

ALL ABOUT JESUS

Luke 24:36-49

Third Sunday of Easter (Series B)

April 14, 2024

Trinity Free Lutheran Church, Grand Forks, ND

Ny Stavanger Free Lutheran Church, Buxton, ND

THEME

The entire Old Testament teaches the plan of God: that the Christ should suffer, die, and rise again so that repentance for the forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed to the whole world.

HYMNS (*AMBASSADOR HYMNAL*)

#109: “That Easter Day with Joy Was Bright”

#112: “Now the Green Blade Rises”

#100: “Alleluia! Jesus Lives”

COLLECT

...; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

Acts 3:11-21 (ESV)

¹¹ While he clung to Peter and John, all the people, utterly astounded, ran together to them in the portico called Solomon’s. ¹² And when Peter saw it he addressed the people: “Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk? ¹³ The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. ¹⁴ But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, ¹⁵ and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. ¹⁶ And his name—by faith in his name—has made this man strong whom you see and know, and the faith that is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all.

¹⁷ “And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. ¹⁸ But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled.

¹⁹ Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, ²⁰ that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, ²¹ whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.

Psalm 4 (ESV)

¹ Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness!

You have given me relief when I was in distress.

Be gracious to me and hear my prayer!

² O men, how long shall my honor be turned into shame?

How long will you love vain words and seek after lies? *Selah*

- ³ But know that the LORD has set apart the godly for himself;
the LORD hears when I call to him.
- ⁴ Be angry, and do not sin;
ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent. *Selah*
- ⁵ Offer right sacrifices,
and put your trust in the LORD.
- ⁶ There are many who say, “Who will show us some good?
Lift up the light of your face upon us, O LORD!”
- ⁷ You have put more joy in my heart
than they have when their grain and wine abound.
- ⁸ In peace I will both lie down and sleep;
for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.

1 John 3:1-7 (ESV)

¹ See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

² Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. ³ And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

⁴ Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.

⁵ You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. ⁶ No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him.

⁷ Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous.

Luke 24:36-49 (SBL)

³⁶ Ταῦτα δὲ αὐτῶν λαλούντων αὐτὸς ἔσθη ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν. ³⁷ πτοηθέντες δὲ καὶ ἔμφοβοι γενόμενοι ἐδόκουν πνεῦμα θεωρεῖν. ³⁸ καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· Τί τεταραγμένοι ἐστέ, καὶ διὰ τί διαλογισμοὶ ἀναβαίνουσιν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν; ³⁹ ἴδετε τὰς χεῖράς μου καὶ τοὺς πόδας μου ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι αὐτός· ψηλαφήσατέ με καὶ ἴδετε, ὅτι πνεῦμα σὰρκα καὶ ὀστέα οὐκ ἔχει καθὼς ἐμὲ θεωρεῖτε ἔχοντα. ⁴⁰ [καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἔδειξεν αὐτοῖς τὰς χεῖρας καὶ τοὺς πόδας.] ⁴¹ ἔτι δὲ ἀπιστούντων αὐτῶν ἀπὸ τῆς χαρᾶς καὶ θαυμαζόντων εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· Ἔχετε τι βρώσιμον ἐνθάδε; ⁴² οἱ δὲ ἐπέδωκαν αὐτῷ ἰχθύος ὀπτοῦ μέρος· ⁴³ καὶ λαβὼν ἐνώπιον αὐτῶν ἔφαγεν.

⁴⁴ Εἶπεν δὲ πρὸς αὐτούς· Οὗτοι οἱ λόγοι μου οὐς ἐλάλησα πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἔτι ὦν σὺν ὑμῖν, ὅτι δεῖ πληρωθῆναι πάντα τὰ γεγραμμένα ἐν τῷ νόμῳ Μωϋσέως καὶ προφήταις καὶ ψαλμοῖς περὶ ἐμοῦ. ⁴⁵ τότε διήνοιξεν αὐτῶν τὸν νοῦν τοῦ συνιέναι τὰς γραφάς, ⁴⁶ καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὅτι οὕτως γέγραπται παθεῖν τὸν χριστὸν καὶ ἀναστῆναι ἐκ νεκρῶν τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ, ⁴⁷ καὶ κηρυχθῆναι ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ μετάνοιαν καὶ ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη—ἀρξάμενοι ἀπὸ Ἱερουσαλήμ· ⁴⁸ ὑμεῖς ἐστε μάρτυρες τούτων. ⁴⁹ καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἐξαποστέλλω τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πατρός μου ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς· ὑμεῖς δὲ καθίσατε ἐν τῇ πόλει ἕως οὗ ἐνδύσησθε ἐξ ὑψους δύναμιν.

