

On the Road Again

One of my favorite Willie Nelson songs is, “On the Road Again.”
The second verse sings:

*On the road again
Goin’ places that I’ve never been
Seein’ things I may never see again
I can’t wait to get on the road again.*

When I reflected on the two people walking the road to Emmaus, that song began to play over and over again in my mind. While they were walking on a road they knew, one that led to a familiar destination, their lives were altered by their encounter with the risen Christ. Very possibly, because of this meeting, they would find themselves on another day, “on the road again goin’ places where they’d never been.”

The post-resurrection appearances of Jesus, written about in the gospels, were meant to encourage those who read them to go on with life carrying the good news of Christ with them. These stories were meant to remind us that an encounter with Jesus is life-changing and that, while he is not walking beside us, he lives on within our hearts, out of sight of others. This presence is there for us to cherish and do with as we wish. We can leave it there undisturbed or we can decide to reveal it to others. We can share it and inspire others to do the same.

I know I always tell you how much better life could be for all of us if we decided to follow the teachings of Jesus; if we would pick up and embrace them and really apply them to our daily lives.

When we are able to do this, change occurs in ourselves and in those around us. It is best to use a gradual approach if and when we decide to do this, changing too quickly would shock us and those who are closest to us. Perhaps, we could practice “forgiveness” for a while until it becomes second nature and then move on to “patience.” It takes a while for us to change the way we live and move and have our being and we tend to backslide from time to time. When this happens to us, we need to understand that we all are human and that we all have another chance to begin once again and get it right.

Often this process seems very difficult to even begin because it requires that we step back from ourselves and truly see our shortcomings and flaws. One we are able to do this we can make progress, one step at a time, down the road that lies before us. When we take these steps, we discover that we are “goin’ places where we’ve never been and our outlook on the world is different. It is a good thing.

The men walking on that road to Emmaus, in our story, were blessed to have Jesus walking and talking with them, even though they did not recognize him until the breaking of the bread. When they understood who it was with them their eyes were opened and they could see the glimpses of truth God had for them. They could understand more fully all they had heard about him and their minds were opened as was their future. Their doubts of the story they had heard of his resurrection were dispelled and they believed.

The love God has for all God's creatures inspires these stories. It shows us that we can overcome anything and everything if we choose to lead more Christ-like lives. It tells us that we do live on in one way or another after we leave this world. We do have immortality leaving behind us all the good we have done that will inspire others to go and do likewise. Jesus was the revelation of this love. His final commandment was that we love one another. When we do, we find life is much better. When we practice love over and over again, it becomes a natural part of us and enables us to set aside all judgmental thoughts we might have about others. It allows us to adopt a "live and let live" policy toward life and keeps us from striving to change others to fit our narrow mold of whatever it is we consider suitable. If we would like to meet the Jesus that lives on in our hearts, we need to reveal that love to others.

Doing this will stir us from where are and move us forward back" on the road again, goin' places where we've never been, seein' things that we will never see again," changing our lives and the lives of those around us. We are called by the love of God manifested through Jesus to discover the abundance of life this will bring us and our world.

Amen