



**The Risen Christ
is one who
WALKS**

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Easter Reflections

The Risen Christ is one who WALKS

"That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What is this conversation which you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulerscrucified 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 this happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; Some of those who were with us went to the tomb, and found it just as the women had said; but him they did not see."

And he said to them, "O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"..... Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread....." Luke 24:13-49 (RSV)

**The foundation of the Christian faith is on the Risen Christ.
So a clear, profound re-discovery of the Risen Christ's words and deeds
is supremely important, rather unavoidable,
in our faith journey.**

The Risen Christ's walk on the road to Emmaus drawing himself near to 'the two followers' (TEV), is amazingly, and critically, important. Two clear, easily understandable facts may be pointed out to establish the critical significance of the Risen Christ's walk and his interactions with the two.

Two facts

First, Luke's narrative of Jesus' Resurrection and the post-Resurrection events, is limited to one chapter (24th

chapter of The Gospel According to Luke). It contains just 53 verses. The narrative of the walk and related events is given in 37 verses, from verse 13 to verse 49. So, almost three-fourths of the narrative, from the time of Jesus' Resurrection to his departure, is set apart for this. It, definitely, reveals its supreme importance.

Secondly, in all the narratives, on the Resurrection and Risen Christ's interactions with his followers, given by all the four Gospel writers, there is no

other occasion in which the Risen Lord enters into such a long and full engagement with any of his followers, “interpreting to them, in all the scriptures the things, beginning with Moses and all the prophets, the things concerning himself.” Lk 24:27.

These facts bring out the supreme importance of the walk and the interactions. Now, it should be pointed out that the supreme significance is not only due to these two things. But to understand, and to be convinced of, the supreme importance of the walk and the interactions, these two facts would be helpful.

Enter into the essence of the interactions

What is striking, rather shocking, is that though the Risen Christ’s walk on the road to Emmaus, his sitting down to eat with the two followers, etc. are common topics for talks and sermons, special, serious efforts are seldom made to enter into the essence of the Lord’s words and actions. This narrative reveals a few supremely important, unavoidable truths about Jesus, his mission and message.

1. Risen Christ’s words and deeds

The Risen Christ’s walk to Emmaus on the day of the Resurrection was one of his first acts, after he rose up from the dead. It was one of his longest and deepest engagements, after the Resurrection, with his followers. So the encounter of the Risen Christ with the two ‘followers’ on the road to Emmaus must have been a very well-planned, carefully chosen act.

Then, naturally, in such an encounter, the words used by the Lord assume special significance.

2. Jesus called two followers of his, ‘fools’

As they walked to Emmaus, Jesus asked the two, “What is this conversation?” Lk 24:17. On hearing the question, the two were surprised. No, shocked and saddened! It is written, “And they stood still, looking sad”. Lk 24:18. It well reveals how much they were physically and emotionally involved in the events of those days! Sadly, Cleopas asked the Risen Lord, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?” Lk 24:19. To their utter disbelief, Jesus put the question to them, “What things?” Lk 24:20. In response to this question they gave a detailed narration on Jesus of Nazareth and on their hope. Also on what had happened that morning – the women’s visit to the tomb and the women’s words on their return.

To this the Risen Christ’s response was most shocking! Jesus called them, “O fools”! Again, “O (men) of slow heart”! Lk 24:25(KJV).

3. Their faith statement

Have we ever cared to think how did the Lord address the two followers? It must not have been a casual use of words. It becomes all the more surprising that the Lord used those words to address the two followers who, “said to him, “concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers.... crucified him. **But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.**, some women of our company amazed us,....., they had even 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 him they did not see.** "Luke 24: 19 – 24 (RSV).

Isn't it incredible that the Risen Lord used the words 'fools' and 'slow of heart' to address those two followers who so brilliantly articulated their faith in Jesus and his work? Also their hope?

4. Why did Jesus call them fools?

Yes, in a casual reading it would seem most unfair, uncharitable. And so unbelievable too.

A careful reading of the words of the two followers, will reveal two elements of their faith statement.

i. They said, "...our chief priests and rulers....crucified him. **But we had hoped** that he was the one to redeem Israel." Lk 24: 20, 21. Was it not just a simple, straight forward declaration of their disappointment, the end of their hope? Yes, surely, it was! But it implied much more than that. It was a clear disclosure of the loss of their faith that the Crucified would redeem Israel.

Or in simple language, it was an outright declaration of their lack of faith in the way of the Cross. They thought that the 'cross' would not be able to bring 'redemption to Israel'.

ii. Their second problem was regarding **the manner** in which he rose up on the third day. They admitted that some of their friends themselves went and saw the empty tomb and heard the angel's words that he was alive. But they did not take it seriously! In a way, they were quite doubtful whether the Lord had risen at all!! They said, ".....**but him they did not see!**"! Lk 24: 24.

The followers thought that, the 'Rising', the 'Resurrection', could not have been such a silent, tame affair. It should have shaken the whole world;

it should have been announced to all the people! It should have been trumpeted all around! The two believed that once the Christ had risen from the dead, he would make himself visible to all! Definitely, in power and glory!