Luke 24:36-49 (ESV)

³⁶ As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, **“Peace to you!”** ³⁷ But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. ³⁸ And he said to them, **“Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹ See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as**

you see that I have.”⁴⁰ And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.⁴¹ And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?”⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish,⁴³ and he took it and ate before them.

⁴⁴ Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,⁴⁶ and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead,⁴⁷ and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.⁴⁹ And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

MANUSCRIPT

The gospel lesson comes from *The Gospel According to Luke*, chapter 24, verses 36 through 49. Please stand as you are able for the Gospel. From Luke 24, beginning at verse 36, we read in Jesus’ name.

³⁶ As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, “Peace to you!”³⁷ But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit.³⁸ And he said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?³⁹ See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.”⁴⁰ And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.⁴¹ And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?”⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish,⁴³ and he took it and ate before them.

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Father, these are your words. Sanctify us in the truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

You may be seated.

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!

It’s all about Jesus.

And what is that? What is all about Jesus? Well, lots of things. But in this passage, we specifically see that the Bible is all about Jesus. So then we could also say that church is all about Jesus. What we’re doing now and all that we do in our life together is all about Jesus. And we can even say that the meaning of life is Jesus. Our life comes from Jesus, and we live to him. It’s all all about Jesus.

We’re still in Easter. Our observance of Easter as a season mimics the actual history of Jesus’ resurrection. In real history, there were seven weeks between Jesus’ resurrection and the Feast of

Pentecost, when the Church began to grow quickly in Jerusalem. And for the first forty days of that first Easter season, Jesus was on earth in bodily form, appearing to his disciples and proving himself to them by many proofs (Acts 1:3). So we mimic the history of that first Easter season by observing seven Sundays of Easter before we get to Pentecost. Part of what this does for us, devotionally, is that we can line up the historical events of the Bible with our own lives. Jesus appeared to his disciples over the course of forty days. Imagine what that would be like. That includes six Sundays. So when we get to the fourth, fifth, and sixth Sundays in Easter, think back to how long ago it was that we came together on March 31 to celebrate The Resurrection of Our Lord. And consider what it would be like to go to church each of those Sundays and see and hear the risen Christ. Maybe you go to midweek Bible study with Jesus during that time. Maybe you go fishing with him or have breakfast with him. That's how it was for Jesus' disciples. Easter was not just one day where Jesus popped out of the tomb, appeared to them, and then ascended up into heaven. It was a season, not a day. If you just see someone once, on one day, maybe you can talk yourself into thinking it was a dream. And I really just mean "maybe," if it's something really unbelievable. But if you see and interact with that person for a season, that would impress the reality of it in our minds.

This is easy to overlook. As Christians, we might assume that most Americans at least know the basics of our faith. Maybe that was true a few generations ago, but it's certainly not true now. Many Americans have no idea that we actually believe that Jesus was raised in bodily form. They have even less awareness that he appeared to hundreds of eyewitnesses over the course of this season. And if we don't focus on this, we might even forget it. So I think it's really helpful that we have a season when we focus on the historical reality of Jesus' resurrection. And it's helpful that it mimics the actual timeframe of those appearances.

Some of the Scriptures during this season record Jesus' appearances to his disciples. Others back up into his ministry to recall how he prophesied of his resurrection. And we get readings from the book of Acts to hear how Jesus' apostles proclaimed his resurrection.

In this gospel lesson, we're still on that first Easter Sunday. Two weeks ago we read the account of that morning from *The Gospel of Mark*. Last week, the gospel lesson covered two Sundays, Jesus' appearance to his disciples on the evening after his resurrection and his appearance to Thomas a week later. This week, we back up again to that first evening. So if this reading sounded familiar to you, that's because it's Luke's account of what we read from John last week. It's the evening of that first Easter Sunday, I suppose about twelve hours or so after Jesus rose from the dead.

