

## God's Saving Hand in a Time of Despair

The current state of the world reminded me that at the beginning of the year some faculty members came together to reenact the biblical scene of the disciples and Jesus on the road to Emmaus.

Today, we find ourselves on our own road to Emmaus searching for answers to the threat the entire world presently faces to our social, economic, and physical wellbeing; a threat brought about by the invisible enemy named COVID-19. In Jesus's time, the disciples were probably feeling like many of us, our friends, and family feel do now — uncertainty about the future, disillusionment and questioning of what our new reality will be.

Yet there are two things I consider: God's divine providence and sovereignty.

While the disciples were walking along the road to Emmaus, Jesus came alongside them and journeyed with them a good part of the way. On that journey Jesus invited them to reflect on all that led to His crucifixion from the days of Moses (Luke 24: 25-27).

I believe in times like these we must all reflect on the road that brought us to this stage of our journey. Certainly, no one desires these circumstances, but God's providence is greater than our short-sightedness.

In his book, "Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices," Thomas Brooks, a 16<sup>th</sup>-century Puritan, tried to explain a seeming contradiction: "The hand of God may be against a man, when the Love and Heart of God is much set upon a man." While God may permit bad times to fall upon us, God also extends a saving hand as He did with David, Joseph, and Job as they struggled in a time of despair.

As the disciples approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if He was going farther. But they urged Him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So, he chose to stay with them.

In times like these, we should all ask Jesus to "stay with us." Indeed, I have heard people invoking God far more often during difficult times in times of plenty. While we have all seen our perceived control over our lives whisked away, God is nonetheless revealing Himself to us all. And this is the time to assert His sovereignty in this world.

When Jesus finally revealed Himself to the disciples, they immediately jumped up and went back to Jerusalem, back home to family and friends to spread the good news that what the women had said after visiting the tomb was true (Luke 24:22-24).

Thomas Brooks described God's sovereignty in this way: "Divine wisdom and love will so order all things here below, that they shall work for the real, spiritual, and eternal good of those who love Him." I believe this is our only hope in the current situation. We only need look for God in our circumstances and He will reveal the deeper purpose.

When the disciples got back in Jerusalem, Jesus revealed Himself to them again. They were still telling of their encounter with Jesus on the road to Emmaus when Jesus appeared to them all and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you... and I am going to send you what my Father has promised..." (Luke 24:36-49)

In sum, I will place my trust in that Peace Jesus offered, confident that God keeps His promises "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you." (Deuteronomy 31:6)

He will not fail us.

Dr. Ron Washington  
H-E-B School of Business and Administration  
MIS Department Coordinator