ST. LUKE 24: 36b-48 TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE

EVER SINCE PARADISE LOST DEATH HAS SWALLOWED UP EVERY LIVING THING. DEATH HAS ALWAYS HAD THE LAST WORD! & HERE THE DISCIPLES ARE FACING WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE IMPOSSIBLE: THEIR CRUCIFIED TEACHER – ALIVE & WELL & RISEN FROM THE DEAD. IT'S TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE! THEY PINCH THEMSELVES / THEYARE SURE THEY ARE SEEING A MIRAGE / A GHOST! THEY ARE "STARTLED & TERRIFIED!" JESUS DOES NOT CONDEMN THEM OR SCOLD THEM FOR THEIR DOUBTS OR SKEPTICISM. HE ASKS THEM A VERY CARING QUESTION: "WHY ARE YOU FRIGHTENED & WHY DO DOUBTS ARISE IN YOUR HEARTS?....TOUCH ME & SEE! & BY THE WAY DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO EAT? ..... THEY GAVE HIM A PIECE OF BROILED FISH & HE TOOK IT & ATE IT IN THEIR PRESENCE."

LET ME ASK YOU: HAVE YOU NEVER HAD DOUBTS OR MISGIVINGS OR STRUGGLES? HAVE YOU NEVER BEEN SKEPTICAL? I REMEMBER SAYING IN A GROUP ONE TIME, IF THE IS A BOOTH IN HEAVEN ENTITLED, "ALL UNANSWERED QUESTIONS ANSWERED HERE" GET OUR OF MY WAY, BECAUSE I AM GOING TO SPEND HALF OF ETERNITY GETTING MY ANSWERED." A MAN CAME UP TO ME SMILING. "PASTOR, JUST HOW LONG IS HALF OF ETERNITY?" THERE WAS A TIME AT THE SEMINARY WHEN I WAS READY TO LEAVE. I TOLD MY ROOMMATES & CLASSMATES THAT I WAS NOT GOING TO BE ANY PHONY-BALONEY PASTOR. I HAD TOO MANY DOUBTS. TODAY I LOOK BACK & THANK GOD FOR THOSE CLASSMATES & PROFESSORS WHO HELPED ME TROUGH MY STRUGGLES. TODAY I SEE THAT GOD LOVED ME & WAS ALWAYS THERE FOR ME NO MATTER WHAT! MY HEARTFELT PRAYER WAS, GOD, I CAN'T CONTINUE UNLESS YOU GIVE ME AN ANSWER TO SOME OF MY QUESTIONS!" I CAN PROMISE YOU THAT IF YOUR DOUBTS & MISGIVINGS ARE HONEST --- IF YOU REALLY WANT TO KNOW THE TRUTH, GOD WILL SEE TO IT THAT YOU HAVE WHAT YOU NEED. ..... SACRATES WAS ONCE ASKED, "WHAT IS THE SECRET OF KNOWLEDGE?" HE ANSWERED, "I KNOW ONLY ONE THING FOR CERTAIN – I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING FOR CERTAI N." THE KEY TO KNOWLEDGE IS THE KNOW THAT YOU DON'T KNOW!

A RUSSIAN PASTOR ATTENDED A MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE IN NAIROBI, KENYA IN EAST AFRICA. HE SPOKE IN. BROKEN ENGLISH. HE SAT IN SILENCE FOR DAYS. ON THE LAST DAY HE WAS ASKED IF HE HAD ANYTHING TO SAY. HE SAID, I NOT UNDERSTAND ANYTHING YOU SAY. I COME FOR ONLY ONE REASON – TO SEE IF YOU KNOW JESUS LIKE I KNOW JESUS – TO SEE IF JESUS COMES TO PEOPLE IN THE FREE WORLD LIKE HE COMES TO PEOPLE IN COMMUNIST WORLD -- TO SEE IF YOU KNOW THAT GOD HAS COME TO FIND YOU. HE WENT ON TO TELL HOW HE WAS A FORMER KGB, A RUSSIAN SECRET SERVICE AGENT – HOW HIS ASSIGNMENT WAS TO GO AND ARREST ALL THOSE WHO WORSHIPPED ILLEGALLY. ONE NIGHT HE RAIDED A HOUSE & ALL THOSE PRESENT RAN AWAY EXCEPT ONE OLD WOMAN. WE ALL

THOUGHT SHE WAS TOO OLD TO RUN. SHE SAID, "I DID NOT RUN, BECAUSE GOD TOLD ME TO STAY HERE. GOD WANT ME TO TELL YOU JESUS IS ALIVE! I SAID, "GRANDMOTHER, WHY WOULD YOU WASTE YOUR LIFE & DEFY YOUR COUNTY TO WORSHIP A DEAD JEW? SHE SAID, "JEW IS NOT DEAD! HE IS ALIVE! & GOD TOLD ME TO STAY HERE & I AM NOT A TRAITOR. .... I SAW MY HUSBAND DIE AT LENINGRAD & I REMEMBER HIS BRIGHT BLOOD ON THE SNOW. I TOOK HIS PLACE AT THE WALL. I WAS NOT AFRAID THEN & I AM NOT AFRAID NOW! GOD TOLD ME TO STAND AT THE WALL & GOD TOLD ME TO TELL YOU JESUS IS ALIVE!" SHE PLACED HER N.T. IN MY HANDS & THEN TOOK MY HAND IN BOTH OF HER HANDS. SHE SAID, "HERE IS EVIDENCE YOU NEED TO SEND ME TO PRISON." INSTEAD OF TURNING IN THE EVIDENCE, I READ THE BOOK. HE LAUGHED & SAID, "YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENED THEN!"

ONCE THE DISCIPLES SAW JESUS EAT THE FISH, THEY SURRENDERED. SPIRITUAL POWER DOES NOT JUST COME FROM KNOWLEDGE – KNOWING ALL THERE IS TO KNOW. SPIRITUAL POWER COMES FROM SURRENDER – WHEN "GOD'S SPIRIT WITNESSES TO OUR SPIRITS THAT WE ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD." HOW LITTLE WE CONTROL OUR DESTINY & OUR LIVES! LET IT GO & LET HIM HAVE IT! THIS IS HOW DRUNK PEOPLE GET SOBER & HOW DRUG ADDICTS GET STRAIGHT. – HOW LIVES GET SAVED! MANY OF YOU ARE WITNESSES TO THESE THINGS! TELL YOUR STORY! SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH & HOPE WITH OTHERS! GET ELBOW DEEP IN PEOPLE'S STRUGGLES & PROBLEMS AS JESUS DID. MAYBE YOU REALLY ARE THE ONLY BIBLE OTHER PEOPLE WILL EVER READ. LET US ALL PRAY FOR THE POWER TO BREAK OUT OF OUR COMFORT ZONES & START GLORIFYING CHRIST. YOU & I CARRY HIS NAME & MAKE UP HIS CHURCH! "THEN HE OPENED THEIR MINDS TO UNDERSTAND THE SCRIPTURES ..... THAT THE MESSIAH IS TO SUFFER & TO RISE FROM THE DEAD ON THE 3RD DAY & THAT REPENTANCE & FORGIVENESS OF SINS IS TO BE PROCLAIMED IN HIS NAME TO ALL NATIONS." YOU ARE WITNESSES TO THESE THINGS! IT'S NOT TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE!