

Hello Friends,

Attached is this week's Sunday Scriblings.

They will read better if you have already read today's lectionary readings which are;

Acts 2:14a, 36-41.

Psalm 116.

1 Peter 1:17-23.

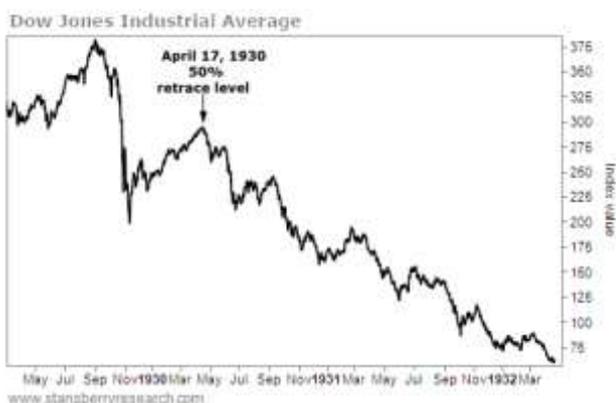
Luke 24:13-35

On the face of it, it may seem like a lot of reading ... but not really.

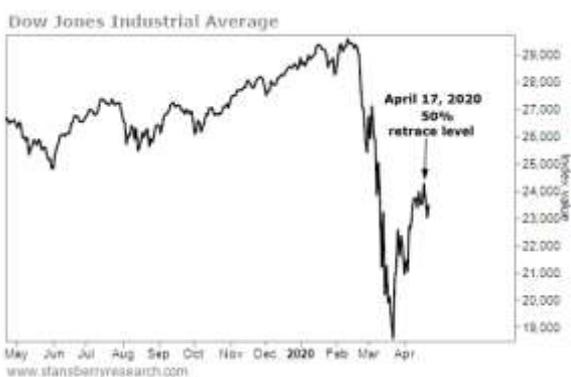
Parts of all of them appear in today's scriblings.

I hope you are all well and keeping mind and body together as we start week 7 together. I'm somewhat fearful at even having a guess at what number the final lockdown Scribbling might be. Anyone got any helpful suggestions?

In case you need something different to worry about this week (other than CV19), take a close look at the two graphs below



And EXACTLY 90 years later



Yowzah!! Hold on to your financial hats!!

I hope you enjoy today's Sunday Scriblings - please feel free to share them with others if you wish.

May God bless you all and keep you safe,

Roy

Sunday Scribbling's No.5 – The 3rd Sunday of Easter

Lectionary readings for today are: Acts 2:14a, 36-41. Psalm 116. 1 Peter 1:17-23. Luke 24:13-35

***** Luke 24 *****

Once again, the Psalm set for today is both useful and pertinent for the position that we all now find ourselves in;

¹ **I love the Lord, for he heard my voice;
he heard my cry for mercy.**

² **Because he turned his ear to me,
I will call on him as long as I live.**

⁴ **Then I called on the name of the Lord:
“Lord, save me!”**

Today's Gospel reading is one we are all very familiar with – The road to Emmaus. Rather than repeat what you have already read in Luke 24:13-35, I thought I might look at the challenges behind this Gospel story and see what similarities I can find to our journey in 2020, starting at verse 13.

¹³ **“Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem”.**

Which two? In v18 we learn that one of them was Clopas. The other remains a mystery, but it might have been his wife, Mary. You will recall that in John 19:25 we were told that **“Mary the wife of Clopas”** was one of the women near the foot of the cross at the crucifixion. So it's possible, but not certain; that said, it would make perfect sense for God to choose another woman to be amongst the first witnesses of the resurrected Jesus, corroborated, of course, by a man whose testimony would be acceptable to the Jewish people.

Remember, that the world as the Jews had known it was now in a state of flux – just as in the Church of England today where a new order is upon us and women have a prominent and important part to play in building God's kingdom here on earth.

We are also told that they were on their way to Emmaus that was seven miles distant. The KJV says it was **“about three score furlongs”** distant (as does my 1611 bible copy) which works out to be about 7.5 miles if you can remember that a furlong is equal to one-eighth of a mile; and equivalent to 660 feet; 220 yards; 40 rods, or 10 chains.

But there are other problems with this 'English' version of events as other sources, such as J Nolland, state that it was **“sixty stadia' distant (where a stadion was 607 feet)”**². Furthermore, it's not clear exactly where Emmaus is. 'Emmaus' is a Greek word from an Arabic derivative and may have referred to one of three different villages, all of which has the same, or similar names. One is just over three miles NW of Jerusalem. The next a little further out at 7 miles. The third some 20 miles distant.

Not that this changes anything about the veracity of the story. But it does show us that we cannot take every word as printed in our English NIV as “Gospel” because they have been subject to many translations and interpretations, by many people, over many centuries.

The point I’m trying to make here is that the historical intricacies, as interesting as they are in helping to set the scene, are not what the Bible is all about. And that’s very relevant to us all today – it’s not how we got into this mess or precisely where the WuFlu started in China that’s ultimately important, but how we go forwards into the future as living members of God’s humanity.

