

*In Nomine Jesu*

## Who is your Jesus?

Hear once again the Word of the Lord to His Church in this, His Third Service, on the day of the Resurrection of our Lord:

*And they gave exegesis, namely, they related, the things on the road and how He was known to them in the breaking of the bread.<sup>1</sup>*

Thus far our text.

**Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**

Alleluia, Christ is risen!!! [*He is risen indeed, Alleluia!*]

Our text begins:

*That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about sixty stadia (seven miles) from Jerusalem, and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened.<sup>2</sup>*

For these two disciples of Jesus, one named Cleopas, it was the end of a very long weekend, which had followed a very long week! Just seven days prior, as their Master had entered Jerusalem triumphantly, they anticipated that He would lead the charge to a great military victory, driving out the Romans and restoring Jewish sovereignty over their land. This was their long-held dream, one which many had wanted to make reality right after they had witnessed Jesus feeding the 5,000 in the run up to the Passover.<sup>3</sup> They were totally defeated, dejected, frightened and likely angry when instead; Jesus suffered the slow, agonizing, shameful death of the disgraced enemy of the state, being nailed to the Cross. This is *not* how this was supposed to end! And, in their unbelief, they were not sure what to make of the most wonderful news from Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James and the other women, that Jesus' tomb was now empty and that He was risen. "Idle talk,"

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<sup>1</sup> Luke 24:35; the Greek term is *exegounto*, G1834.

<sup>2</sup> Luke 24:13-14. The Tyndale New Testament and the KJV read, "communed together and reasoned."

1. <sup>3</sup> John 6:1-15; other accounts of the feeding of the 5,000 are in Matthew 14:13-21, Mark 6:30-44 and Luke 9:10-17.

they initially called it.<sup>4</sup> As they were headed to Emmaus, possibly back home after the Passover, the two were reasoning, trying to make sense of what had happened and trying to figure out what next.<sup>5</sup> Our text continues:

*While they were talking and discussing, or reasoning, together<sup>2</sup>, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were restrained from recognizing him. <sup>6</sup>*

As Jews, these two disciples knew the Scripture forward and backward by heart, and should therefore have expected Jesus' trial, Crucifixion and Resurrection! Yet to them Christ and Him-crucified remained a stumbling block!<sup>7</sup> After all, they felt that they were good Jews and *victims* who simply needed delivery from Rome. In spite of all they were taught and knew, it never occurred to them that they were actually *perpetrators* needing delivery from the wrath of God, sin, death and hell. Theirs was a theology of glory, and their Jesus was one who was to conquer through feats of physical strength! The evil in their hearts kept them from *seeing aright*<sup>8</sup> the One who in reality was to conquer by dying on a Cross. They did not even recognize, in the words of this evening's 1,300 year old processional hymn, "*The Lord in Rays Eternal of Resurrection Light,*"<sup>9</sup> as He drew near and went with them!

Our text continues; please bear with me because this is a bit long:

*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 and gloomy. 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 in the presence of God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified*

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<sup>4</sup> Luke 24:1-11, 22-24; "idle talk" in v.11 in Greek *leros*, G3026.

<sup>5</sup> Regarding "possibly returning home" see note on Luke 24:13 in TLSB, p1771.

<sup>6</sup> Luke 24:15-16.

<sup>7</sup> Luke 24:6-7, 1 Corinthians 1:23.

<sup>8</sup> LSB 478.2a.

<sup>9</sup> LSB 478.2a

*him. But we had hoped that he was the one about to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened.<sup>10</sup>*

Brothers and sisters, you have just heard who their Jesus was. Who is *your* Jesus? Is *your* Jesus the one who came to lead you to a life of physical prosperity? Is *your* Jesus the one who came to declare you morally superior *in your flesh* to your neighbor who is not like you, simply because you are always well groomed, have a picture-perfect family, don't drink, don't smoke, are always in church and give generously, while he is a homeless alcoholic and IV drug abuser with HIV? Is *your* Jesus the one who came to lead you to political victory over your Godless rivals?

