

OUR REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH

3<sup>rd</sup> S. of Easter

Luke 24:36-49

Iowa City, Iowa

April 19, 2015

“The Disciples and Us—Jesus Provides”

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Let's go back to the first Easter. Jesus had been raised from the dead. The tomb was very empty, as the women, Peter, and John could testify. That same day 2 of Jesus' followers were on their way to Emmaus. As they walked, Jesus came and joined them. They talked together, and Jesus explained to them the meaning of all that had happened. Then they shared a meal in Emmaus. Jesus disappeared from their sight, and they rushed to Jerusalem to tell this to the 11 disciples. It is at this point the words of our text begin: “As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them...”

As we consider the words of our text, we have demonstrated for us the truth of this fact: Jesus provides what is needed. It is true for the disciples. It is true for us.

Consider what the disciples needed and what Jesus gave them:

They had DOUBTS v. 38 “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?”

People had talked about an empty tomb. Some had even said they saw Jesus. But they needed to see Him for themselves if they were to be eye-witnesses of the living Lord. Jesus meets their need by “standing among them,” telling them to “see” and “touch.” There was no uncertainty now, for He was with them. For their doubts, Jesus provides His presence.

They had FEARS v. 37 “They were startled and frightened” First because they thought they were seeing a ghost. But it went deeper than that. There was the fear of the PAST—their part in what had happened to Jesus; fear of the PRESENT—the danger they were in from Roman authorities; fear of the FUTURE—what would happen to them with their Master gone.

Jesus meets their need by saying: “Peace be with you!” His peaceful presence calmed their fears. By His living presence they gained a new perspective on the past, by His living presence, they gained confidence for the present; by His living presence they gained hope for the future. For their doubts and fears, Jesus provides His peaceful presence.

They had FOOD TO SHARE. They were meeting in a home where there would be food available. Jesus said, “Have you anything here to eat?” He showed His humanity and ate in their presence. Jesus provided a way for them to share their food; in a reversal of sorts, they provide for Jesus' need for food.

They had IGNORANCE v. 45 “Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.”

The disciples were confused as to what had happened, why it had happened, and what it all meant. Jesus spends time explaining it all to them: the prophecies and their fulfillment, and what would happen to the Christ (Himself) and what would happen in the future. Jesus provides understanding to replace their ignorance.

They had SINS. Not the least of which was the sin of denial, of forsaking their Lord, sins of omission maybe more than commission. Jesus tells them “Repentance and forgiveness will be

preached in his name to all nations.” You know who would be included? They themselves! Do you suppose this provided them with something that they needed? He provided the assurance of forgiveness to them, which they needed to continue serving. His forgiveness-earning death was for them as well as for future generations!

They had WEAKNESS OF SPIRIT as they considered proclaiming the message of repentance and forgiveness. No doubt they felt inadequate for the task to be witnesses of Jesus and His resurrection. They felt powerless as they were few in number and lacked great eloquence and education. Jesus provided them not only with the message but with the PROMISE OF POWER: “But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.” V. 49

It would seem to me that you and I have some of the same problems and needs faced by those early disciples. Let’s reflect on those same 6 areas—our needs and Jesus’ providing.

We have DOUBTS, like the early disciples, as to whether words are enough evidence for us to believe. Jesus, the Living Word, stands among us in the written Word and in the Lord’s Supper and in Holy Baptism, and by the Holy Spirit, assures us that His Word is true. “These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.”

We have FEARS about past failures, our present and future uncertainties. Jesus says, “Peace be with you!” He offers us a peace that has been earned at great price on Calvary. It is a peace that does not deny reality but offers hope and security in the midst of the storms of life.

We have FOOD and other physical blessings. Why has God given you what you have? We are blessed to be a blessing as St. Paul puts it: “God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work.”

We have IGNORANCE about spiritual things. There are many things we do not understand and will not until we are in heaven. But there are many things God does want us to understand. Therefore, He has provided us with a Teacher: “The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.” John 14;26

The primary tool of the Holy Spirit is the Bible. This is why Our Redeemer is spending two years in reading through the Bible. It is the Holy Spirit’s classroom or text book. O Holy Spirit, do Your work in each of us.

We have SINS. Like the disciples, maybe our sins most often fall under the category, “Omission”—things we don’t do that we should—failure to trust God and His promises, failure to love and serve others, failure to worship God with our heart and life. Jesus provides what we need: forgiveness.

We have WEAKNESSES. We feel inadequate to speak God’s Word or share the Gospel. God provides the powerful Holy Spirit to enable us to do what we, on our own, are unable to do.

Like the disciples, Jesus provides for our needs. He can do that, however, only if we are close enough to Him. Many of us have garage door openers, but they work only if we are close enough to the door. The remote unit will have an influence on the door only if it is close to it.

My hope and prayer is that you and I will stay close to Jesus through Word and prayer and the Lord's Supper and allow Him to have an influence on us, allow Him to meet our needs from day-to-day.

May our peace-giving, forgiveness sharing, life-giving Lord meet our needs this week as we strive to serve Him. AMEN.