

Introduction

Welcome to St. Peter's Lutheran Church Estevan. Pastor Kleemola here to bring you a partial service for the Third Sunday of Easter - April 26, 2020.

Readings for the Second Sunday of Easter

First Reading: Acts 2:14a, 36-41
Psalm: Psalm 116:1-14
Epistle: 1 Peter 1:17-25
Gospel: Luke 24: 13-35

Text for today's Sermon is taken from Luke 24:13-35

On the Road to Emmaus

That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ

should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Sermon – Present in His Word

Christ has risen! He has risen, indeed! Alleluia!

Dear friends in Christ Jesus; There is a subtle, but very persistent theme in the events of the Resurrection as told in the Gospel accounts of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. It shows up in the announcement that the angels make to the women at the tomb. Listen to the angel's words and you will hear a common thread. In Matthew's account, the angel said, "**He is not here, for he has risen, as he said.**" (Matt 28:6) In Mark, the angel said, "**Go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.**" (Mk 16:7) Luke's account is the longest. In his account, the angel said, "**He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.**" (Lk 24:6-7) Did you notice the small, but very important idea that each angel had in their message? Each of these accounts made it clear that an important part of the angel's message of the Resurrection was a reminder that Jesus had regularly told His disciples that He would rise from the dead. They all included an emphasis on the Word of Jesus. And, since Jesus is God, this is an emphasis on the Word of God.

Jesus Himself made this very clear in the reading we just heard. Jesus joined two of His disciples who were traveling from Jerusalem to Emmaus. **That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking with**

each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. (Lk 24:13–16) Notice that Jesus did not immediately reveal Himself to them. Instead, He first taught them from the Word of God. The opening words of their conversation show how much they need this instruction.

Jesus greeted them by asking a perfectly natural question. **“What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?”** (Lk 24:17) This gave the two travelers the opportunity to express their grief at Jesus’ death. The two travelers **stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?”** (Lk 24:17–18) From these words, we learn that the news of Jesus’ crucifixion had spread throughout Jerusalem. Cleopas assumed that anyone who had been in Jerusalem would know all about it.

Then Jesus asked one of those open-ended questions that gave Cleopas and his friend an opportunity to talk. **He said to them, “What things?” And they said to him, “Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.”** (Lk 24:19–24)

This is a very good summary of Jesus’ ministry. It even speaks of the resurrection. The words, **“We had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel,”** even proclaim that Jesus is the Messiah. The only problem is that they didn’t believe that it was true. Their words showed that they knew everything they needed to believe in Jesus. Never-the-less, from their point of view, it was more like a dream than reality.

Right then and there, Jesus could have said, “Here I am! The accounts of my resurrection are true!” He could have shown them His hands, feet, and side. He could have shown them that He was alive, but He didn’t. Instead, He began an intense Bible Study. **He said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” And beginning**

with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. (Lk 24:25–27)

When I was in seminary, I took a course on Messianic prophecies, but I'm sure that the little I learned paled in comparison to this authoritative interpretation the risen Christ gave to those two disciples. What an eye-opening experience that must have been – to see all of God's plan for our salvation laid out, from the first promise that the Seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent (Gen 3:15), to the detailed descriptions of the crucifixion in Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53. It was all there for any with eyes to see. **"...A band of evil men has encircled me, they have pierced my hands and my feet.... They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing."** (Ps 22:16, 18) **"Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed."** More than 700 years before it happened, Isaiah could have been standing at the foot of the cross as he describes how Christ was made a guilt offering for our sins.

Before Jesus revealed Himself to these two disciples, He showed them Christ in Moses and the prophets... what we would call the OT. He taught them that the entire OT points to Christ. He used the OT to show these two disciples that it **was necessary that the Christ should suffer** as they had witnessed with their own eyes and ears. He showed them, from the OT, that the very heart of what it meant to be the Christ was for **the chief priests and rulers to deliver Him up to be condemned to death, and crucified.** According to the Scriptures, this is exactly what the Christ came to do and experience. The very testimony that they gave when they explained the happenings in Jerusalem... who Jesus was... what He experienced... His suffering and death... this very testimony points to Jesus as the Messiah promised by God in the Holy Scriptures. No wonder that their hearts burned within them.