It's interesting and helpful to read the same story from two different gospels. A detective would tell us that, when interviewing witnesses, if two people say the same thing in the exact same way, something fishy is going on. We should expect that truthful witnesses would corroborate each other, and that some details would overlap, but each would have some unique details, and they might emphasize different things. So there is certainly some overlap between John's story and Luke's, enough to make it obvious that they're talking about the same thing, but they have some unique details, and they teach different things.

Some of the disciples in the room had already seen Jesus. Some of the women had seen him that morning (Matt. 28:9-10). And they reported it to the eleven apostles, but they did not believe them (Luke 24:10-11). There were also two men who had left Jerusalem that day and were walking to Emmaus. Jesus appeared to them and walked and talked with them. Then those two disciples hurried back to Jerusalem to tell the others that they had seen Jesus (24:13-35). So they

were there, with the women, the eleven apostles, and several other disciples. And they were all talking about these appearances when Jesus came and stood among them.

Jesus said, **“Peace to you!”** (24:36). That’s familiar from what we read last week from John, where Jesus said three times, **“Peace be with you”** (20:19, 21, 26). The quotation is just a little bit different because Jesus spoke to them in Aramaic, but Luke and John wrote their gospels in Greek, so they had to translate Jesus’ greeting. So it’s different, but both are accurate and they mean the same thing.

And Luke tells us how they first reacted. They didn’t believe it right away. Even when Jesus stood among them and spoke to them, **“They were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit”** (24:37). Last week we heard about Thomas, and how he refused to believe the others when they told him they had seen Jesus (John 20:24-25). But here we learn that all of the disciples had a hard time believing it. They knew that people don’t just come back to life. Even after seeing Jesus raise others from the dead, and even after hearing him prophecy that we would be crucified and rise again on the third day, they still didn’t expect it. It’s not the way things normally work. So instead of immediately being filled with joy, they were frightened, thinking that they were seeing a ghost. But Jesus assured them by showing them his hands and his feet. John talks about the wounds in Jesus’ hands and side. And John is the only gospel that mentions the spear puncturing Jesus’ side before he was taken down off the cross (19:34). But Luke had not said anything about the spear at the crucifixion, so he records Jesus showing them his hands and feet, where nails held Jesus to the cross. So this is one of those examples of Luke and John recording the same event, and they corroborate each other, but they share different details.

Luke really emphasizes the physicality of Jesus’ resurrection. Jesus invited the disciples to touch him. And he said to them, **“For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have”** (24:40).

And Luke takes us through the emotional journey of the disciples. At first, they disbelieved and were afraid. But after Jesus showed them his hands and feet, **“they still disbelieved for joy”** (24:41). The reality is starting to set in. But they’re so overcome with emotion that they can hardly believe what they are seeing and touching. It’s like when a parent holds a newborn baby for the first time. You see it and touch it, but it’s so surprisingly marvelous that you have to ask yourself if this is really happening. You feel different, because the joy heightens your senses, and you experience it as more real than the ordinary moments of life. And because our experience of those ecstatic moments is different than our ordinary experience of reality, we wonder if it’s really real. It’s like those moments are *too* real, so they feel unbelievable.

So Jesus helps the reality set in. He does something that is so ordinary that it’s amazing. He asks for food. Imagine being there and experiencing this. This Jesus whom you’ve come to know and love dies. But then he appears alive again. It’s so marvelous that you can’t believe it. But Jesus is kind of nonchalant about it. He’s just like, **“Hey, you got anything to eat here?”** And the disciples are all just standing there staring at him while he eats some fish. They see him pick up a piece of fish, put it in his mouth, and they maybe watch to see if it falls through him like a ghost. But it doesn’t. He eats it like any other person. So Luke really emphasizes the physicality of Jesus’ resurrection.

It’s also very sensory. During the Easter season we especially talk about the historicity of Jesus’ resurrection. We talk about the eyewitnesses. But they weren’t just eyewitnesses. These people were also ear-witnesses and hand-witnesses. They don’t just see Jesus. But they also hear his words. And they touch him. John writes about this in his first letter, **“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked**

upon and have touched with our hands, ... we have seen it and testify to it and proclaim to you” (1 John 1:2). It’s very sensory, and that emphasizes the reality of it. When people have an experience of the supernatural, they might talk about hearing a voice coming from somewhere. Or they might see something. It might even be something they can see through. Sometimes they both see and hear. But this is different. It’s more. The disciples see Jesus, but they don’t see through him. And they hear his voice. They touch him, and they watch him eat. Then he has a conversation with them. And this isn’t the only time he appears to them. But over the course of forty days, he appears to them again and again in order to teach them (Acts 1:3).