The resurrection, we are told in Luke 24:1, takes place on the first day of the week – Sunday - which is the third day after the crucifixion. Have you ever wondered why it was three days, and not four, or seven for that matter? It won’t surprise you to hear that God probably chose three days for a very good reason. First of all, maybe he was signaling that the beginning of the week marked a new beginning, whilst at the same time introducing women into the Church as reliable witnesses. More likely, and more importantly, the Jews believed that the soul stayed with the body for three days, and then departed on the fourth³.

Therefore, the resurrection had to take place on the third day latest – otherwise, from a Jewish perspective, you would have a resurrected Christ without a soul and that might have been seen as a contradiction to Jesus statement of; **“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.”** (Matthew 5:17)

Now this may seem like nonsense to us, but remember that the vast majority of His early disciples were Jews, heavily steeped in their traditional and strongly held Jewish beliefs and customs. It’s hard enough for us to get our so called ‘modern educated heads’ around some of the biblical teachings, but try and imagine the leap of faith the new disciples and believers had to make in the first century AD when their promised land was under occupation by the Romans, and their new leader, Jesus, had just been crucified.

“¹⁶ but they were kept from recognizing him.” How many times do we read these words, or similar, in the bible? The strange bit is that we all fall into this trap and have difficulty in ‘seeing’ the truth of God that is right in front of us.

Why is this?

Why is it so difficult?

I have three suggestions; (1) You cannot learn to meditate or pray deeply buy reading a book. You need to practice. (2) You need discipline to train your mind and thereby allow God to access your soul. (3) You need ‘desire’ in its strongest form.

Not easy ... I know, I hear you; but don’t forget that we are all sons and daughters of God and we already have a portion of his divinity resident and pre-installed in us in the form of our soul. All we have to do is allow Him access to it, and feed it, so that we can help God grow His kingdom here on earth through us.

“²⁰ The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him;”

This is a difficult sentence to understand as it implies that the Jews were responsible for the crucifixion. The failure of Luke to mention Pilate or the Romans only adds to the anti-Semitic

overtone, but the fact remains that it was the Jewish Sanhedrin and their people who pushed for this sentence, even though it was the Roman Gentiles who carried it out. If we now back up and look through a different lens we can see that all humanity had a hand in His death, and therefore by extension, we, Jews and Gentiles, all had a finger in the pie of the Cross and the Resurrection.

Similarly, one could argue that we are all responsible for the position we now find ourselves in. We use the earth's resources as and when it suits us whilst paying lip service to the dire warnings of what lies ahead for both humanity and the planet. Maybe we need to reassess the way we live our consumer based lives and the damage we are inflicting on others. Maybe this our moment of revelation.

“³⁰ When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them.³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him.”

***** Acts 2 *****

“¹⁴ Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd:”

“³⁶ “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”

³⁷ When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

And that's pretty much where we are today – “Brothers, what shall we do?”

Fortunately for us, Peter continues and provides an answer: **“³⁸ ... Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”**

⁴⁰ With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” ⁴¹ Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.”

Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 3:9 (KJV) **“⁹ For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.”** By this, Thomas Merton explains that; “As sons of God, we are called to use our freedom to help God create His likeness in our own souls⁴.”

The final word of today's Scribbling's go to the unknown 14th century mystical author of the 'Cloud of Unknowing' who teaches us this; “God in His wisdom and judgment gave humans sovereignty and stewardship over all creatures, but that authority was lost when the human bowed to the proposal of subordinates, disobeying the Creator⁵”.

Peter was right Repent (Change) and be baptized by the Holy Ghost.

Amen.

1. All biblical passages from the NIV.
2. Nolland .J (1993) Luke 18:35-24:53 (Vol.35C p1202) Dallas. Word, Incorporated.
3. Marshall I.H. (1978) The Gospel of Luke: a commentary on the Greek text (p895). Exeter, Paternoster Press.
4. Thomas Merton (2013) Spiritual Direction and Meditation (p27) Martino Publishing
5. The Cloud of Unknowing (2009) Translated by Carmen Acevedo Butcher (p76) Shambhala Publications Inc.

To finish: a short prayer for our time using the words of Psalm 116

O Lord ... hear my prayer.

² I will call on him as long as I live;

³ I am overcome by distress and sorrow;

⁵ Oh God, who is full of compassion,

⁶ I am brought low; save me.

⁸ My feet are stumbling,

¹⁰ I am greatly afflicted.

¹³ I will lift up the cup of salvation.

¹⁴ I will fulfill my vows to the Lord.

¹⁶ Truly, I am your servant.

¹⁸ I will fulfill my vows to the Lord.

Hallelu Yah – **Lord ... hear my prayer.**

We pray for all your people as they struggle with the current world crisis.

We pray for those who are unwell; for the dying.

We pray for the bereaved; most especially for those that we know.

We pray for the hungry; for the homeless.

We pray for the lonely; the dispossessed.

We pray for our Leaders; our scientists, and most especially for all those in the front line.

We pray for those living in fear.

Hallelu Yah – **Lord ... hear our prayer.**

And lastly Lord we pray for ourselves as we silently lift up our fears; our hopes; our worries and our wishes to you in the sure knowledge that **“when two or three are gathered together in your name, there you are in the midst of us”** (Matthew 18:20)

Hallelu Yah – **Lord ... hear our prayer.**

Amen