Last week's Gospel Reading was John's account of Jesus appearing to the disciples in the locked room. When Thomas saw the Lord, he confessed, **"My Lord and my God!"** (Jn 20:28) Jesus responded to Thomas and said, **"Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."** (Jn 20:29) In today's Gospel, we heard how Jesus did that with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. In this account, Jesus pointed to the Holy Scriptures as the proof of His resurrection *before* He revealed Himself to these two disciples. They did not know it was Jesus talking to them. Never-the-less, they believed because of the testimony of the Holy Scriptures. They believed without seeing.

When Jesus first joined the disciples, they had the facts exactly right, but the facts depressed them. The facts depressed them because they did not interpret the facts in light of the Holy Scriptures. They did not understand how the crucifixion fit into the plan of God. They **had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel**, but they did not understand that the crucifixion was the way that the Christ did the redeeming. It was as Jesus opened the Holy Scriptures to them that they began to understand that, in the crucifixion, Jesus not only redeemed Israel, but He redeemed the entire world. Jesus opened the Gospel of the OT to them, and the Holy Spirit called them by that Gospel. The Holy Spirit created faith in them even though they did not recognize that it was Jesus Himself who taught them. Not only did the Holy Spirit bring them to faith, but they became an example of **“those who have not seen and yet have believed.”** (Jn 20:29)

There are many devout Christians who really wish they could have heard the Bible class that Jesus gave on that road to Emmaus, myself among them. How wonderful it would be to hear God's Word taught by the perfect Teacher. While we cannot know every last detail of His teaching, today's reading gives us insight into the general theme. In fact, I've told our catechumens more than once that if I ask them what the OT is about, they had better say “Jesus.” This is a primary principle of Biblical interpretation taught by the Scriptures themselves and demonstrated in today's Gospel: **Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.** (Lk 24:27 Jesus Himself tells us that the Bible teaches us that it is **necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory.** (Lk 24:26) It is by this suffering that Jesus not only redeemed Israel, but also redeemed the entire world.

Now that Jesus had taught them from the Holy Scriptures, it was time for them to share a meal. As they talked, the two disciples **drew near to the village to which they were going. [Jesus] acted as if he were going farther, but they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.” So he went in to stay with them.** (Lk 24:28–29) This is common Middle Eastern hospitality at work. There were no Motel 6's, Super 8's or other public lodgings. As travelers came to the end of the day, those who had farther to go, acted as though they would continue their journey. Those who had arrived at their destination, insisted that other travelers stay with them and enjoy their hospitality.

Hospitality included a meal. When you stayed at someone's house, **they** would serve a meal to you. **They** would bless the food and serve it to you, the guest. But something changed as this guest came to eat with these two disciples. Notice how Jesus turned the tables on His hosts. He became the host and served them. **When he was at table with them, he took the bread**

and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. (Lk 24:30–31) Jesus was the invited guest, but He became the host. He took the bread. He blessed it. He broke it. He gave it. Jesus served the two disciples. And it was as Jesus served them with this meal that He finally revealed Himself to them.

This pattern of teaching and then eating is very common in the Bible. The Gospels record many meals that Jesus had with a wide variety of people. Every time there was teaching before eating. First there is teaching from the Word of God. Then there is a meal with the Christ. This meal in Emmaus was different in that it is a meal after Jesus rose from the dead. In this meal, Jesus began teaching the disciples that although they could not always see Him, He was always with them. He was with them in disguise on the road as He taught from God's Word. He was with them as He broke the bread and they recognized Him. He was still with them even after He disappeared from their sight.

