

3rd Sunday of Easter

Luke 24

LSB Hymns: 483, 531, 459, 830, 642, 920.

Introit: Psalm 4.

P Answer me when I call, O my righteous God! You have made wide room for me in my distress.

C Be gracious to me, and hear my prayer!

P O sons of man, how long will my glory be disgraced?

C How long will you love what is empty and search for what is a lie?

P Know that the LORD has singled out for Himself the one who is devout.

C The LORD will hear when I call to Him.

P Tremble, and do not sin!

C Tell this to yourselves on your beds, and be silent!

P Offer righteous sacrifices,

C and trust in the LORD!

P Many are saying, "Who will show us anything good?"

C Lift up the light of Your face on us, O LORD!

P You have put more joy in my heart

C than people have when their grain and their new wine have increased.

P Let me at once lie down in peace, and sleep!

All: For You alone, O LORD, will make me dwell in safety.

Collect: O God, through the humiliation of Your Son You raised up the fallen world. Grant to Your faithful people, rescued from the peril of everlasting death, perpetual gladness and eternal joys; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

1st Reading: Acts 3:11-21.

Epistle: 1 John 3:1-7.

Gospel: Luke 24:36-49

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for the sermon is the Gospel heard before, Luke 24:36-49.

36 While they were talking about what had happened, Jesus stood among them. He said to them, "Peace to you!"

37 They were startled and terrified and thought that they were seeing a ghost. 38 He asked them, "Why are you troubled? Why do doubts come into your minds? 39 Look at My hands and My feet! It is I Myself. Feel Me and see! A ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see Me have."

40 After He said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.

41 While they were still so overwhelmed with joy that they could not believe it, He asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?"

42 They gave Him a piece of broiled fish. 43 He took it and ate it while they watched Him.

44 He told them, "These are the very words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, namely, that everything written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

45 Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. 46 He told them, "This is what Scripture has said: 'The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day; 47 and on the basis of His name, repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.'

48 You will testify to these things. 49 "I am sending you what My Father has promised. Wait here in the city until you are armed with power from above!"

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us in your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,
Peace be with you.

The appearances of Christ after His resurrection are so full of meaning. You not only have the obvious teaching that Jesus rose from the dead, but you also have many other teachings concerning the life of the Church. Last week, we not only learned that Jesus rose from the dead, but we also learned that Jesus

established the office of the Holy Ministry and gave it the authority to forgive sins. Today's Gospel once again shows us that Jesus rose from the dead, and it also gives us a hint how to interpret the Bible and what the church is supposed to proclaim.

Today's reading from the Gospel account of Luke once again has Jesus showing Himself to the disciples. Once again, Jesus invited the disciples to examine the wounds of the crucifixion. **He asked them, "Why are you troubled? Why do doubts come into your minds? Look at My hands and My feet! It is I Myself. Feel Me and see! A ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see Me have.** Jesus very much wants the disciples to realize that He is no mere spirit. They are not just seeing things. He's the real flesh and blood Jesus risen from the dead.

Then, when they still seemed to struggle with the idea that Jesus was a real flesh and blood person, **He asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?"** **42 They gave Him a piece of broiled fish. 43 He took it and ate it while they watched Him.** Jesus really wants them to understand that He is truly risen from the dead in His own flesh and blood body.

Now after Jesus demonstrated His resurrection, He taught the disciples a very important principle for the proper understanding of the Bible. **He told them, "These are the very words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, namely, that everything written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled."** Here Jesus instructs the disciples and us that the correct way to understand the Bible is to find Jesus in every passage. As you know the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms are the Old Testament. Jesus basically showed the disciples that the entire Old Testament is about Him.

Jesus then gave the disciples the precise meaning of the Scriptures. **Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. 46 He told them, "This is what Scripture has said: 'The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day; 47 and on the basis of His name, repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.'** When Jesus says, **"This is what Scripture has said;** He's saying that this is what the Bible says. Since Jesus is the Christ, He Himself has accomplished the suffering and the rising from the dead. He also proclaimed repentance and the forgiveness of sins until He ascended into heaven. In today's Gospel, He passed that proclamation on to His disciples. Each generation has passed that mission on to the next. This is the mission statement that Jesus gave to the Church ... **and on the basis of His name, repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.'** Christ's instructions guarantee that when the Apostles write the books of the New Testament, those books will proclaim repentance and the forgiveness of sins in the name of Christ. This means that the New Testament will also be about Jesus since He is the source of forgiveness.

What does it mean to proclaim repentance? The Augsburg Confession says, ***"Repentance consists of two parts. One part is contrition, that is, terrors striking the conscience through the knowledge of sin. The other part is faith, which is born of the Gospel [Romans 10:17] or the Absolution and believes that for Christ's sake, sins are forgiven."*** (AC: I, art. xii, par. 3-5) So step one in the proclamation of repentance is the proclamation of sin in such a way that the punishment you deserve for your sin strikes terror in you. The second step in the proclamation of repentance is to point you to Christ and His work to save you from that terrifying punishment.

So what does it mean to proclaim forgiveness? Even though we are guilty and deserve punishment here on earth and forever in hell, God, for Christ's sake, declares us righteous. By His death, Christ made satisfaction for our sins. (AC: I, art. iv, par. 2) The proclamation of forgiveness begins with the proclamation of Jesus earning forgiveness for us on the cross. It also includes the proclamation of the Holy Spirit delivering forgiveness to us by Word and Sacrament. It includes the proclamation of the Holy Spirit working faith in us so that we receive the benefits of that forgiveness. It includes describing the benefits of salvation and eternal life that come with forgiveness.

Peter gives an excellent example of the proclamation of repentance and the forgiveness of sins in today's first reading. The Holy Spirit had just worked through Peter in order to heal a lame man. After Peter healed the lame man, he went into the temple area. The man who had been lame went with Peter. The man who had been lame was now hopping, and skipping, and jumping for joy as he went up to the temple. This drew the attention of the crowds.

As the crowd gathered, Peter began proclaiming the terror of sin: **The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you handed over and denied before Pilate when he had decided to release Him. 14 You denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you. 15 You killed the Author of life, but God raised Him from the dead. We are witnesses of this** (Acts 3:13–15) Peter flat out told the crowd that they were guilty of crucifying Jesus who was not only innocent, but is also the Son of God.

Now listen to his proclamation of the second part of repentance along with the proclamation of forgiveness: **"Repent therefore, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped away, 20 so that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that He may send the Christ, whom He has previously appointed for you, namely, Jesus! 21 Heaven must receive Him until the times when everything is restored, as God has promised since the world began by the mouths of His holy prophets."** (Acts 3:19–21) See how Peter points the crowd to Jesus. He describes forgiveness with the words, **"so that your sins may be wiped away."** "Wiping away" is another way of talking about forgiveness.

The interesting thing about Peter's sermon is that not everyone who heard his sermon participated in the actual conspiracy to kill Jesus. In fact, when you study Peter's other sermons, you discover that he regularly accused his hearers of killing Jesus even if they weren't even in Jerusalem on Good Friday. After a while you begin to realize that when Peter accuses people of killing Jesus, he is not just talking about the people who conspired to crucify Jesus on Good Friday, but he is talking about all our sin that caused God's wrath to pour out on Jesus as He hung on the cross. If Peter were here today, he would accuse us of killing the Lord of Life. How? With our sins.

With what sins have we crucified the Lord of Life. Have we listened to gossip without checking the facts? Do we stubbornly defend our own opinion rather than stubbornly defending the teachings of God that we find in His Word? Are we arrogant enough to believe that we don't need to join our fellow Christians in Bible study? Who is number one in our lives, us or God? Jesus said the church should proclaim repentance and that repentance should terrify us by revealing the punishment we have earned with our sin. The proclamation of repentance should be frightening. Do we really understand that if God were 100% fair, we would go to hell? If not, we've not fully repented.

Thank the Lord that He is not fair. Instead, Jesus did the most unfair thing possible. Even though He was perfectly innocent, He exchanged His holy righteousness for our sin. He earned forgiveness for you and I with His innocent suffering and death on the cross and the shedding of His holy, precious blood. For our sake [God] made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21) The great exchange that Jesus made with us as He died on the cross is the most unfair thing that has ever happened. It's also the source of the forgiveness of sins for all of us.

Although the proclamation of the forgiveness of sins begins in terror, the end result is the greatest comfort ... the comfort that our sins are forgiven ... the comfort that eternal life is already ours. This is the comfort that the Apostle John gives in the beginning of today's epistle: See what kind of love the Father has given to us, **that we are called "the children of God"!** and so we are. (1 John 3:1)

Christ has instructed His church to proclaim repentance and the forgiveness of sin in His name. Our order of service should proclaim repentance and the forgiveness of sin in His name. Our preaching and teaching should proclaim repentance and the forgiveness of sin in His name. Our responses and singing should proclaim repentance and the forgiveness of sin in His name. Anything that says nothing about repentance and the forgiveness of sin in the name of Christ does not belong in our service.

Christ has risen. He teaches His church to proclaim repentance and the forgiveness of sin in the name of Christ. The proclamation of repentance produces honest terror with the law and then points us to Christ. The proclamation of the forgiveness of sins gives the greatest comfort for it assures us that our sins are forgiven for the sake of Christ on the cross. That forgiveness assures us that we are a child of God and will live with Him in eternal joy. **Amen**

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. **Amen.**

3rd Hymn: 459,

Prayer of the Church 3rd Sunday of Easter

P Having died and risen from the dead, Christ has fulfilled the prophecies and has brought life and immortality to us in Him. Rejoicing in this eternal victory, let us pray for the Church here and throughout the world and for all people.

Brief Silence,

P Gracious Father, You sent Your Son to deliver us from death and hell. Sustain us and all the Church in steadfast faith in Christ's resurrection, confident that the work we do in Him is not in vain..... Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Gracious Father, turn us constantly to Your reliable and saving Holy Scriptures, that meditating day and night on Your certain Word, studying it together, and hearing it proclaimed, we may grow in knowledge and love of You..... Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Gracious Father, uphold and encourage all faithful pastors, and all the people of Your Church throughout the world, that we may all joyfully confess You and Your Son's saving work by the power of the Holy Spirit.....Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Gracious Father, give us wise and caring rulers, and all in authority over us, and lead them to uphold the common good, defend the weak and the unborn, and preserve justice for all people..... Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Gracious Father, hear the cries of all who are sick, recuperating, lonely, and depressed (especially _____), and use us to bring Your Word of life to encourage them in Christ's victory..... Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Gracious Father, since You raised Your Son from the grave, death must release all who trust in Him. Give faith to those near death and to their families. Comfort all who mourn the death of loved ones in the promise of our life everlasting with You..... Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Gracious Father, You give us Christ's Body and Blood to forgive our sins and strengthen our faith and love. Bless all who come to this Sacrament today that they may receive it in true repentance and joyful confession of the faith once delivered to the saints..... Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P All this we ask, gracious Father, through Your Son, Jesus Christ, who has conquered death and the grave, and in the Holy Spirit, the giver of life, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

4th Hymn: 830,