Have you ever been on a long trip and the anticipation of getting to where you want to go was just overwhelming?

When I was young, my family took a trip from Ft Lauderdale to Disney World. The Magic Kingdom had just recently opened. And of course we drove, a trip of about four hours back then. Can you imagine the anticipation we kids felt? I feel sorry for my parents in hindsight. We must have bothered them incessantly… *Are we there yet? Are we there yet?* I can still remember that long last road on Disney property that headed into the park, it seemed longer than the whole trip.

When later I traveled with my family my daughter and her cousins would sing the whole way down that last long stretch from the gates to the parking lot. I think my sister or wife may have encouraged them to do so just to keep them in control, it soon became a family tradition.

People are not the only creatures to be filled with anticipation. I had a dog that would get excited the moment he knew he was going on a trip. Interestingly enough he was equally excited about the whole journey. It was sometimes equally annoying as I am sure I was to my parents. One such trip to visit my sister an amazing thing happened. He immediately settled down as if knowing it was going to be on a long road. And oddly enough just as we were entering Ft Lauderdale, before we even exited the highway, he perked up and began to get all excited like if he knew that the destination was near. And when we pulled into the neighborhood he began to cry with joy, *anticipation for the arrival.*

He already knew where we were going.

*Sometimes I wish I could still be that excited about where I was going.*

**Anticipation Lost**

I wonder what it was like for our two disciples in our Luke passage, on the road to Emmaus. They left on the trip three days after Jesus had died. Their hearts were downcast; what a sad slow hopeless road that must have been. What were they thinking along the way when that fellow traveler came across them? They surely suffered a loss of hope rooted in the crucifixion so significant that even the rumor of Jesus rising again did nothing to comfort their broken hearts. Anticipation turned to disappointment. They said of Jesus to the other traveler:

*We had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. 22 In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning 23 but didn’t find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. 24 Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.”*

These two men thought Jesus was going to redeem Israel. They thought he would live and reign and usher in a new kingdom, a kingdom of God founded in Jerusalem and not Syria, or Rome, or Egypt, or any other country that had dominated them. They wanted a Jewish state, with Jesus as king, but the cross took that hope away. *How could the messiah have died?*
Hope Given

Then Jesus did something remarkable that made the hearts of the disciples burn within them, he expounded the scriptures:

25 He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

I would have loved to walk along that road, to hear that teaching first hand. I am sure time stopped – the miles melted away.

- **Genesis 3:15** I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.
- **Genesis 15** A Blood Oath with a curse: body broken - blood shed
- **Genesis 17:10-14** Covenantal sign *Barith* = Circumcision.
- **Genesis 22:13-14** “*The Lord Will Provide*” “And to this day it is said, *on the mountain of the Lord it will be provided*” “Through your offspring all the nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.”
- **The Passover** – substitutionary sacrifice of a lamb, its body broken & blood shed
- The details of the Temple practices – body broken and blood shed
- **Psalm 22** & Promises of David
- **Isaiah 53** & minor prophets

Surely he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.

5 But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.

6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:4-6)

I could go on and on and I am sure Jesus did on that long road. He took the anticipation that was lost on the cross and gave them hope once again!

Jesus’ scripture lesson, his interpretation of the history of God’s redemption opened new understanding for these men. God’s way was not our way... he operates in ways quite contrary to human plans and expectations:
For my thoughts are not your thoughts, 
    neither are your ways my ways,”
declares the Lord. 
9 “As the heavens are higher than the earth, 
    so are my ways higher than your ways 
    and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9)

It was God’s plan from the beginning that his son would suffer and die. 

Jesus was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. 

Yet sometimes we too loose our anticipation and hope. 

It may be easy for us to accept God’s way of working through the suffering and death of Jesus, but it is quite another thing when it is the suffering and death of those we love. 

• Who could fathom or understand the suffering or death of a child? 
• And how can we keep on talking about the Coming Kingdom of God and the redemption of Man in the midst of ongoing war? 
• How do we keep hope alive when peace seems to be just a dream? 
• A long, long road far off. 

The two disciples on the road were shocked to find a fellow traveler who did not know about Jesus. They said to him: Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days? 

They challenged him: Do You Not Know? Where have you been hiding? 

Jesus responded to them with a mild rebuke: How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! They asked him Do you not know? But he said how can you not believe? I wonder what Jesus would say to us today who allow the events of our time to rob us of our anticipation, our hope in the Lord. 

Are we also slow to believe all that he has taught us? 

Anticipation Restored 

I used to think that the whole point of this passage was the clear teaching that all of scripture proclaimed the truth of Christ. But it is not the teaching on the road that is the climax of the story. In fact the disciples are kept in the dark as to the identity of the teacher on the road until the moment he picks up bread, breaks it and then gives it to them. 

These same words are used by Luke in the feeding of the 5000 in chapter 9, and in the ordinance of communion in chapter 22. The event of Jesus breaking bread clearly is the climax of the story as the disciples eyes are opened and the Lord is revealed to them. 

These disciples challenged Jesus on the road Do you not know? But they were the ones who did not know! It was Jesus that was standing right before them. He taught them, their hearts burned, and yet their eyes were not opened until
Jesus broke the bread! This is Amazing! As if to say in the breaking of bread... **I am here!**

They break bread with Jesus and then suddenly had the real presence of Christ right there in their midst! **Alleluia their Anticipation is restored!** They immediately get up and return to Jerusalem with overwhelming anticipation. The slow road becomes a quick one.

Jesus revealed himself at other times and ate with his disciples at almost every instance. I think that the frequent celebration of the breaking of bread in the early church was motivated by the many instances of the resurrected Jesus eating with the disciples. And it is this desire to experience the real presence of Christ that we find our hope, hope in the present and our anticipation for where we are going.

**Our Anticipation Restored**

Holy Communion should be celebrated as a foretaste of the feast to come. And of course the purpose of a foretaste is not to satisfy hunger but to build anticipation for the coming feast in Heaven. Calvin calls Holy Communion a *Means of Grace* where we come face to face with the presence of Christ and taste his mercy, we drink his grace. I have been celebrating communion weekly for some time and when I don’t receive it, I miss it, I long for it.

I am grateful for what we have been given, but I am not satisfied. I long for more. I don’t want a foretaste, I long with great anticipation the time when I will be sitting at His banquet table eating His meal in His presence. Drinking to Him toasts of praise for his grace and mercy for saving even a sinner like me!

Have you lost your anticipation for the Coming Kingdom? Have you suffered, and wonder **Why God?** Why is your way so painful? Why have you thwarted my plans and expectations? Why is this road that I am on so much longer than I have expected, so full of hazards?

We are traveling all of us upon a long road, and we wait patiently for that time when we too recognize our savior.

But as we travel, we need to remember that Jesus is with us, he has made himself known to us. He teaches everything we need for this life and provides us a sure path for the next. Do not be slow to believe all that he has taught us... and in the meantime, we meet him in the breaking of bread. We recognize our savior and know his face... A foretaste of our communion with Christ, and a restoration of our anticipation.