This pattern of hearing God's Word and then eating God's meal has made its way into the liturgy of the church. We follow the pattern that Jesus used as we first have the Service of the Word where we hear the teaching that Jesus has passed on to us through the writings of His apostles. We continue that pattern as we eat a meal with Jesus and all the company of heaven even as Jesus gives His body and blood for us to eat and to drink.

Even though we cannot see Jesus, He has promised to be with us. He is with us as we hear the Word of God and the Holy Spirit uses it to strengthen our faith. Then, after we hear teaching that is based on the Word of God, we have a meal with Jesus where He feeds us His true body and His true blood given and shed for us for the forgiveness of sins.

Jesus comes to us in His Word. He comes to us as His Word falls on our ears and He comes to us as the Word combines with the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper. In each case Jesus reveals Himself to us. He is with us just as He was with the Emmaus disciples. We have His promise and by His promise He gives us forgiveness, life, and salvation. Amen

Prayer of the Church

You have heard our pleas for mercy, O Lord, and given up Your Son to be our Saviour. Hear us now as we come to You on behalf of ourselves and all people according to their needs.

Our hearts have burned in us, O Lord, as Your Word has been read and preached. Keep our faith from growing cold and grant us grace, that we may not waver in faith or succumb to temptation. Give to us and to our children receptive hearts, that we may hear and, hearing, believe and, believing, be steadfast in this faith and hope all our days.

You have cleansed us, O Lord, with water and the Word in Baptism, and You have marked us as Your own people. Give to us grace, that we may live out this faith in holy lives, lifting up Your name in word and works for as long as we live. Guide us, that with souls purified by obedience to the truth, we may love one another earnestly from a pure heart.

Bless Your Church, O Lord, that she may welcome the stranger in Christ's name and manifest the unity of the faith in the bonds of love. Gather together those who are separated, and preserve their faith by Your Word until all precautions and shelter measures have passed. Bless Tim Teuscher, president of our Synod; David Haberstock, our Regional Pastor; and all our LC-C pastors. Bless those training for church-work vocations. Bless each of us as we live out our baptismal vocation of worship, witness, prayer and service.

Guard our nation, O Lord, that we may enjoy peace and security in the face of threat and danger. Bless Justin Trudeau, our Prime Minister; the Parliament of Canada; Scott Moe, our Premier; and all provincial and local officials, that they may fulfill their offices faithfully. Bless all emergency and medical workers and the members of the armed forces who protect us, and we ask that You would teach all nations the ways of peace

Deliver us from all our afflictions, and grant us strength to bear all our burdens, O Lord. Hear us in particular for Pattie Berday, Dean Euteneier, , Gerald Olson, Wanda Stang, and those whom we name in our hearts. According to Your gracious will, heal the sick, relieve those who suffer, comfort the grieving and give peace to the dying.

Stay with us, O Lord, and be our strength in weakness and our hope in time of despair. Your gracious will once kept the saints in faith even unto death. Keep us, we pray, with them in Your faith and fear, that we may be found faithful when Christ comes again in His glory to bring to fulfillment all things, once and forevermore.

Through the breaking of the bread, O Lord, feed us upon the flesh of Christ and grant us to drink His blood in faith. Forgive our sins, strengthen our faith, build up our unity as a congregation and Synod, and equip us through this communion to love You and love one another as You have loved us. Preserve the faith of those who wish to receive this Sacrament in the presence of the congregation but cannot, and grant them their desire soon.

Accept, O Lord, this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving we bring for all Your goodness and generosity. Accept our tithes and offerings, that Your Church may have the resources to proclaim Your Gospel and care for the poor and those in need.

These and whatever other things we need, O Lord, we pray You to grant us in the name of and for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose death has made full atonement for our sin and whose resurrection has granted to us the promise of our own joyful resurrection to eternal life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, we pray. **Amen.**

Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you.

The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.