

Rev. Timothy M. Crummitt

Third Sunday of Easter - Year B

59th Week of Pandemic - Second Outside Service

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Acts 3:12-19

Psalm 4

I John 3:1-7

Luke 24:36b-48

04/18/2021

### **Gospel**

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke:

36bJesus himself stood among [the disciples] and said to them, "Peace be with you." 37They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. 38He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." 40And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. 41While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" 42They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43and he took it and ate in their presence. 44Then 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, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." 45Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, 46and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, 47and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in

his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48You are witnesses of these things.”

The Gospel of our Lord

### **Prayer**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

### **Mixed Expectations**

Good morning! Expectations, they can certainly throw a wrench into things. I have told this before, but when Megan and I were in our first year of marriage we had a rather significant argument in a Lowe’s store in Columbia, SC over Christmas decorations. We had both grown up with different preferences, but we had both expected that Christmas should look a specific way around our home. I grew up in a house where colored lights were used inside and white lights were used outside, Megan was the opposite. Neither was really wrong. But because we had EXPECTED that it would look a certain way, we were unable, at first, to see the other’s way. Expectations can get us into trouble.

Take our Gospel reading this week. I read it twice last week and had an idea of what I wanted to preach about, but I had arrived at the text with an expectation, and it wasn’t until reading it a third time that I realized I had been reading the text incorrectly. I was adding something that wasn’t there. Like I said, expectations can get us into trouble. When you come to Jesus with your own expectations, he often does something VERY different.

Just look at our pericope (a fancy word for the assigned text) for today. The story is FULL of misplaced expectations! It starts before the crucifixion. The disciples had EXPECTED that the Messiah would act in a certain way, and Jesus had defied those assumptions. So even after Jesus

told them that he was going to die, they were still surprised at the arrest and crucifixion. They had not expected that the Messiah would be killed. Then, three days later he did something else that they didn't expect, he came back from the dead! That was something that a dead person just didn't do! So once again, even though Jesus had told them what would happen, those words didn't meet what they expected the average dead person to do... mainly to come back.

So, after the events of the resurrection, after the women have found an empty tomb and after the road to Emmaus, the disciples are again talking about what Jesus had been doing, defying expectations, when Jesus raises the bar again! He just shows up in the room. He literally appears before them. He doesn't come through a door like every other human being, but instead just shows up! BAM! Now if someone just appeared before you like this you would be afraid, so Jesus tells them to calm down. *"Peace be with you,"* he says. These are the words that usually accompany an appearance of an angel. But the disciples assume that he's a ghost or spirit. After all, he just randomly appeared in the room, that's not something you or I could do. But again Jesus defies expectations, and he asks for food. He wants to prove that he has a real body, that he is flesh and blood. He tells them *"Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."* Then Jesus shows them his body, as proof that he is real, "come see! Feel my hands, know that I am real!" Next he asks for some food, because again, ghosts and spirits don't eat like human beings.

You see... God is all about changing expectations. Just because we want or think that things should go a certain way, doesn't mean that God

doesn't have something drastically different planned. And so, Jesus explains this to the disciples. They knew the scriptures, but until Jesus explained them they never understood them. God was doing exactly what God had always promised to do, it's just that we had never been paying attention well enough to fully understand.

Which raises a unique challenge for us, here... now... At the end of our Gospel lesson the disciples are told something powerful: *"Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, 47and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48You are witnesses of these things."* It's that last verse that always gets me... "You are witnesses of these things." For a simple statement it sure carries a lot of expectation, on God's part this time!

And just like that we are called out of our comfort zones into tough places where God is at work. Fred Craddock puts it wonderfully though when he writes that *"after twenty centuries, preaching a crucified Christ and accepting all people equally continue as problems haunting the corners of the church, awaiting full and free resolution."*<sup>1</sup> This can be intimidating, believe me, I know, sharing the Gospel across the whole world? Where do we even start?! Fortunately Jesus gives us a little direction. Start in our backyard. "Beginning in Jerusalem," he tells the disciples. It won't be easy, but it's not impossible. Tell a neighbor, a loved one. Share your life of faith with those around you. With one step at a time our lives can become beacons of light announcing the work that God has done and is doing here in this place. All you need to do is change your expectations... Who knows what might happen! Amen.

---

<sup>1</sup> Craddock, Fred B. *Luke*. Louisville, Ky: John Knox Press, 1990. p. 291.

