

Gathering Guide

for Communities and Friends

God is Stranger: Cleopas and the Stranger, July 14 2019

The Big Idea

It is possible for Jesus to be near and yet not recognized. We can be so self-absorbed, so self-confident in our theology and understanding of God and Scripture, so set in our ways that we are blind to the reality of Christ right in the midst of our current circumstances. When our guard is dropped, when our prejudices, snobbery, and indifference to the needs of others give way to radical hospitality we suddenly see Jesus! Revolutionary hospitality transforms both the giver and the receiver and ushers in the presence of Christ into a world desperately in need of a glimpse of

Where we are in the Bible

We come to the end of this series *God is Stranger* with the most important event in all of human history, the resurrection of Christ. For our purposes we will pick up the story later that day – after the shock of Jesus being alive begins to settle in. We see two followers of Jesus on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24:13-35 talking about the events of the past week and they are suddenly joined by a stranger whom we are told is Jesus himself only they do not recognize him.

Other scriptures to consider

Luke 15:11-32

(The feast to celebrate)

Luke 14:15-25

(The invitation to the feast)

Acts 2:42-47

(Fellowshipping and feasting)

Revelation 19:6-9

Finding a bit of ourselves

- When in your life have you experienced receiving unexpected and wonderful news? Did you have any problem believing the news? How did you feel? How do you think you felt compared to the feeling the disciples must have experienced upon hearing that Jesus was alive?
- These followers of Jesus did not recognize him even when he rebuked them and explained the Scriptures to them while they were on the road (Luke 24:15-27). Is it possible that we might be in situations and places where we do not recognize Jesus even today? How can you tell when Jesus shows up?
- In this story we see another example of hospitality offered and received as Jesus joins these two for a meal? How has your view of hospitality and welcoming of strangers been enhanced as a result of this series?

Where do we go from here?

- Things had not gone the way these two followers of Christ had expected. What are some of the dangers of expecting God to act and respond in a certain way? What occurs when your faith is based on how you think God should respond instead of just God Himself?
- Read Luke 24:32. The two travelers just experienced Godly heartburn. They finally realized that God was in control the whole time and they just needed to have faith. After looking back, in what life situation did you realize that God was in control of the whole time, even if you didn't believe it while everything was occurring?
- Everything changed once these followers of Jesus opened their home to the Lord and invited him in. When invited, Jesus will always stay. In what ways can we make this offer of radical hospitality to those around us so the reality of the presence of Jesus can be experienced by all?



Prayer focus

Our prayer for today is for better vision...

- To see Jesus for who he really is and not who we want him to be.
- To see in others the likeness of God and the value He places on those whom we might consider strangers..
- To see our own prejudices, snobbery and indifference to that blinds us to the needs of others or to our own capacity to offer hospitality.

