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*Mark 16:12 & 13*

*Afterward he appeared to two who were walking from Jerusalem into the country, but they didn't recognize him at first because he had changed his appearance. When they realized who he was, they rushed back to tell the others, but no one believed them.*

I have always found the story referenced above to be a fascinating account of an event that took place after the resurrection of Jesus on that first Easter Sunday. The Gospel writer Luke goes into much greater detail in a section of Scripture that we have come to know as the walk to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-34). But Mark's account is much briefer and to the point.

The substance of the story is that the two disciples encountered Jesus as they walked along the road but they didn't recognize him. These weren't just two strangers, they were two disciples of Jesus. They were not part of the Twelve but they were followers who we would think would recognize Jesus if they saw him. It was only later that they realized it was Jesus they were walking with and then as Luke says, "he left them". What apparently opened their eyes was the sharing of Scripture with them by Jesus. As God's word spoke to their hearts (not just their heads.) they realized they were in the presence of the Son of God. It is so important for us to understand that God has chosen to work through our hearts as well as our minds. Our faith in God is meant to be experiential not just rational. It's really about a relationship, not about knowledge alone. It's necessary to know Jesus (God incarnate) not just know about Jesus.

How often have you encountered someone who you knew but the person was not in

the "place" you normally saw them and thus you didn't recognize them at first? This perhaps in some way explains why the disciples did not immediately recognize Jesus. They had seen him brutalized and murdered two days before. They did not expect to see him again alive, much less walking along a dusty road on the way to Galilee. Certainly his resurrected appearance was different to some extent but we know he was recognizable from the account of his appearance to the Twelve in the Upper Room. Because we don't see what we expect at times, we don't believe in what we see. This was true of Jesus' appearance and is true in the lives of many who have truly found Christ in their lives.

When people truly come to faith in Christ Jesus they change. They begin the process of becoming made over into the image of Jesus himself. That doesn't mean they begin to "look" like him, it means they begin to "live" like him. As they change the way they think about life and about people their "image" changes. There will be people who have known them for years who will not recognize them because of the changes in them. It is this kind of change that marks a person as a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

If you would like to know Jesus and become more like him, why not join us for a journey with a friend to a new beginning.