Brothers and sisters, if *your* Jesus is *not* the Jesus who was incarnate to be crucified, dead and buried for the forgiveness of *your* sins, then bodily resurrected to make *you* right with the Father, *repent*, for *your* Jesus is a *false* Jesus and *your faith is in vain!* If someone tries to set *you* straight with the Truth, and *you* respond with the scorn of unbelief, as did these two disciples, *repent*, for *your faith is in vain!*

Let us now hear the Risen Jesus' response to all that:

*And he said to them, "O foolish, not-thinking<sup>11</sup> ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not **absolutely necessary**<sup>12</sup> that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he thoroughly interpreted<sup>13</sup> to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.<sup>14</sup>*

The good news is that, although they had dulled their hearts to the truth, God did not give up on these men! Although they did not at all deserve it, out of His deep love for them, the Incarnate, Crucified and Risen Christ remained with them. He began by very firmly rebuking them, pointing out that their so-called worldly "reasoning" was all foolishness to Him!<sup>15</sup> After giving them this kick in the tunic,

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<sup>10</sup> Luke 24:17-21

<sup>11</sup> *anoetoi*, G453

<sup>12</sup> *edei*, G1163

<sup>13</sup> *diermeneusen*, G1329

<sup>14</sup> Luke 24:25-27

<sup>15</sup> This concept is developed more thoroughly in 1 Corinthians 1:18-31.

Jesus proceeded to walk the two disciples through the entirety of the Old Testament Scripture, from the First Book of Moses, namely Genesis, all the way through Malachi, showing them that every detail, even down to the last lower-case “i” and apostrophe,<sup>16</sup> points to Him crucified for the forgiveness of sins!

Consider, for example, the story of the Passover, the feast about which we sang in the Processional hymn and which is detailed in Exodus 12. When God heard the cries for help from His people, the Israelites, whom He considered as one, “His firstborn son”<sup>17</sup> and who were enslaved in Egypt, it pleased Him to deliver them. He called Moses and his brother Aaron to approach Pharaoh to ask him to release them. Pharaoh, of course, refused, as God hardened his heart. Through a succession of plagues launched by God on Egypt, Pharaoh maintained a tough stance. Finally, God smote the first born of all of the people and livestock of Egypt, after which Pharaoh briefly relented and let them go. God protected the Israelite first born by asking the elders of the people to kill an unblemished year-old male lamb without breaking its bones, and smearing its blood on the doorposts and lintels, or crossbars, of their houses. When He then passed through Egypt that night, God, seeing this sign, passed over the houses bearing the blood of the lamb, sparing their first born from death. God clearly did not need the sign of the blood to know where His people lived; *they needed the sign!* He clearly was pointing them to the promise of Christ, the unblemished Lamb of God, who would come in the fullness of time to be crucified, also with bones unbroken, *the one perfect sacrifice of all time*, shedding His blood to deliver sinners from the *telos*, the end, of their life’s work of sin, that being death, into eternal life in Him!<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Language adapted from the original text of Matthew 5:18.

<sup>17</sup> Exodus 4:22.

<sup>18</sup> Psalm 34:20, John 19:33-36, Romans 6:21-23.

The Israelites fully received the benefit of the lamb's blood shed on their behalf, at the Red Sea, as they passed through while the Egyptians, who were trying to chase them back, were drowned.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, the benefits of Christ's blood shed on the Cross were given to you at your baptism!<sup>20</sup> Our Old Testament pericope, or cutting from Scripture, for today, is the *Te Deum* sung by Moses and the Israelites following their delivery at the Red Sea, and is full of references to Jesus and His Cross! YHWH, Elohim, Right Hand, Salvation (*Yeshua*), redeemed (*Goel*)!<sup>21</sup> The similarity to the *Te Deum* we have just sung is striking!<sup>22</sup> [pause]

The Passover was for the Old Testament Israelites, the focal point, the meaning, and the object of who they were in God! As such, the Passover was the focus of all that God *then* commanded them. Time and again we read, "I brought you out of Egypt, now do this." God is telling the Israelites that their identity is grounded in what He did for them, and as His people, they should do such and such.... And they were stiff-necked by nature, just like the Pharisees and the Priests, just like Cleopas and his friend, just like us all! As we have just reviewed, the Passover clearly points to Christ's Passion. Thus, by including constant reminders of the Exodus when giving His Law, God, knowing that sinners cannot keep the law perfectly, was at the same time pointing His people to the redemption that was to come, at Calvary! Christ-crucified *is* the focal point, the meaning and the object of who *you* are in Him! You are thus forgiven for not keeping the Law, you are then freed to keep it, and forgiven when you do not keep it perfectly! Just as Jesus did not give up on the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, having just shed His blood for them, He does not give up on *you*!

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<sup>19</sup> Exodus 14, 1 Corinthians 10:1-2.

<sup>20</sup> John 19:34, Romans 6:4, Ephesians 5:25-7, Colossians 2:9-14, 1 Peter 1:1-2; 3:18-22, 1 John 5:6a.

<sup>21</sup> The original language in Exodus 15:13 is "*ga'alta*," "You have redeemed."

<sup>22</sup> LSB 223-5.

