

## **Luke 24:36b-48**

<sup>36</sup>While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." <sup>37</sup>They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. <sup>38</sup>He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? <sup>39</sup>Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." <sup>40</sup>And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. <sup>41</sup>While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" <sup>42</sup>They gave him a piece of broiled fish, <sup>43</sup>and he took it and ate in their presence. <sup>44</sup>Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." <sup>45</sup>Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, <sup>46</sup>and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, <sup>47</sup>and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup>You are witnesses of these things.

"Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures."

Do you have problems understanding the Scriptures? I hope so. For if we don't we are probably not reading them with much more than a cursory glimpse.

One of the people from my past who was a great influence upon me was a lovely, saintly lady called Mary. She was my mentor when I started on note as a preacher some 40 years ago.

Mary read the Bible from cover to cover each year. After she died I was given the pick of her bookshelves. The first book I picked up was her Study Bible. It has notes in it, passages underlined, and even pieces of paper with Sermon notes on. In the front cover was a most important section. She listed 7 questions she would ask of every passage she read, day by day.

In reflecting upon the Scriptures with these questions Mary would allow God to open her mind to understand the Scriptures.

Mary's Questions; -

1. Is there an example for me to follow?
2. Is there a sin for me to avoid?
3. Is there a command for me to obey?
4. Is there a promise for me to claim?
5. What does this particular passage teach me about God?
6. Is there a difficulty for me to explore?
7. Is there something in this passage I should pray about today?

I offer them to you, as I have to many others over the years.

Mark Twain said, "I am not troubled by the things in the Bible which I do not understand, but I am troubled by those things which I do understand and which I find very difficult to measure up to."

Allowing God to open up the Scriptures to us is important. It is good to do alone, and it is good to do corporately, in a group, so that we can allow the collective mind to work and explore together and reflect upon our individual reflections, that we make sure we are hearing God and not our own dogmatism shining through. It is good to share with people who come to the Scriptures from a different perspective, always agreeing with each other may not be as helpful as a struggling discussion shared in loving respect with others that all may see more clearly even if there is not a uniform agreement at the end of it.

I sign off my reflections here for a few months, whilst on Sabbatical. Perhaps I will have more time to sit with the Scriptures and allow God to open them up even more to me. I do intend recommencing sharing reflections in the autumn with you so beware. In the meantime -

"Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures."