



Pauline Reading: Chris Monaghan CP

1 THESSALONIANS 3:12-4:2

- May the Lord be generous in increasing your love and make you love one another and the whole human race as much as we love you. And may he so confirm your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless in the sight of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus Christ comes with all his saints.
- Finally, brothers and sisters, we urge you and appeal to you in the Lord Jesus to make more and more progress in the kind of life that you are meant to live: the life that God wants, as you learnt from us, and as you are already living it. You have not forgotten the instructions we gave you on the authority of the Lord Jesus.

Mount Olympus

- Is generally agreed to be our earliest preserved Christian text.

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- It gives us a glimpse into what was happening in the churches decades before the Gospels came to be written.
- Imagine a time before churches, a time when Christians were small groups of believers in a world that did not understand or accept them. Their message came from the outer boundaries of the Roman Empire. One that was deemed to be both fanciful and outrageous.

MESSAGE OF JESUS

- A Judean carpenter from Galilee who was brutally killed was claimed to have been raised from the dead who was going to return soon to judge all creation, making all rulers, emperors, governors and kings obsolete, whose reign would be marked by peace, love, and compassion. Could it possibly be true? If it was, the world would never be the same again.



- In the northern province of Macedonia on the major highway known as the Via Egnatia fledging communities in Thessalonica and Philippi not only accepted the message that Paul and his co-workers proclaimed but became courageous witnesses in their turn who were praised for their faithful endurance.

WHILE WE ARE WAITING

- Growing in love
- Being strengthened in holiness
- Being ready to meet Jesus on his return (blameless)
- Making progress in the life of faith
- Not forgetting what has been handed on to us



WHEN THE LORD JESUS COMES

- My dear Paul,
- The followers of Jesus in this city are in receipt of your letter, which was read out in church a month ago and which appears to confirm a widely held view that our Lord will be returning in glory at any moment to take believers such as my humble self back with him to heaven. Being a hard-headed businessmen I took your words with utmost seriousness. To prepare myself and my family for the day of the Lord, I sold my business at a knockdown price and gave the proceeds to the poor – and that, let me at, was a tidy sum, but I assume I won't need any cash in heaven!

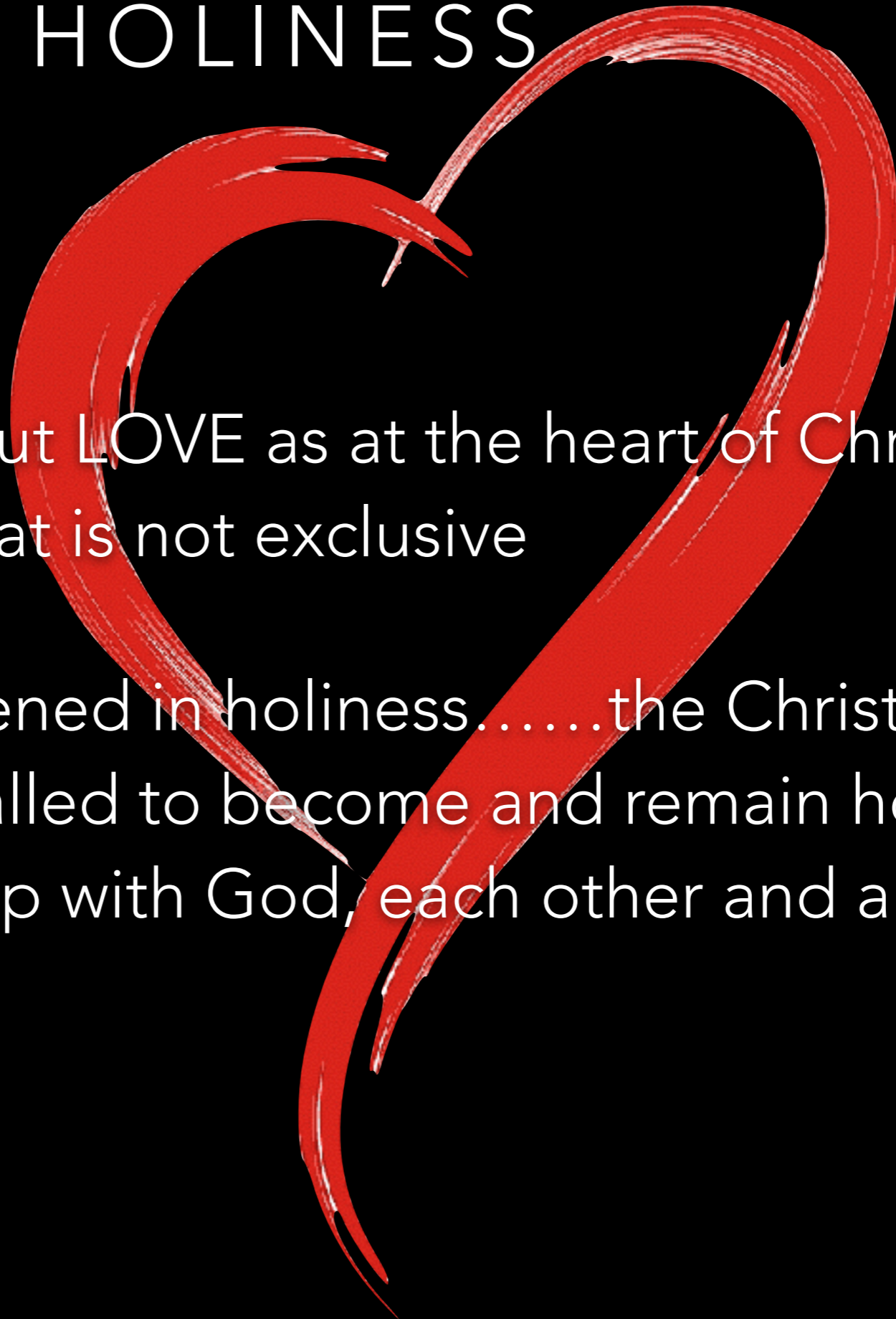
- So here I am with my bags packed, my property disposed of and myself, my wife, and my children taking it in shifts to scan the skies for something unusual to appear. In fact, every time I hear a trumpet, I nearly jump out of my skin! And what has happened? Nothing.
- I can't help feeling that I've been made to look an utter fool in the eyes of my friends and my business acquaintances. They all think I've gone stark, raving mad. Meanwhile, the man who bought my business, far from suffering the catastrophe reserved for the wicked, is making a handsome profit and living in my house, which is one of the finest in the city.....Paphlos

CHRISTIANS WHO DIED BEFORE JESUS' RETURN

- 1 Thess 4:13-18 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died.

LOVE AND HOLINESS

- First task is about LOVE as at the heart of Christian life.... A love that is not exclusive
- Being strengthened in holiness.....the Christians were called saints- called to become and remain holy – in right relationship with God, each other and all the world.



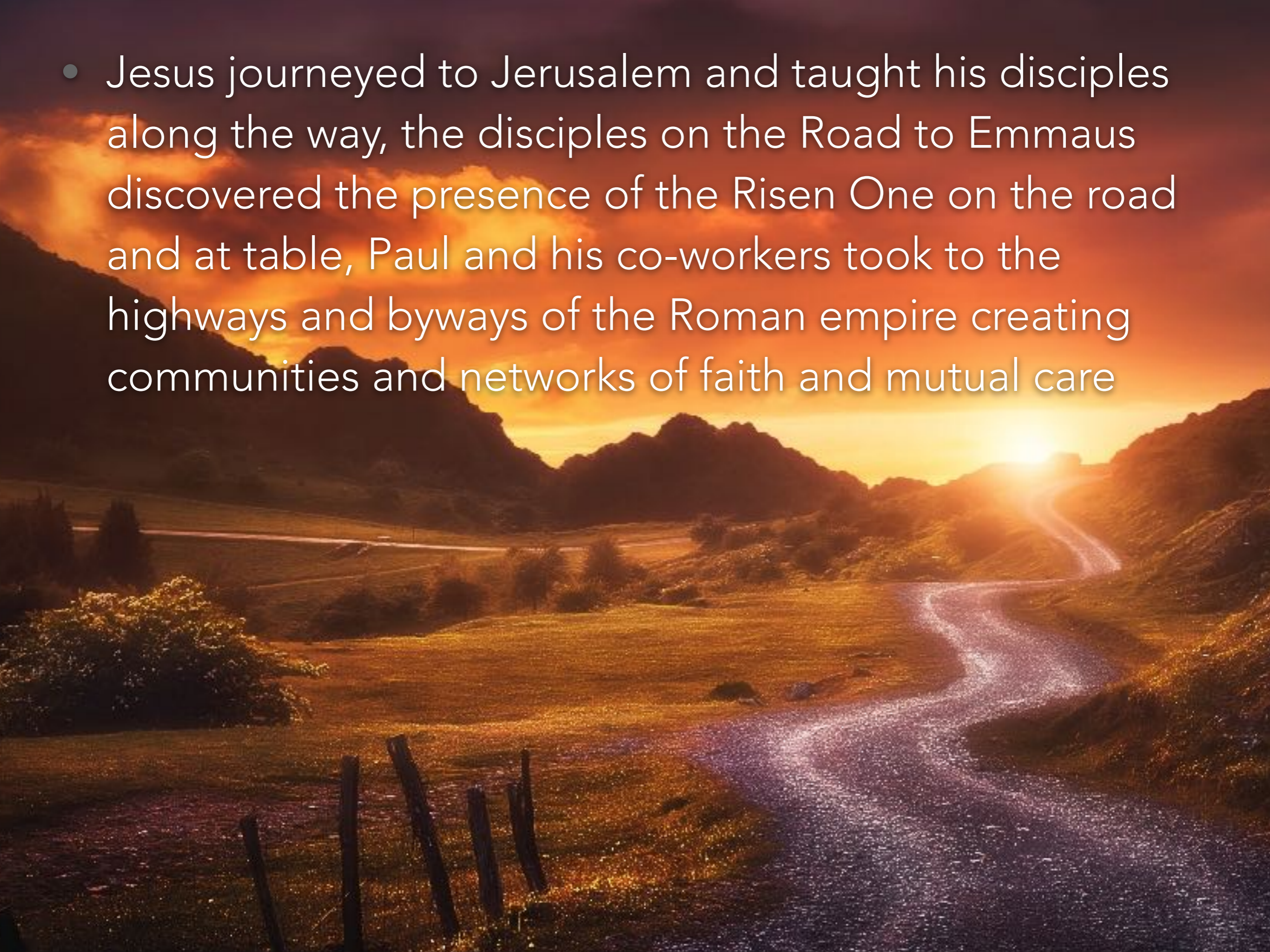
- “But if one must reduce sanctification to a single notion, it may be summarized in the idea that the believer both lives in holiness and grows into holiness.” Porter
- Holiness and love are intimately connected – the greatest commandments being love of God and our neighbour



FAITH AS A JOURNEY

- Discipleship is a way of walking.... A journey....from the time that Abraham and Sarah set out on a long journey to an unseen land, to the Passover and desert wanderings, to the journeys into exile and that of return this motif says something profound about the nature of a life lived in faith....

- Jesus journeyed to Jerusalem and taught his disciples along the way, the disciples on the Road to Emmaus discovered the presence of the Risen One on the road and at table, Paul and his co-workers took to the highways and byways of the Roman empire creating communities and networks of faith and mutual care



NO TIME FOR STANDING STILL

- The life of faith is a dynamic process... not about standing still, or priding ourselves on our achievements and merits.
 - It's about growing and not about being content to stay where you are - especially when it comes to love.
 - We need to recover some of that urgent desire..... that expectation and vibrant hope.....
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