The Passover, of course, is but one example of what Jesus interpreted for the two men. Scripture is an *organic whole*, all pointing to Christ and Him crucified for the forgiveness of your sins and raised to make you right with the Father. And, as our Epistle reading emphasizes, *all of Scripture, Old Testament included*, was written for *both Jew and Gentile*! The reading of the Scripture in God's services, our Pastors' sermons and Bible studies should leave you yearning for more. When you sing, "*Feed me till I want no more*,"<sup>23</sup> as you are about to as you receive Christ's very Body and very Blood on this day, do you mean it?

Returning to our text:

*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." 24*

The two were now beginning to realize that maybe, just maybe, the women who had been to the tomb were in fact telling the truth! All is not hopeless! They were beggars hungry and thirsty, not for bread and water, but for the Word of God, and were yearning for more!<sup>25</sup>

The two asked Jesus, whom they did not yet recognize, to stay with them, which He did, for "*The Lord is (always) near to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth.*"<sup>26</sup> They had sinned, denying the truth that Christ died on the Cross, to atone for their sins and had risen for their justification.

Our text recalls what is next:

*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. 27*

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<sup>23</sup> LSB 918, verse 1.

<sup>24</sup> Luke 24:28-29.

<sup>25</sup> Paraphrased from Amos 8:11.

<sup>26</sup> Psalm 145:18.

<sup>27</sup> Luke 24: 29b-31.

Having been again shown the truth, they were now repenting, and Jesus was about to forgive their sins through His table fellowship.<sup>28</sup> And, lo and behold, in Jesus' blessing and breaking of the bread, the Holy Spirit opened their eyes and they realized, WOW! This *is* Jesus, the One who scandalized the Pharisees by eating with sinners, had been crucified to forgive them, risen to justify them, and who, they may have heard, promised to give His Body and Blood to His redeemed people, to receive often for the assurance that their sins are forgiven!

Perhaps that helps us understand that which is recorded next:

*32 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?"<sup>29</sup>*

The yearly Passover meal which they had been eating their entire lives to remember God's great act of deliverance from Egypt, suddenly took on new significance for them as a foreshadowing of that which they were experiencing!<sup>30</sup> There the Christ was, in His glorified, Resurrected Body, the Victim and Priest in turn giving His Body for the Feast!<sup>31</sup> This is why Jesus left them; he had given them all they needed to sustain them in this life, through His Word and Sacrament, just like He gives *you* in His Divine Service! The two were filled with joy!

Our text concludes:

*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!" And they gave exegesis, namely, they related, the things on the road and how He was known to them in the breaking of the bread.<sup>32</sup>*

Having been refreshed and strengthened, through Jesus' salutary gifts of His Word and Sacrament, now having true faith toward God and along with it a fervent agape

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<sup>28</sup> Arthur A Just, Jr. *Heaven on Earth, The Gifts of Christ in the Divine Service*, (St Louis, CPH, 2008), p 72-83.

<sup>29</sup> Luke 24:32.

<sup>30</sup> Exodus 13:3-10, Numbers 9:1-14.

<sup>31</sup> LSB 633, verse 2.

<sup>32</sup> Luke 24:33-35.

love toward their brothers and sisters in that faith,<sup>33</sup> they excitedly went straight back to Jerusalem without spending the night at home in Emmaus, to completely explain to the Apostles and those with them, all that they had experienced and learned. *“The Lord has risen indeed and has appeared to Simon!”* Jesus Christ, who was materially Incarnate and Crucified, materially rose from the dead!

Two thousand years later, the message remains the same. Christ had to die on the Cross, for the forgiveness of your sins and for the sins of the whole world. Christ, though, has been raised from the dead, your faith is valid and *you too* shall be raised from the dead! We know that He lives because of the *historic fact* of the empty tomb. Your sins *are* forgiven and you *are* right with the Father!!! Death is defeated! To assure you of that, and to keep you grounded in that reality, Christ has called men to His Office of the Holy Ministry, our Pastors, to speak in His stead, opening His Scriptures to you, and making Him known to you in the breaking of His bread! And through them He has called and equipped you, His Royal Priesthood, to proclaim His death and Resurrection until His coming again. This is what our theme text means for you this day. *You* are free to relate the things of Jesus and how He *is* known to *you* in the breaking of the bread!

Alleluia, Christ is risen!!! [He is risen indeed, Alleluia!!!]

**The peace which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus**

Evening Service, Feast of the Resurrection

Psalm 100; Exodus 15:1-18; Acts 10:34-43; Luke 24:13-35

Read by Deacon-in-training Roni Grad, approved by Pastor Michael A. Morehouse

April 16, 2017

*Soli Deo Gloria*

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<sup>33</sup> *Post Communion Collect*, all 5 DS settings, LSB