptures. About himself. Starting with Moses. Saying these things about me.

[15 : 49] These things about me. Were written. Centuries ago. And now I'm fulfilling them. And now they are being fulfilled.

And it reminds us. That we need the word. And the spirit together. In our lives. To breathe life. Into this book. To bring things.

To our attention. To highlight things. To make things. Come alive to us. And Jesus is teaching. Kindle something.

Within Cleopas. And his companion. Nearing their ordinary home. Like a good Jew. They invite the stranger in. For a meal.

Though Jesus appears. To be wanting to go further. They press their invitation. Harder. Because they desired. The stranger to come in. They made space for him.

[16 : 49] Allowing him entry. Into their home. Into their dwelling. Almost as we will see. Into their hearts. Does Jesus need an invite.

Into your home. Into your situation. Is there a welcome. For him. Is there a space. For him. Are you pleading with him.

To come. And join you. Is he free. Is he free. To come to your table. This morning. As is the custom.

Normally the host. Would say. A blessing. At the meal. But Jesus. Takes the initiative. He picks up. That day's bread.

Probably brought. In Jerusalem. To be brought. Back with him. He lifts it up. Blesses it. And breaks it. And shares it.

[17 : 44] And the scripture tells us. And their eyes. Were opened. And they recognized him. And at that very moment. He vanished.

From their sight. This. Was. Jesus. The man. That they knew. Revelation.

Occurred. Eyes were indeed. Opened. There was a. A recognition. Straight away. There was a realisation. A reality. That Jesus. Was. Alive.

That it was. True. And then he vanishes. Before them. Just disappears. And you can imagine.

The scene there. The bread dish. Just laid on the table. Where Christ. Had put it down. The oil lamps. Probably flickering. In the darkened room.

[18 : 42] With the broken. Servings of bread. Ready to be it. Beside them. And then. And then.

Comes the explosion. The rise. Of faith. With eyes. Truly opened. With hearts. And minds. Bursting. With the knowledge.

That Jesus. Was. Alive. And this. Is a change. This is a radical. Transformation. And they say. They say to themselves. Did not our hearts.

Burn within us. While he talked to us. On the road. While he opened. The scriptures. To us. You know. We're in a world now. Where. The bible.

Is looked down upon. But we read. Testimony. After testimony. After testimony. Of folks. Who encounter Jesus. Through the word of God. And the Holy Spirit.

[19 : 39] Brings these words. To life. And this time. They're not leaving.

Jerusalem. With their disappointment. They're running back. To Jerusalem. With a glorious message. Knowing.

That Jesus. Has been raised. Verse 33 says. And they rose. At the same hour. And returned. To Jerusalem. The place.

Where their hopes. And expectations. Had seemingly. Being extinguished. A place. Where they had gone. From. Rather than. Remaining.

With the. Inner circle. Of Jesus. It becomes. Their focal point. Once again. Because they have. A new purpose. And they have. A new destination.

[20 : 35] Just like. The people of God. Need to have. And they were bringing. A glorious message. To the disciples. To start. Despite the disciples.

Still holding out. Because they were. Fearful. Of the authorities. They sought them out. They knew. Where to go. Despite.

Taking a trip. Most likely. At night. In the darkness. Going through the night. On a dangerous road. That they had come along. Before. Despite all the.

Circumstances. That would say. Stay at home. Stay safe. Stay in your comfort zone. Despite the trial. And the difficulties. These were left.

And these. These weren't considered. Because they had. A glorious message. They sought out. Those that needed.

[21 : 31] To hear the message. That Jesus. Jesus Christ. Has risen. And they too. Now were eye witnesses. Of it. They had had.

A scripture lesson. From Jesus himself. Explaining. What had happened. In his life. And in his ministry. So what do these words.

Mean for us today. In Invergordon. We have a glorious message. We have a glorious message. That Invergordon. Needs to hear.

That Jesus is alive. That he is. Who he says he is. That God's hatred of sin. Was dealt with.

On the cross of Jesus. Jesus took upon him. The wrath of God. He took our sin. Our shame. And our guilt. And placed it upon himself.

[22 : 30] He took the punishment. That was due for us. And he took our place. So we won't have to bear it. These words remind us.

That anyone. Can meet Jesus. Anyone. God is at work. In the community. And maybe we need to pray.

That we become more aware. Of his kingdom activities. Outside of these walls. These words tell us. That disappointments. And griefs. And sorrows.

Will come our way. And yet. Jesus Christ. Can reveal himself. To anyone. He is gracious. He is faithful.

It reminds us. That Jesus wants. To be in our normal lives. And wants to transform. Them into something more. It reminds us.

[23 : 28] That we are people. That we are people. On a mission. And despite the dangers. And discomforts. That we may face. The good news. Needs to be brought. To others. You don't need to be.

Anything special. You don't need to have a title. You just need to have a testimony. And the knowledge of Jesus. For yourself. To be prepared. For yourself. These words remind us.

That we need to be equipped. To serve each other. To love each other. And forgive each other. To go beyond ourselves. And look out for each other. That the other's needs.

May be more important. Than our own. These words remind us. That we need to go after Jesus. To pursue him. And his kingdom purposes. Leaving things behind.

We need to be. An invitational people. And a people. That despite the darkness. Outside. Are prepared to journey. To others.

[24 : 34] To tell them about the kingdom. Whatever the dangers. We too are to welcome strangers. And the outcasts. Just like Jesus did. We're here to help the sin sick. And those that need a loving. And a living saviour.

Not just a pile. Of good intentions. And lifeless words.

Remind us that Jesus is alive. And he is alive forevermore. Amen.