All of the disciples had been learning from Jesus. The apostles, especially, had been learning from Jesus for three years now. But they never really understood what he was teaching them. The forty days after Jesus’ resurrection is when they finally understood. It was like the last semester of their training, when everything they had been learning or trying to learn finally clicked. And it started with this night. When Jesus finished his fish, he went into a Bible study with them. He reminded them that he had spoken with them about his death and resurrection. **“These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled”** (24:44).

This is a way of saying that all of the Old Testament testifies of him. As Christians, we generally think of the Bible as having two sections: the Old and the New Testaments. So if we say, “The Old and the New Testaments testify of Jesus,” that’s our way of saying that the entire Bible is about Jesus. The Jews usually divided the Old Testament into three sections: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings, or the Psalms. Sometimes they would just divide it into two sections: the Law and the Prophets, in which case they would include the Psalms and other poetic writings in the Prophets. But the most common way they divided the Old Testament was into three sections. The Law is the five books of Moses, Genesis through Deuteronomy. The Prophets obviously includes the Major Prophets, like Isaiah and Jeremiah, and the twelve Minor Prophets that are at the end of the Old Testament. But the prophets also included the historical books, like Joshua, Judges, Kings, Samuel, and Chronicles. Then the Writings, also called the Wisdom Literature or the Psalms, obviously included the Psalms, but other books like Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes. Now what’s the point of this? It’s not just trivia. But it means that when Jesus says **“Everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled,”** that’s the same as saying that everything written about him in the whole Old Testament must be fulfilled.

There are some obvious prophecies of Jesus, like Isaiah 53 about the suffering servant, Micah 5:2 about the Christ being born in Bethlehem, or Abraham nearly sacrificing his son Isaac in Genesis 22. But Jesus teaches us here that all of the Old Testament looks forward to him, either in a direct, indirect, or some kind of supporting way. When Israel camped in the wilderness for forty years, that looked forward to Jesus. When Ezekiel saw strange visions of a temple in heaven, that looked forward to Jesus. When David complained in the Psalms about his friends betraying him, that looked forward to Jesus. Even the Ten Commandments or passages of judgment, when the prophets are calling the people to repentance, all of that looks forward to Jesus. Some of the Old Testament contains clear prophecies of Jesus. A lot more of it is patterns that God sets in place that foreshadow Jesus. Other parts are not necessarily prophetic, but it’s all part of this story of God working in the people of Israel to bring the Christ into the world.

So Jesus “opened their minds to understand the Scriptures” (24:45). Prior to this moment, the disciples could read or hear the Scriptures. And on a basic level of reading comprehension, they

could understand what the words meant. They could memorize the commandments and learn the stories of Abraham, Moses, and David. But they never really understood the full meaning of it. They could not see the big picture of what God was doing in all that, not until Jesus opened their minds to understand it.

So Jesus was not referring to one passage, but to the entire Old Testament when he said, **“Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem”** (24:47). This is the message of the Old Testament: that the Christ, the Son of God, would be killed and then rise again. And the purpose of this is to grant repentance for the forgiveness of sins to the whole world. Even in the Old Testament, salvation was not only for the Jews. It was from the Jews, because Jesus is a Jew, but it has always been for the whole world. And that, of course, includes you.

So this is what we should take comfort in: from the beginning of the world, your God was working out his plan to save you. He knew you before the foundation of the world. And he really knew you, the good, the bad, the really bad, and the really, really bad. And he loved you. It is not his desire to condemn the world, never has been. But his desire is to save you. And so, from before the beginning of time, it was the will of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit that the Son of God would come to this earth, suffer and die as an atonement for all sins, and rise from the dead on the third day. This has always been his plan. And the proof of this is Jesus' resurrection from the dead. It's all about Jesus. It's all about him coming for you, to suffer and die for, and to rise from the dead for you, so that in him, you have forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Amen.

Now may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:7). Amen.