

REPENTANCE & FORGIVENESS

Easter 3-April 18, 2021

Baltic and East Nidaros Lutheran Church

Luke 24:36-49

“Everything Written”

Sermon by Pastor Randall J. Questad

Grace and peace to you from God our Father
and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
Amen.

This week’s gospel from Luke should sound very familiar to you after hearing John’s account last week of Jesus’ first appearance to his disciples as they were locked behind closed doors. Luke is very likely writing about the same event as what John had written in his gospel that we heard last week. Today we get to sit on the most amazing bible studies one could imagine as Jesus himself opens the minds of the disciples to everything that was written in scripture. But don’t worry you will not be here all day. Jesus summarizes everything in scripture into a short sermon for you.

*You can easily hear some similarities in Luke’s account of one of the initial appearances of the newly risen Jesus Christ to John’s account which we heard last week. In each case, it is Jesus himself, not an angel, who came and stood among the disciples. Luke and John recorded the exact same words that Jesus first spoke to the disciples. “Peace be with you.” In both accounts the disciples are afraid. In both accounts Jesus asks why they have doubts since everything that happened, his suffering, death, and resurrection from the dead happened just as he promised. Although Thomas’ name isn’t mentioned specifically in Luke’s account, we hear the similarity of how Jesus showed his nail pierced hands and his feet and told his disciples to touch him so that they would not doubt but believe that Jesus’ **body** had risen from the dead.*

Luke’s description of Jesus’ appearance to the disciples doesn’t make any mention of locked doors when the 10 of the disciples first saw Jesus and when Thomas believed after seeing and putting his finger in the side of Jesus a week later. John’s gospel is often described as the book of signs and focuses on miracles that Jesus performed. Luke as you may recall was a physician. Luke notices and records details of this resurrection event through a lens of a physician.

While John’s eyes were looking for signs, Luke’s ears were opened to hearing what was said. Luke begins with these words, “While they were talking about “this”. The “this” his disciples were talking about was the appearance that Jesus had just made to Cleopas and another person as they were walking along on the road to Emmaus. These two did not recognize the risen Jesus at first. These two were doing the same thing as the disciples were. They were talking about all the things that had happened. The news that Jesus was no longer in the tomb was out and spreading. The pieces of what Jesus had spoken were starting to fit together, but they were still having trouble getting one final piece to fit. When Jesus appears to them, he plays with these Cleopas and his companion. Jesus gets these two to tell him what they do know. They knew that Jesus was a mighty prophet. They knew that he was handed over by chief priests and leaders and was condemned to death. They

knew that he was crucified. But they did not know and did not believe that Jesus had risen from the dead. They did not know what Jesus' resurrection meant for them. We are told that they had "hoped" that Jesus would redeem Israel. But now their hopes were gone because they didn't believe in the risen Jesus.

Then Jesus gave the same bible study to these two that Jesus gave to the disciples in the reading for today. He started at the very beginning with Moses, then taught about all the prophets and opened their eyes so that they understood that everything that was written is about himself and what that means for them.

Before Jesus reveals this to his disciples in today's reading, Jesus demonstrates that he had been raised from the dead in the flesh. The first impression the disciples had about Jesus was that he was a ghost. Believing that Jesus had risen as a ghost would help explain how he appeared before them without coming through the locked doors. Before Jesus would begin a bible study with these frightened disciples, the first thing Jesus had to undo was their belief that it was just a ghost of Jesus who was floating around making appearances like Casper the friendly ghost.

They start to believe that Jesus is not a ghost when he has them see his hand and feet. Luke says that now in their joy they were still disbelieving. They were closer to believing, but not completely until Jesus convinced them that it was the body of Jesus and not the ghost of Jesus who was raised simply by asking, "Have you anything here to eat?" Jesus could have repeated his miracle where he multiplied 2 fish and 5 loaves of bread to feed thousands to satisfy his hunger, but instead he asks them for something to eat. Jesus who had been dead in the tomb for three days was now hungry and wanted food. As Jesus ate this piece of fish it stayed in his body rather than drop onto the floor from a transparent ghost. Jesus was alive in the flesh. His body was resurrected.

*After this mystic myth was dismissed that he was just a ghost, then Jesus did the same thing as he did with the two who were walking on the road to Emmaus. He started at the beginning of scripture with Moses. He turned next to the pages of the prophets and then he taught them about the Psalms. He opened their minds to how everything written in scripture points to the crucified **and now risen Lord**.*

Jesus opened the minds of the disciples that day when he taught them that everything written in scripture is about death and resurrection. Once the disciples now believe in the resurrection of the body of Jesus Christ, they are called to preach this good news of repentance and forgiveness to all nations. Without believing that Jesus died and rose again for you, forgiveness would be as uncertain as hearing a story about a ghost.

That is the summary of what everything in scripture points to. The law of Moses declares you as a sinner. And the good news of the risen Jesus Christ is "Peace be with you. Your sins are forgiven.

Soon you too will confess in the words of the Apostles' Creed which also sums up everything that is written in scripture. We believe in the forgiveness of sin, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.