

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed 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 as the women had said; but they did not see him." Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?"

Luke 24: 17a

Easter afternoon while enjoying dinner with my family, a text message came in from my daughter.

**My friend Angie wants to know why you say "He is risen" instead of "he has risen?" We've discussed and now we need a professional's answer. Happy Easter by the way.**

After an extended discussion with Cindy, Tony, Don, Grammy and me . . . none of us agreed. But I think that using IS through faith, is a way of bringing Love's power of God into the present. Your father has a good sports analogy. Babe Ruth is and always will be the home run king. Happy Easter to you too.

**Your explanation is what I thought it was. I don't understand the babe Ruth analogy though. Is it because he was the king? Lol**

Ask Jeremy. What prompted the discussion?

**Angie was reading stuff on Facebook and people were saying "he is risen" so she was confused as to why it was in the present tense and not past.**

Regarding Babe Ruth. Other people have hit more home runs than Babe, but in the hearts of those who loved and revered him . . . he will always remain the king.

**Thanks for the explanation. Angie said sorry to take over your family dinner talk with answering her question.**

No problem. It enlivened our talk.

**I told her that's probably what it did.**

Our lively conversation during the breaking of our Easter bread was not unlike that between those men on the road to Emmaus (or to no where I like to say . . . because there was no such town). In her book, 'A Miracle a Day: Twenty Stories from Emmaus Homes,' Rev. Gail Reynolds wrote: 'Emmaus was the name of the town where two of Christ's discouraged and depressed disciples saw Christ risen. They had not recognized the stranger who walked with them part of the way out from

Jerusalem that first Easter day, but some gift of grace encouraged them to invite the stranger into the place where they intended to spend the night. "Stay with us," they suggested. And it was at dinner in Emmaus that Jesus turned the table and became the host: it was as Jesus did that now familiar act of thanking God for the bread and breaking it and sharing it that Cleopas and the other one had their eyes opened. After that, when they understood that he was risen from the dead, they "rose up" (according to the Greek text, literally had their own resurrection!) and raced back to Jerusalem to tell the others the great news. From the moment at the table when Christ was revealed to them, they understood that nothing is impossible with God, that all possibilities are wide open to all. God provides life even when every other power seems to deny it. God insists that development and learning and growth are possible even when all observations and assessments would seem to indicate that there is no hope for change or improvement. God says that all life is precious and possessed of abilities that are enhanceable even when others see only limitation, handicap, disability. . . . The mission of Emmaus Homes is 'to enhance the quality of life for people with mental retardation or other developmental disabilities through life experiences that enable growth and inclusion within each person's chosen communities. This mission arises from faith in Jesus Christ, who empowers all people to affirm and celebrate their worth and uniqueness'"(p. 1-2).

Elaine is one of the miracles who was energized by the Spirit of God moving within the Emmaus Jesus community. The following is part of her personal growth story. 'No one knew very much about Elaine, only that she was very quiet and kept to herself. She was always well mannered, always did what she was asked to do, and never made demands on the group home's staff. Consequently, little special attention was paid to her. One day another of the people living in that home suggested to Elaine that they might live together in a house that they could rent. To everyone's surprise Elaine agreed. A few months after the move, Elaine again surprised everyone by asking that a meeting be held of her care team. There was something she needed to talk about. When the group assembled, Elaine explained in a very soft voice and with multiple pauses that she really did not want to go to visit the people whom she usually visited at

Christmas time. With some encouragement she gradually went on to reveal that the people in question had always treated her with disdain, often yelled at her and called her names. "I don't want to be with them. They're not nice people," she said. For the first time in her life Elaine felt she could advocate for herself, say what she really felt, and live the kind of life she wanted without apology! A few weeks later, when involved in planning her activities for the coming year, Elaine was asked what she'd like to learn how to do. After a few moments of thought, she said firmly, "I think I need to continue to learn how to say 'no!'" This represents a profound breakthrough; God's liberating Spirit at work' (A Miracle A Day, p. 3).

Whenever I hear Ken Medema sing his Easter tune, 'Jumping with a Friend,' I think of Elaine and others who rise up to new life in Christ in surprising ways too. I wonder, as you listen to his words, can you sense some new life in Christ blooming in you?

1) I dream of flying yet I'm rooted to the ground. Can't let go of the baggage and the ways that bring me down. Now I raise my weary head and though the tear strained eyes, longing for the freedom of the skies. Now the invitation comes to me, this will be a moment to break free.

2) Look world I'm falling, like a rock down from the sky, no chute to save me now, now one to hear my cry. All my hopes and dreams are dashed and there's no place left to turn. Won't be long before I crash and burn. Now I hear the voice of certainty, I'm your safety, bind yourself to me.

3) It is Easter morning and I'm walking to the tomb, my feet are slow and heavy, as I'm struggling through the gloom. All at once I realize the mighty stone is gone. I look up to a brilliant cloudless dawn. Now I hear him gently say to me: "I rose up from the grave to set you free!"

Refrain: Take the leap, take the risk. Step right out of your safety zone, I am here and I promise, you will not make the jump alone. We are bound together now, all the way to journey's end, you'll be jumping in tandem with a friend.