

Sunday 24 April: Chosen before time began (Luke 24:13-36)

The amazing thing about Easter is that God had planned everything from the beginning of time and didn't ever change his mind. So nothing took God by surprise; nothing was unexpected; nothing went wrong. How do we know this? Luke tells us this when he repeats the story told by Cleophas who was a friend of Jesus.

The Bible doesn't tell us much about him and his companion, but we suspect they might have been husband (Cleophas) and his wife. They had been in the city and they had probably actually stood and watched how Jesus died. I wonder why they went to watch? Most of us would not have chosen to go and see the suffering that crucifixion caused. I think they went because they kept hoping till the very last minute that there would be a miracle. Perhaps they had expected to see Jesus escape off the cross and begin to rule as God's chosen one.

But nothing like that had happened. Jesus had died – and there wasn't even any point in going to a funeral because his body had disappeared. So they packed up in Jerusalem and headed home to Emmaus, a village about 11kms from Jerusalem. They were so utterly sad and disappointed; nothing seemed right and life would never be the same again. They don't seem even to have thought about the possibility of a resurrection.

As they were walking along, a stranger caught up with them and walked alongside them. He noticed how sad they were and asked them why this was so. When they told him the sad story, he reacted surprisingly for he told them they were being foolish – silly-billies!!

And then, using the Old Testament, he explained that everything had been planned. The details were all there. The crucifixion was proof that God was still in control for it had been planned from the beginning of time.. We don't know exactly what verses he quoted and anyway it would take us hours to look up verses and show all the proof of God's planning. The two walkers were fascinated.

When they got to their home village, they decided to invite the stranger to stay with them. So they sat down to supper together. And then they realized who the mystery guest was. Perhaps it was just the way he prayed as he said 'grace'; perhaps they also saw his wrists with the nail marks. Whatever! They just knew that he was Jesus. And the fact that he then disappeared

didn't rattle them at all. They packed up there and then and rushed back to Jerusalem to tell the others that it was true: Jesus was alive once again. Everything God had promised had come true. They realized that now; Jesus death was part of God's plan.

We don't understand why it was planned that way, but we don't have to. We aren't God. But it is important to know that God loved all of us so much that he planned for millennia to send his son to die so that we could be right with him. If he loved us enough to do that, we can trust him with our lives and ask him to work out his plans for us.