

Hope in Uncertain Times by Nigel Coles Part 4: Hope may be right under your nose

Luke 24:28-29

“As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going further. But they urged him strongly, ‘Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.’ So Jesus went in to stay with them.”

Everyone needs hope.

More than that I believe everyone wants the kind of hope: – a sure and certain hope.
we have as Christians

We all ‘hope’ to get through the other side of the coronavirus pandemic. That’s not what I’m talking about, because that’s evidently not sure and certain, not for everyone.

Peter puts our sure and certain hope like this, he says God has: “given us new birth into a living **hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3).

I’ve lost count of the number of people I’ve met over the years, who have responded to me, when they realise, I’m a person of faith, say something like:

‘I wish I had your faith’ or similar.

Different conversations go in different directions, but it’s not unusual for a conversation, which starts like that to end with me longing for the other person to simply open their eyes to what’s right in front of them.

In the moment, many people have other things, which seem more immediate, filling their hearts and minds, distracting them from seeing what’s under their nose.

Re-reading the episode ‘on the road to Emmaus’ I began with, there’s something in this episode, which I’ve simply not been able to get away from.

Jesus, the day after his resurrection, appears to two people on the road to Emmaus. One’s named Cleopas, the other we don’t even know their name. It could have been Mrs Cleopas, or a friend.

Read the whole episode, later, yourself and see if you can identify with any of the characters. Not for the first time, I can see myself. You see sometimes I’m so consumed by the events of my life I fail to notice Jesus in my circumstances. That’s what seems to be going here.

When Jesus came up to these two, it says ‘they were talking with each other about everything that had happened’. Jesus asks them: ‘what are you discussing together as you walk along?’

An uprising of confusion, hope, fear, questions, sadness and yes, a longing for God.

Jesus listens and what he hears from them is what he often hears from me. A whole load of stuff, which, as these two, I easily allow to consume me. I allow the stuff and questions to distract me, to take my focus away from Jesus and so that’s as far as it often goes.

And then something happens we'll recognise from any number of conversations with friends and family and colleagues: It says 'Jesus continued on as if he were going further'.

Would you like any shopping doing? Would you like to come around for a meal? (obviously not now) *Oh I wouldn't want to trouble you.*

Don't you test people?

You might be really lonely and desperate for friendship, but you're not going to admit that.

You might be near to breaking point but accepting help from someone else sounds like failure. *'Oh that's alright, I can manage'.*

Jesus acted as if he were going further.

Jesus invariably does not appear before our eyes when we demand it.

The answers to our prayers are not usually delivered instantaneously.

Hope that is certain is not delivered completely, instantaneously, without some demonstration our need is deep and heartfelt. When we spot it, we need to grab hold of it with both hands. These two **urged Jesus to stay with them**. When they did, when they welcomed him in, they discovered hope, their hope they thought had evaporated, was right under their noses.

We shouldn't be surprised: having brought up three children my observation is each of them are more rounded human beings, appreciative of life and with a compassion for others, partly because Maggie & I **didn't give them everything they wanted, when they wanted it**. We have a word for the opposite of that still don't we? We talk of spoiled children and I didn't want to spoil my children. I really wanted them to have everything they wanted, but I knew that would not be best for them.

My testimony as a Christian is my relationship with God became unshakable from my early twenties when it dawned on me God is my Heavenly Father. My hope has been sure and certain ever since whatever. I didn't know that and wanted it and I did effectively what Mr & Mrs Cleopas, or whoever they were did in the road to Emmaus, I urged him strongly 'stay with me'.

You want a hope that is sure and certain?

You've witnessed the replay of the Easter story - how many times?

Have you urged him strongly to stay with you?

Of course, it may simply sound like a simple welcome into my heart. Jesus looks deeper than the words you use, into your heart.

I've had a whole variety of conversations in recent weeks about how people don't want to go back to everything as it was before the coronavirus pandemic upended the normal rhythm of our lives.

Belonging, family, community, time for one another closest to us, time for the garden, board games, (yes even Monopoly) have all been appreciated. What else do you want to change? Why don't you urge Jesus to stay? He'll open your eyes if you do.

To watch the video, go to: <https://www.thefuelcast.com/>

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