

Lectionary readings: Acts 2: 14a, 36-41; Psalm 116: 1-4, 12-19; 1 Peter 1: 17-23; Luke 24: 13-35

For reflection and prayer

- **Acts 2:** *'Change your life. Turn to God ...'* (v38) *Get out of this sick and stupid culture.'* (v40 The Message) Three thousand people were added to the church in response to being touched by the Spirit through Peter's preaching. People changed direction and started a new life. Our culture is sick; this generation has gone astray. How we need to get alongside people and share a message of freedom, forgiveness, new life, hope. Let's open our hearts to God this week and let Him show us where we need to be changed, as individuals and as a church. For how can we share a message of mercy and forgiveness and love if we ourselves have not allowed that message to change us?
- **Psalm 116:** This is a psalm of praise to God for His goodness. *'I will offer to you the gift of gratitude and acknowledge Your loving Presence with joy In the holy Temple of my heart, in Your midst, O Beloved. Praise be to You, for You dwell in all receptive hearts.'* (v 17, 19 Psalms for Praying) Lord, give each one of us a receptive heart this week so that we open ourselves more and more to You who dwell within us.
- **1 Peter 1:** I was particularly struck by v18 in The Message: *'Your life is a journey you must travel with a deep consciousness of God.'* How well are we journeying, as individuals and as a church? How conscious are we of God every step of the way? How keen are we to keep in step with God as we journey on?

'Love one another as if your life depended on it.' (v22) *'Your new life is not like your old life.'* (v23) It's only as we realise the depth of God's extraordinary love for us that we can love one another deeply, for our new life of love comes from God dwelling within us. Let us open our hearts to God's love this week so that we let His love flow in and through us.

- **Luke 24:** This is my favourite resurrection story - the walk to Emmaus, the journey home for these two disciples. It is the story of our journey home too. So often we are deep in conversation with ourselves, the inner monologue continuing unabated, thoughts, ideas, images going round and round incessantly. In the midst of all this, day after day, Jesus is walking with us, but we are not aware of His presence, so engrossed are we in our own thoughts, doubts, fears, anxieties. Then we decide to share where we are and how we are with God and bring Him into our situation. And as we share our hopes, our fears, our disappointments, our confusion, our grief, light begins to dawn. We begin to see a purpose. We begin to see how God has been with us all along, and we feel His loving presence in our midst. As we invite Him to share our life, we realise the wonder of who He is. We find our hearts burning with love. We realise we are home - home with our Beloved - where we belong. This is good news we can't possibly keep to ourselves. The Lord is alive. He lives within us. Hallelujah!

A prayer

Jesus of the Emmaus Road, come as we walk the lonely path, and be our companion. Come when life mystifies and perplexes. Come into our disappointments and unease. Come at table where we share bread and hope, and coming, open our eyes to recognise You. Amen (Donald Hilton)