

Easter Tuesday
St. Luke 24:36-48
April 6th, 2021
Saints Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

He Opened Their Understanding

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

Lord God, heavenly Father, Who didst reveal Thy Son to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus: We beseech Thee to enlighten our hearts also by Thy Word and by Thy Holy Spirit, that we may become established in the faith, hold fast to Thy Word, delight to speak thereof, and diligently meditate thereon, that although, according to the example of Christ, we must suffer much evil on Earth, we nevertheless may have and retain a sure comfort in Thy Word, until, after this life, we shall be raised unto eternal life, through the same, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one true God, world without end. Amen.

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

Yesterday, our Lord + Jesus met and walked with two men, Cleopas and Simon, as they walked from Jerusalem to Emmaus. He expounded for them all the Scriptures that told about His Passion and death for the sins of the whole world, from Moses through all the prophets. Our Lord + Jesus had hidden His identity from them, and was revealed to them in the breaking of the bread. Our Lord revealed Himself to be flesh and blood, and not a ghost, for He ate with these two men when they arrived in Emmaus. Then, when He was revealed, He disappeared from their sight. These two men in their joy ran all the way back to Jerusalem to find the other disciples and tell them what they had seen; they had walked, talked and ate with the risen Lord + Jesus.

Today's Gospel pericope continues the Gospel of the Evangelist St. Luke from yesterday. We are told by St. Luke that as soon as the two men had found the other disciples and told them all of the events to which they had been witness, the Lord + Jesus appeared in the middle of them. As much as it happens in science fiction movies, people do not appear in one's midst suddenly. No one teleports into the midst of anyone else. Therefore, the reaction of the disciples is understandable. They think that they are seeing the ghost of the Lord + Jesus. They do not realize that He is standing in the midst of them in flesh and blood, having risen from the dead.

Just like with the two men on the road to Emmaus who had the Lord + Jesus revealed to them in the breaking of the bread; who not only saw that He was the Lord from His preaching and teaching, but He was indeed risen from the dead and was flesh and blood when He joined them in eating food with them. Our Lord confirms that He is flesh and blood for these disciples in the upper room—that He is indeed the risen Lord + Jesus Christ—by asking if they have any food. They had broiled fish and honeycomb. When He ate, they knew that He was indeed not a ghost. But it was still hard for them to believe that He was the risen Lord + Jesus, because no one had ever raised himself from the grave. Not only that, but people coming back from the dead was not a common occurrence. Even today there are very few people who come back from the dead. The ones who come back from the dead in our times are those who have only been declared physically dead for a few minutes.

Here was their Lord and Master Who had been dead for three days standing in the midst of them, declaring to them, "Peace to you" and showing them the wounds in His hands, feet and side. He Who was dead was there in the midst of them, as a living breathing flesh and blood Man. They could touch His flesh and see with their eyes that He was indeed the Lord risen from the dead. This was something that was too wonderful to believe. It is something that we, if ever, rarely see in our day. It was the same for the disciples. Seeing a person raised from the dead was not a common thing. Even our Lord + Jesus only raised three people from the dead in the entire three-year ministry of Him on Earth. Our Lord + Jesus reveals Himself to be a living, breathing human being, Who is also the Lord God, by asking for something to eat.

Their disbelief needed to be removed. Our Lord + Jesus removes the disbelief of the disciples there in the upper room in the same way that He restored the hope of the two men on the road to Emmaus. He opened their understanding of the holy Scriptures. When the writings of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms were opened to them so that they could see that all the events that happened in the last week were supposed to happen, and happened the way that the holy Scriptures said they were suppose to happen, then they were able to comprehend the holy Scriptures. They were able to understand that these things needed to happen in order for them to have atonement for their sins.

Our Lord's crucifixion and death—His innocent sacrifice on the tree of the holy cross—needed to happen for the atonement of the whole world, so that all those who cling to Him in faith may be made right with the Lord God. He needed to offer up His innocent life—His perfect and sinless flesh and blood—as a ransom for all of mankind. The holy Scriptures needed to be fulfilled. They were fulfilled in Him. The Christ had not come to establish an earthly kingdom like the kingdom of His ancestor King David, but He had come to bring and everlasting heavenly Kingdom to all those who believe on Him. This Kingdom could only be given through the incarnate Son of God offering up His life as a ransom for many. Our eternal home in Heaven can only be granted to us through the Lord God taking upon Himself our flesh, fulfilling the Law as One of us, and offering up His life in our place.

The wrath of the Lord God is appeased in Him. The wrath of the Lord God was poured out upon Him on the tree of the holy cross on Good Friday. We now have peace with the Lord God because of what our Lord + Jesus did for us on the cross. Our Lord + Jesus can rightly come into our midst and declare that we have peace. We can rightly wish peace be upon one another, for through the Lord + Jesus we all have peace. When we greet one another by saying, "Peace be with you" we are simply stating that we all have been given peace with the Lord God—the forgiveness of our sins—through the Lord + Jesus. When we greet each other with "Peace be with you" we are giving each other our Lord + Jesus. We are saying that our Lord + Jesus dwells among us.

Indeed, our Lord + Jesus comes into our midst when He offers to us food, even as He received and ate food as a testimony that He was not a ghost, but was flesh and blood. He offers to us His Body and Blood in bread and wine and declares to us that He is truly present among us. He is not here in our midst only spiritually. He is here present among us in His Body and Blood given in bread and wine. Whenever the Lord + Jesus comes into our midst—wherever two or three are gathered together in His Name—He is bringing and gifting to us peace with our Lord God.

When we doubt that He is here among us, for such a thing is too wonderful for us to believe, He opens our understanding of the holy Scriptures by starting with Moses and the prophets and the psalms and shows that all that He did during Holy Week was supposed to be done, and it was supposed to be done for us poor, miserable sinners. The Christ must suffer and die and the third day be raised from the dead, so that all those who cling in faith to these works and merits of Him will have eternal life.

This is the message that must go out into all the world. This is why we continue to meet in this place, so that all those who come through those doors may have the holy Scriptures opened up to

them, and they may understand and believe that salvation is found in the Lord + Jesus, the Christ alone. No work of man will ever suffice as a payment for sin. No good work we do will ever cover over our sins. Only the Christ, the Son of God, can atone for our sins. He comes to be in our midst and open our understanding by preaching to us the Word of the Lord through His ministers. They open our understanding of the holy Scriptures from Moses through all the prophets and through the writings of the four Evangelists who recorded for us the deeds of our Lord + Jesus.

Our Lord + Jesus also opens up our understanding that salvation is found only in Him, when He offers us this meal. We see only bread and wine, but our Lord + Jesus has promised in His Word that He is present here with us in this bread and wine in His Body and Blood. He is here with us. He is here whenever two or three people are gathered together in His Name. He is here to declare "Peace to you." He gives us peace by absolving us of all our sins. He gives us peace and opens our understanding that we may comprehend the Scriptures which declare that our Lord + Jesus suffered and died for the sins of the whole world, and He was raised again for the justification of all those who cling to Him in faith. May us poor sinners continue to joy and marvel that our Lord + Jesus continues to come to us in His Word and Sacraments to take away all our transgressions and give us eternal life with Him in His Kingdom in Heaven. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty God, Who through the resurrection of Thine Only-Begotten Son Jesus Christ hast overcome death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life, replenish us, we beseech Thee, with Thy heavenly grace, that, dying unto sin always, and living unto righteousness, we may at last triumph over death and the grave, in the full image, of our risen Lord, to Whom, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, be honor and glory, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!