

Rev. Timothy M. Crummitt

Third Sunday of Easter - Year B

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Acts 3:12-19

Psalm 4

I John 3:1-7

Luke 24:36b-48

04/14/2024

Gospel

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke:

36b Jesus himself stood among [the disciples] and said to them, "Peace be with you." 37 They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. 38 He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 Look 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." 40 And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. 41 While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, 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 in their presence. 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, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, 46 and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and 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.” 49And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

The Gospel of Our Lord

Prayer

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

Wait.

Christ is Risen! Alleluia! Good morning! For those that aren't aware by now, I have Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder. This manifests in a variety of ways, but it's been particularly challenging this past week. When you're at home with a bad back and planter fasciitis that makes it a challenge to even move around, you can get a little frustrated. While I take medication to help manage it, it's impossible to completely rewire a hamster wheel of a brain.

As I have said before, it's one of the reasons why I like meditation and silence so much. Simply because it's such a rare thing for me. It's why that time before worship when we hit pause is so important. It's why that little pause before a prayer means so much. BUT the one thing I can't stand is having someone tell me to sit tight and wait. Which is why it's so important to pay attention to that last verse in our Gospel reading. Verse 49 isn't in the original suggested reading for today, but after Norm Otto read it at bible study on Monday afternoon we all realized how contextual the reminder was for St. Paul's.

But let's back up first. For us it's the Third Sunday of Easter. The resurrection was three weeks ago for us! Not so for the disciples. Our reading this morning takes

place at the MOST three days after the resurrection, more likely the day after. The text immediately before this is the road to Emmaus where Jesus is revealed to two disciples in the breaking of bread after a long day of travel. So after that miraculous event the two disciples rush back to the rest of the gang to let them know what happened when Jesus once again shows up!

Now we don't get the locked door story of the Gospel of John, but the text certainly seems to suggest that Jesus literally appears in the same room in a miraculous way. As is always the case when a heavenly being appears to us regular old human beings, the first thing Jesus does is tell the disciples to calm down. "*Peace be with you*" he says. The disciples assume they're looking at a ghost, which is fair, and so Jesus next works to establish the fact that he is real, that his body is not an apparition. "*Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 Look 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.*" Jesus is telling them to come and take a look, see for themselves! He is real! He keeps it going; "*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 in their presence.*" Ghosts can't eat food. If you saw the 1995 film *Casper* you know that it falls right through their bodies, it's just a fact.

Next he reinforces what he had already told them and that's where he tells them to get back to Jerusalem and stay put. They are told to wait. If you have shown up for any of the Wednesday book studies that started in Lent, this should sound familiar. In several of the chapters in the book *When Church Stops Working* by Andrew Root and Blair D. Bertrand we are told to wait. It's been by far the least

liked of the chapters we've read, and I think it's safe to say that it's been a point of frustration. That's why those words from Jesus hit just a LITTLE different this time around.

As we discussed what it means for the disciples to wait Karen Otto pointed out that it takes time to process things. Remember that this is still just DAYS after the brutal death and resurrection of Jesus. Heck, it's barely been a week since he rode into town on a colt to fanfare and cheers. He's been celebrated, arrested, mocked, beaten, crucified, buried, and risen from the dead. I imagine the disciples are reeling from the news, and then he literally shows up in the room! God knows they need time to get things together. Even though he's alive, he still died. I'm sure they were still processing that horrific event. And then on top of it all he challenges them to spread this news across the entire world! I would need a few days to get it together.

We need time too. The reality of what the church used to be has changed. It will take more than an 8 week book study for us to figure out how to respond. But what do we do in the meantime? I'm glad you asked! Let's go back to the text. Jesus asks for a piece of fish. This makes it clear that he's real, but it does something else too. You see, in the Gospel of Luke meals are an especially important event. Jesus is constantly eating, and the Gospel writer is always telling us about it. The last supper is an especially important time, but on the road to Emmaus we saw another one too. Jesus spends the entire walk with the disciples teaching them and showing them the meaning of scripture. But throughout that whole experience they don't recognize him. Scholastic knowledge doesn't seem to be the key. It's clearly important, but it's

not the center. When the disciples sit down to share a meal and Jesus breaks bread they finally see him for who he truly is, God!

We'll find Jesus the same way. In the breaking of the bread. We won't find all our answers, sure, but we'll certainly see God. There is one more little line I love in our text today. "*While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering...*" It seems impossible to be joyous and still in disbelief all at the same time, and yet here we are. How can we as a church wait and still do God's work all at the same time? Apparently it is possible, the disciples did it, we're invited to do it too. So St. Paul's, let's wait and see what God has in store together, and in the meantime, we'll gather around that table and eat from the bread of life. Amen.