

Their Eyes Were Opened

Luke 24:13-35 (24:16, 31)

October 5, 2008

LWML Sunday

In † Jesus name. Amen.

In our Gospel text notice how the disciples eyes were opened. Notice how our risen Lord reveals Himself to these two men. Jesus when He reveals Himself to Thomas does not say to Him, “Thomas look into my eyes. Remember when we did this thing or that thing?” Nor does our Lord perform miracles before Him. What does He do for Thomas to prove that He did die, but show him His scars. The holes in His hands, His feet, and His side where water and blood poured forth. The marks of the crucifixion convert Thomas from doubting to confessing.

It was three days after His shameful death upon the tree. Two disciples, Cleopas and another, are traveling from Jerusalem to Emmaus, a seven mile journey. It may take about two hours to make the journey down to Emmaus. And on this journey a third man joins them. Our Lord showed Himself to those disciples headed to Emmaus. But before He did they acted as Thomas did,

and as the world so often does. We are struck by our own sinful reason. The men related words to Jesus about what they expected to happen. **“Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and who our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. There were at the tomb early in the morning, and when they did not find his body they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see (Lk. 24:19b-24).**

That is the result of our fallen human nature from the time of Adam and Eve’s fall. Rather than to rely upon the Word’s of God, **You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die”** Eve tries to abide by her own reason. That is the result of our first

parents not believing God's Word. Eve was convinced that even though God said not to do it, that just because it looked good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that it would make one wise, that she could ignore God's Word.

These two disciples, Cleopas and the other, could not reason the death of this prophet. What they had received and what they wanted to see were two different things. Jesus did not show Himself to those headed to Emmaus with trumpets, shouts of joy, and loud angels. No Jesus had kept their eyes closed so that they could see Him in one way. Jesus rebukes the two, **O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?** Jesus used Moses and the prophets as proof. It was necessary that the serpent would strike His heel (Gen. 3:15). It was necessary that a Ram be sacrificed so that Isaac could live (Gen. 22:13-14). It was necessary that Jesus would be swallowed up and held for three days in the belly of the tomb. It was necessary that He was stricken, smitten, and afflicted.

It was the reconciliation of the world to the Father. It was Christ glorified, lifted up to draw all men unto Himself, the daring rescue of mankind from Hell's grip. And that Biblical reality rekindles the disciples' conviction. Notice too that that quiet witness, the preaching of the Word and the breaking of the bread does not send the two into frenzied dancing and shouting. Rather Christ's teaching through His Word and the breaking of the bread sent them back to Jerusalem. Through that preaching and the breaking of the bread GOD opens their eyes to faith in Him. The disciples did not do it, God alone did!

The point of the resurrection, what Easter means, what we preach from our pulpits and the LWML proclaims in their work is that Jesus is the Messiah of the Scriptures. That Jesus was anointed to die, to fulfill the Law for wayward men and to re-order creation. His Father did not love Him because He just kept the Law perfectly. He loved Him because Jesus put Himself in our place that we would not have to die for our sins. He loves Him because He crushed the Serpents head, because He burst forth from the belly of the tomb three days later having defeated death by dying and rising. Christ toppled our kingdoms, He tore down the proud, and He exalted the Humble.

But that preaching is different than what the world expects. For the world likes glory. They like miracles. They like excitement and Hallelujahs. They like the empty tomb. Yet it is Jesus on the cross, the suffering, the nails, that soldier's piercing lance, and His death that many in the world do not like. Yet without that our thoughts are just like Thomas. He refused to believe the death on the cross of His Lord. It is like the selfish worry of the disciples on the road to Emmaus. We thought we know what He was coming to do, but I guess not. They admitted that they had thought Jesus was coming to redeem Israel, until He was crucified on the tree. Satan tried to drown out their faith, by convincing them Jesus couldn't have died, shouldn't have died. Satan would try and drown out the churches cry for mercy, the reality that by His stripes we are healed, that by His suffering, bleeding, and dying, that we are saved. Repent, the Kingdom of God is at hand. The point of He is risen is: HE DIED! Easter, our preaching and teaching each day, the work of the LWML, and all in the Church is about Jesus death. And for those who believe it, there is no better news, no other cause for joy.

O course He lives. He is life. Death could not hold Him. It has been satisfied. Death is finished. If He had not risen then our faith would have been in vain, for He would not have had the power to satisfy and end death. But He did rise. He does live. He left the grave clothes behind. But He still, and forever, bears His scars, the marks of His office. He bears witness of Himself through the Holy Scriptures, both Moses, the prophets, the evangelists, and the apostles.

Through those Words of God's Grace, and through those Words alone, God has opened our eyes. He has revealed Himself to us, even if our reason cannot grasp how it is so. It is not because you have made it so; it is only because of what God reveals to you. That is why we are to tell of Word of God, not our feelings and thoughts about Jesus, but about what the Word of God says. That you are a poor miserable sinner but that Christ has redeemed you from the punishment that you deserve and that you have been made His own. The Word of Christ works faith. It opens eyes. The work of the Church is to remain faithful to that Word and to spread it throughout the world so that many may come to know the work of the Crucified and Risen Christ.

And so, you are His, by GRACE, you are His beloved, His child, His precious Holy bride. There is no one to accuse you. No one can stand against you. For Christ is your Lord. While you wait for the coming of the resurrection and the consummation of that union, He joins you to Cleopas, the other disciples, to Thomas, to Peter, to all the saints, that is He joins you to the Church. But most importantly He joins you to Himself in the breaking of the bread. Amen.