

My eyes can't see
Bread broken and a prayer said
You are revealed

A common theme runs throughout the resurrection stories. Jesus isn't recognized by his disciples. In the Garden, it takes his voice calling Mary's name to make him known. On the road to Emmaus, he isn't recognized until he breaks bread and gives thanks. When he stands on the seashore, he remains a mystery until the disciple whom he loved recognizes him.

As I puzzled over this mystery, I came to three possible conclusions for why no one recognizes him. First, Jesus has changed. Resurrection did something to him that physically altered him, and this makes it harder for his disciples to know him. Second, a veil has been placed over their eyes, so to speak, so they cannot see until Jesus wants them to see. Third, they are so concerned about themselves that they can't recognize the very one they mourn.

While it could be any of these three, I'm going to take door number three. I think the disciples are feeling so sorry for themselves that they can't see Jesus. Their eyes are so turned inward that they cannot see the Christ standing before them. Their pain gives them blinders.

I choose three because it's the one that happens most to me. It is easy to get so caught up in busyness, self pity, self concern or self centeredness that I can't see Jesus. I'm so busy looking out for me, or feeling sorry for me, that I don't notice Jesus besides me.

In those moments, I need a word. I need Jesus calling my name. I need bread broken, wine poured and thanks said. I need someone who loves Jesus to point him out to me. It's why I need worship and communion with other Christians. Without it, I have no one to call me out from my inwardness. It might be in the sermon. It could be in the person passing the peace. It might be in the prayers over bread and wine. In worship, Jesus tries to connect to me like he tried to connect to his disciples after the resurrection. He comes to help me see.

Pastor Parnell

(Inspired by Brian McLaren's book, We Make the Road By Walking.)