

LESSON 3

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LISTENED TO



This week we are looking at a feeling that everyone has experienced - anxiety. We will be finding out what anxiety is and ways that we can reduce our own anxiety, as well as support others. We'll see what we can learn from the story of Jesus' appearance on the road to Emmaus.

First read through - Luke 24:13-35

For this first read through, as you listen, try to put yourself in the shoes of the two men.

Questions:

How do you think the two companions were feeling?

- Have you ever felt like this?

They had really missed the significance of history's greatest event because they were too focused on their disappointments and problems. In fact they didn't even recognise Jesus when

He was walking with them, and they were walking in the wrong direction – away from the fellowship of believers in Jesus.

Second read through – Luke 24:13-35

For this second read through, try to put yourself in the shoes of Jesus.

How does Jesus interact with the travellers?

Do He rush in to solve their problem or judge them for seemingly running away?

He does speak sternly to them when He says – you foolish people however. What do you make of that?

What can we learn from Jesus' approach to these two men?

Jesus' approach to these two men is fascinating. We see him literally walking alongside them, asking them questions – letting them speak, really listening to understand their pain. At any point in the journey, He could have revealed His glory, dispelling all of their doubts. But instead He chooses to start by listening. Then Jesus gently meets them where they are at – taking the time to explain the scriptures to them – helping them see things from another perspective.

When you interact with people, do you take the time to walk alongside them? Or do you “jump” in, either ready to give them advice, berate them or wanting to tell them about your story?

What do you know about Anxiety?

Anxiety is a vital emotion. It warns us of possible risks or problems. It keeps us from making bad decisions or judgements – but it's also the emotion most commonly linked with emotional and mental health problems. We all experience anxiety, but some people are more prone to it than others.

Think of it as a bit like the body's smoke alarm – it warns us that something significant may be about to happen. But sometimes it becomes too sensitive and is triggered too often, and that's when it becomes a problem. It stops being a helpful warning and starts to disrupt everyday life – an anxiety disorder.

What does anxiety feel like?

Feelings may include:

Racing heart; Sweating; Dry mouth; Muscle tension, aches and pains; Dizziness and feeling faint; Inability to concentrate

When we experience anxiety, our body is preparing to respond to a risk or an emergency. This is fantastic news if we are in real physical danger that demands a real 'fight or flight' response. But in our modern lives, that is rarely the case, leaving our bodies prepared for a physical reaction which we have no real outlet for. Anxiety disorders are best treated with a combination of approaches such as cognitive/behavioural

therapy, medication; relaxation, faith and supportive community/family/friends.

So what about Faith?

Faith can be a big support for those struggling with anxiety, because it gives a bigger perspective and reminds us that God is in control. It encourages us to simplify our life and remember what really matters. Times of prayer can help calm nerves, focus the mind and limit panic or waves of anxiety.

Remember, however, that recovering from anxiety problems is not as simple as just being told 'do not fear'. Those suffering will often require expert help as well as the support they get from their faith and church.

Meditation

Let's take a few minutes of quiet to review what we've heard today and think about what to do with it, giving God the space to speak to us. Get yourself comfortable and close your eyes.

Think of a time when you felt lost and confused and someone took the time to listen to you.

- What was going on?
- How did you feel?
- Who took the time to listen to you?
- And how did that change things?

Now think of someone that you know that may be struggling at the moment.

--Could you be the person who takes the time to listen to them?

A person who doesn't try to fix things, but gently comes alongside to hear their pain and help them to understand their situation from a fresh point of view?

Closing prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, who for love of our souls entered the deep darkness of the cross; we pray that Your love may surround all who are in darkness of great mental distress and who find it difficult to pray for themselves.

May they know that darkness and light are both alike to You and that You have promised never to fail them or forsake them. We ask it in Your name. Amen