The Risen One could not have but be seen by everybody! He could not but be mighty and majestic!! But Jesus rose up unseen! He walked around unrecognized !! Lk 24: 16. Unbelievable!!

5. The Cross and the Resurrection demand a new way of thinking

Now, it becomes quite clear why the Risen Lord called the two, "fools". In spite of the fact, they were followers of Jesus and they had concern and commitment, they held on to the world's way of thinking, to the world's reasoning system, the world's imaginations and logic.

By addressing them 'fools', the Risen Christ was calling them to have a different way of seeing, thinking and reasoning. He conveyed to them in an inescapable way to have a new logic, to adopt a new way of understanding and of assessing things. Those who think in this world's fashion are, in the eyes of the Risen Christ, fools!

The Cross and the Resurrection demand a new discipleship based on a new way of thinking and a new logic. The Risen Christ, on the road to Emmaus, was asking them not 'to be fools'! Also to believe that the 'way of the Cross' was, surely, capable 'to redeem Israel'.

6. An Inescapable Call

The two followers, as many of his followers, refused 'to follow' the Master, along the path of the Cross. They held on to a hope in worldly terms. And they

rightly deserved to be called 'fools', 'slow of heart', even though they very brilliantly articulated their faith and hope.

The Risen Lord calls us also to reject this world's logic. Not to be 'FOOLS'. And to embrace a new logic, a new way of reasoning based on the Cross and the Resurrection. Although they claimed themselves to be his 'followers', they were not willing to walk along his 'way'. Jesus said, 'I am the way'.

7. A cry from the agony of the Risen Christ

There is a very important point to be noted here. The address, "O fools, and slow of heart", Lk. 24: 25 (KJV) was not only an act of accusation, but it was equally a cry that burst forth from the agony of the Risen Christ. Why? Please note, whom did he address like that? Any two persons? No! The risen Lord used those words to address two of his own followers!

Definitely, during his public ministry he must have been taking them around, teaching them and interacting closely with them and answering all their questions, as his 'followers'. In spite of all that, they were not able to, or willing to, go along the way of the Cross.

They were not prepared to accept the 'reasoning', logic revealed in the Cross. And they remained to look forward to, to hope for, the 'Resurrection' with power and glory, with crown on the head and staff in the hands.

Naturally, the Master would have been deeply pained. And that 'address' must have sprung from that pain.

8. A great act of assurance

What is amazing is the Risen Lord's response to the situation of his followers. Unbelievably, the Risen One, as one of the first acts after the Resurrection, chose to walk with those followers as one of them! The two 'followers' did not see anything extraordinary about their 'fellow traveller'. **That is why, there could be a deep engagement of 'explaining' and 'interpreting' on the road to Emmaus.**

The walk to Emmaus 'drawing near the two followers' was an indescribably great act of assurance of the Risen Lord to those two followers entrapped in the way of thinking, the reasoning, of this world.

The Master had chosen the twelve 'to be with him'. Mark 3: 14. During his public ministry, he had proved that he was always, with his followers.

Now, even after the Resurrection also, he proved that he would walk with them fully engaging himself in their moments of doubts and despair. "..... I am with you, always, to the close of the age." Matthew 28: 20. And undoubtedly, it is a message to people of all times, caught in the web of the world's way of thinking.

9. Total transformation

The Risen Lord's engagement with the two followers, transformed them.

The two followers had not been impressed at the beginning. In fact, they were a little contemptuous too. And they had asked him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things....?" Lk 24: 18.

Their attitude changed dramatically. Now, they were very keen to invite him

to their house and 'constrained' him to stay with them.

It was as an expression of the change happened in them, that 'they constrained him, saying, 'stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.' Luke 24: 29. The Risen Lord, putting a seal to their transformation, 'went in to stay with them'.

10. The Risen Christ goes in to stay with his followers

Should it not be noticed that the Risen Christ, respecting his followers' invitation, went in to stay with them?

The Risen One did not opt for big mansions and palaces but went in to stay in the humble dwelling place of his two followers. While living, he had told, "Foxes have holes, and birds have nests, but the Son of man has nowhere to lie down and rest." Lk 9:58 (TEV). Even after the Resurrection, the Lord continued to have no place of his own and offered his fellowship at the dining table of two of his ordinary 'followers'. It must have a profound impact on our understanding of the Risen Christ and his choices.

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In a never-to-be-forgotten act of reassurance, the Risen Christ, on the day of the Resurrection itself, as one of the first acts after the Resurrection, walked all the way to Emmaus, with two 'fools', Lk 24: 25, with two followers who were 'slow of heart'. We cannot excuse ourselves from having a radically new understanding of the Risen Christ and his choice.

The Risen Christ is One who WALKS
To Emmaus,
Not to Jerusalem!
To eat supper in a hut at Emmaus,
Not to dine at the victory celebrations at Jerusalem Palace!
To open the eyes of the followers,
Not to teach those who crucified him, a lesson.

– Mammen Varkey

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Vichara Dhara 46 - 30 March 2015

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