

The Grumpy Disciple Blog #16

Two Confused

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Jesus was a trickster. Yes, a trickster—at least once. Bait and trap. You’ve done it, and I’ve done it too.

The Gospel of Luke tells of sightings and interactions with a resurrected Jesus by his disciples, three days after his death—hence Easter morning celebrations followed.

At the end of Luke’s record of the life of Jesus, things were a mess. His followers had never been so confused as when their prophet-leader suffered arrest and then died an early death at 33. Though he had followers up and down the land of Israel, two *special* disciples lived in a small town, seven miles from Jerusalem, called Emmaus.

One named Cleopas and an unnamed companion (possibly his wife) got suckered by Jesus—BAD. Bad, for good I mean. Later in the day of the not-so-sure resurrection, these two grievors left other disciples in Jerusalem. They walked toward Emmaus and discussed the failed hopes of the Master as the Messiah. Sadness and loss filled their hearts and words. Were they leaderless disciples now?

Mystically, the person of Jesus existed in a new and improved trans-dimensional body. Yes, previously he could walk on water, eat all the figs he wanted and never gain a pound, plus other supernatural peculiarities. But this was different. Using latitude and longitude, Jesus simply appeared on the same road at the same time as the special two. He initially dummed-down his visit for the confused faithful by making their eyes see a different man—as if he had disguised himself. Odd tactic indeed. (A prank? You decide.) For his own reasons he chose to appear as a fellow traveler. There, he found these two engaged in sober conversation. Jesus played dumb, assumed ignorance and politely asked, “Why the long faces?”

They took the bait.

Cleopas gave the “Reader’s Digest” condensed version with the unexpected twist at the end.

Instead of sympathetically listening to the grieving walkers and soaking in their interesting story of the prophet Jesus’ ministry, ending in death three days ago...his holy trap slowly descended. The stranger gave the best darn one-on-one (well, actually two) Bible study. He blew away their soggy minds. In third-person speak, he explained the entire course of God’s will from Moses and all the prophets culminating in the death and yes, resurrection of that prophet named Jesus.

The two stood under the trap and didn’t even know it.

When the threesome approached Emmaus, the two hungered for this unexpected, excellent Bible teacher to come, have dinner and stay the night. If Jesus ever stretched the truth, it happened then. Luke 24:28 “He *acted* as if he were going on farther.” Yeah, plenty are the times I’ve acted as if I had somewhere else to be, too.

The trap lowered further.

His hyped-up hosts fidgeted with the fixin's while Jesus flipped through their magazines and caught the local news...while planning his escape. At the dinner table they asked the intriguing guest to say the blessing over the meal. Now, understand, during his three years of travel and ministry, Jesus might have said the blessing at meals, three times a day, some 2,695 times—and that's with Jesus not always hoggin' the role of blesser. (Yes, Jesus never ate hog, I know, I know.)

He broke the loaf of bread and handed out chunks. As the hosts' hands took hold of the ripped bread the guest disappeared.

The trap slammed down hard.

They said something like, "Wow! Gosh! Gee whiz!" but in Hebrew (or Aramaic).

A déjà vu moment occurred.

Cleo said, "When he—"

Companion, "broke the—"

Cleo interjected, "bread—"

Companion added, "he looked exactly like—"

Both concluded exclaiming, "Our Master! Jesus! Yes!"

Happily freaked out, they grabbed some food and ran back toward Disciple Headquarters in Jerusalem. Silliness, amazement and feelings of having been remarkably duped, powered their strides. During the two sweaty hours to get there, disembodied Jesus was wherever he wanted to be. But, he did eventually head toward Disciple HQ, waiting for two pairs of human feet to arrive from Emmaus. Once there, the Emmausians (I made that up) reiterated the entire special Bible study plus the dinner disappearance incident. When completed and the excitement peaked, Jesus popped in *and everything changed*.

Why did he choose to trick or prank those two confused disciples? I don't know, but I'm sure they told that story until the day they died. I would have.

Trick: "An illusive appearance; an act or procedure intended to achieve an end by deceptive or false means; a clever or dexterous feat intended to entertain, amuse."

These Things Make Me Grumpy