

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ!

He walks with us and he talks with us, and we don't always recognize him until much later, if at all. But our Lord opens the scriptures to us even as he opens our hearts, and we are transformed. The story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus is one of my favorite Bible passages, especially "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" This passage ties in so well with another of my favorite passages, this one from Jeremiah "His word is like a fire shut up in my bones, I am weary of holding it in, indeed I cannot." (Jeremiah 20:9b)

The Word of God burns in our hearts, my friends, it burns and it will out! It shouldn't be contained, nor can it be contained, it's in your hearts, it's in your bones! God is love and love must be shared which only adds to the treasure God's Word is. Love, the resurrected Jesus brings the paradox of peace with burning hearts. We all get discouraged, I get discouraged, sometimes it seems like our work of mission not only gets stalled but actually takes a few steps backwards, there are times when it seems that we are stuck on Good Friday and that hope is gone. But I ask you, can we recognize our resurrected Savior as he walks among us? Can we feel our hearts burning within us, in spite of our best efforts to hold God's word in? Are we going to miss opportunity of sharing God's word, or are we going to treat it as a case of heartburn and hope it goes away so we don't have to change or because we aren't in control? Are we going to continue our walk or are we going to just wonder what's going on?

The truth of the matter is, Jesus calls us forward, in spite of efforts of some to control our mission. We travel whatever miles and hours are needed from our homes to climbing our daily hill, life is hard at times, people using others, scrambling over the tops of others. We face toil, hardship, and death, death of hope, death of dreams, death of meaning, literal death. It's a stressful world, stress is everywhere as blame is assigned carelessly, fingers are pointed, and people grieve even as we feel their pain. Sometimes we wonder, where is God?

But we are disciples, we answer God's call even when we wonder. And God sends us into a world, into our jobs, our lives, into dangers, and God goes with us as we are called to recognize the burning within us to realize God's love and to share it with others, continuing our walk with Jesus, imitating his life of love, self-sacrifice and compassion, to heal broken hearts and to heal a broken world. The Holy Spirit sent by the risen Christ goes with us, hastening our steps, making our homecoming joyful, as we rush to tell others "we have seen the Lord!" The Lord has come, he has opened our hearts, he makes himself known in the breaking of bread, and this story happens now, as we gather together day after day, week after week, month after month. God's Spirit has set our hearts on fire, and bids us to shout "We have seen the Lord!" AMEN

