

April 26, 2020 ~PrayingThrough Our Present Darkness

Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognizing him.” Luke 24:13-15

Dear God, we depend on you to outshine any darkness in this world. Surely the coronavirus pandemic that has moved from people in a city far away to our own communities was unseen and hidden for reasons we don't understand. The virus spread by people to people darkened our bright futures, good health, prosperity, and so many dreams. It happened so quickly that we couldn't think of anything except all we'd lost in a dark tunnel of fear, anxiety, and uncertainty.

Are we, Lord Jesus, like the two travelers leaving Jerusalem on the road to Emmaus? They were so lost in the darkness of your crucifixion and their own despair after losing the prophet and presumed redeemer of Israel, that they were unable to recognize you walking with them.

Surely it was easy to lose sight of you in all our goings and doings until 8 weeks ago. In the sudden darkness of sheltering, did we see you waiting in our homes right away? Were we kept from recognizing you by the sudden changes, the numbers of infected, and the tragic numbers of those who succumbed and could not be saved? Working and schooling became home based for so many, and those who went to work caring for the patients, those working in retail stores, in deliveries and in essential jobs were so exhausted they scarcely had time to find you in when their days ran into nights. Lord, were we like the men who met you on the road in their darkest hour? Forgive us if we didn't recognize who you were and why you wanted to draw us close to you right away. Thank you for waiting around to comfort us, Lord Jesus.

Promise Keeping God, you've always shown us a way when no way out of our darkness seemed possible. You've waited on us to come to you, and we never had to go far. You've been close to us through all our dark tunnel experiences with illnesses, losses of people we loved, wrong choices that left us flat on our faces, and broken relationships that broke our hearts. You promised you'd never leave us or forsake us, yet in the darkness of suffering, death, and losing so much of our freedom we wandered in our personal losses, and failed to see that only you had the presence and the power we needed to persevere. Thank you for every time we see you in challenges we face today.

Encouraging God, you entered this tunnel with us, you will remain with us as we pass through this dark time, and you will be rejoicing with us when we find the end of this tunnel and emerge in the light of a new awareness and understanding of your love, your mercy, and your grace. In your true and holy Word, in knowing we belong to you, and in remembering all you have done for us, we can be confident of your presence. Your inspiration has given us purpose in a time when we surely could have been wanderers with no hope and no direction. You've encouraged us with ways to share our compassion, our time, our talents, and our treasures. Thank you for encouraging us, God. Thank you for using this darkness to give us purpose and to share your light in us.

You know, Father God, that our lives in this sheltered tunnel are very different from when we packed away our Christmas decorations and began the New Year. How thankful we are that

your plan wasn't to let us put you away with Christmas this year! You know how different this world may be other side of this tunnel, and you're already preparing us for challenges we never dreamed we might face. Thank you for using this dark time to remind us that our power, our wisdom, our courage, and our confidence is only from your Spirit in us.

Like the travelers whose eyes were opened when you sat with them in their home, we feel your presence and thank you for being with us and blessing us in our sheltered places. We ask even now as we walk with you toward the end of this tunnel, that you'll help us persevere, grow in our faith, and trust you instead of ourselves or the world's distractions. We give you thankful praise for protecting us and guiding our wise choices. You are our way, our truth, and our light in this tunnel time.

Lord God, in Jesus's Name we ask that you remain with us in our present darkness. We see your light shining in the darkness of this pandemic. Holy Spirit, we depend on your constant presence in all our joyful celebrations and our dark discouragements. Please walk with us along the road through this world until that day when we walk through the end of life's tunnel into the gates of heaven. Amen