

The Third Sunday of Easter (2021)

Luke 24:36–49 *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.”*

In the Name of Jesus.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Lord, was the starting pistol of ‘repentance and forgiveness of sins to all nations!’ That includes, happy for us, even your pastor and you dear people.

So, let’s take care of repentance and forgiveness of sins first of all. I know it was one of y’all! It’s OK. We Lutherans do not DEMAND confession and absolution. But if your conscience bothers you, your minister, your fellow baptized, are ready and reborn to hear your admission of a life gone wrong yet still hoping on God.

So, whoever it was, you can come to your pastor and admit it. One of you prayed for rain last week, didn’t ya? ‘Rain...IN...DUE...MEASURE...’ is how the prayer goes! You CAN’T just grab the ears of the God Who cannot stop smiling at His Son and you and me and all the world and DEMAND...RAIN! The rainbow assures us we won’t ALL be washed away. But, still.... ‘In...due...measure!’

‘Pastor’s being a bit frivolous today at the start of his Bible book report, isn’t he?’

Let’s call it joy.

WHY... ‘MUST..... the Scriptures be fulfilled’ ?

Because, because, because, because, because....

The Gospel portion today follows Jesus’ appearance to two disciples on the road to Emmaus. When Jesus broke bread, then vanished from the sight—praise the Lord!—they ran back to Jerusalem and found the disciples. And then:

And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, ³⁴ saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!”¹

There is JOY in those words; a joyful SURPRISE! “The Lord has risen—REALLY! He must have passed through sin, death, grave and hell! For He had NO PROBLEM appearing to Simon!’ Simon who? The Simon Jesus called Peter.

⁵⁶ Then a servant girl, seeing him as he sat in the light and looking closely at him, said, “This man also was with him.”
⁵⁷ But he denied it, saying, “Woman, I do not know him.”
⁵⁸ And a little later someone else saw him and said, “You also are one of them.” But Peter said, “Man, I am not.”
⁵⁹ And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, “Certainly this man also was with him, for he too is a Galilean.” ⁶⁰ But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you are talking about.” And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. ⁶¹ And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, “Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times.” ⁶² And he went out and wept bitterly.

¹ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Lk 24:33–34). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

My dear ones: today, in our land of bounty and idolatry, a man's word means nothing. And I don't mean just our betters, our gods, lords and masters in authority. I beg my LSU students to stop using the word 'promise.' The violent reaction to by begging shows I'm right.

'I PRAH—MUSS!' is NOT a vow, solemn and unbreakable. It is a ruse, to get what I lust for right now, RIGHT NOW! Then, as we all wonder why we're paying the restaurant bill AFTER we eat: 'I'm not hungry NOW! Why I am paying these people for food?!' So, the promise made when we want to make ourselves look good fades to nothing when it IS time to be good.

For the old Jews, Jesus' people, a vow was solemn. A broken vow was unbelief and betrayal of the worst kind; a type of bitter death. So, the man's tears. Peter? No longer 'Peter!' THAT was the special name Jesus laid on him. Back to being coarse and sinful Simon.

Yet the Day Christ rose was joy and today is joy and it's joy to the End and beyond, friends of Heaven! For even THIS sad episode was seen, planned, foretold—and filled with Promise that is NOT a deceit.

³¹ "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, ³² but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." ³³ Peter said to him, "Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death." ³⁴ Jesus said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me." ³

² [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Lk 22:55–63). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

³ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Lk 22:31–34). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

‘When you have turned, strengthen your brothers.’

What was the turning? ‘There is no doubt NOW that Jesus suffered, was buried, descended to all what’s the grave but still lives! He made a special appearance: to Simon; Simon Peter. He has risen indeed!’

Two quick conclusions from all this, my lovelies.

The words of the liturgy we sing and pray this day are as old as the Christian Church. ‘The Lord be with you. And with your Spirit. Lift up your hearts. To the Lord. Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. This is My Body.’

Joy. To pray and sing and believe and rise OURSELVES with the same Gospel and words that have always raised the children of sinful Adam to become children of God.

I beg you, my dear ones: stop making your poor pastor compete with other preachers. I cannot compete. If you are one of those who insist on hearing from three, four, dozens of Bible-blabbers on a regular basis, I fear for your salvation. You have plenty enough to do with your religion when you squeeze in ten minutes every week to deny your Lord; then weep; then attend the Sacrament of the Altar, to strengthen your brethren and proclaim ‘Christ is risen indeed!’

Second: begin, fill, put the cherry on the top of the day as you practice for your final rest—live from your Baptism at

the joyful behest of the One Who saw Simon Peter with clear eyes, and still called that man ‘friend.’

Your Baptism means that you are NOT surprised when faith, hope and love fail you from YOUR side to God, from you to others.

Your Baptism assures you that God came Man to men the only way it was going to work. ‘It MUST go this way!’ Men are always going to look to an idol, a creature, a man who has all the answers, all the power, all the influence, blah, blah, blah. Jesus came as such a man, to rule, to teach, to give, to grab every man’s attention. But He came this way:

³³ And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁴ And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And they cast lots to divide his garments. ³⁵ And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, “He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!” ³⁶ The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine ³⁷ and saying, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” ³⁸ There was also an inscription over him, “This is the King of the Jews.” ⁴

Surprise.

Surprise every poor sinner you meet: don’t be surprised they are the way they are.

⁴ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Lk 23:33–38). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Surprise them with the joy of faith, the certainty of hope in Christ, and even the work of love: with no reference to THEIR broken vows or YOUR wounded majesty.

Surprise yourself! With honest trips to the scale, the mirror, the conscience: with the confidence that all that comes from OUR side is NOT then last word on us! HE is the last word on us.

And most of all, surprise God, heaven, Jesus, the Holy Spirit Who lives where you live. Surprise your friend by making HIM...no...promises...today...

And live from HIS promises only! 'Abide with me, dear Savior: YOU...PROMISED! Abide with ME...and every man will know that you, my friend, are risen from the dead: indeed!'

In the Name of Jesus.