

Pastor Joshua Janke
Risen Savior Lutheran Church, McFarland, WI
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The Powerful Word Makes Everything Clear Luke 24: 36-49

- I. Even in the presence of fear and amazement
- II. So that we see clearly our Risen Lord

Behind the locked doors in Jerusalem were disciples who were talking about what the Emmaus disciples were saying about Jesus appearing to them on the way to Emmaus while they were talking to each other Jesus stood among them. They were startled. They were frightened. They were troubled. Look at these fear filled disciples. They were in danger. The same people who had put Jesus death wanted to find them and destroy this Jesus' movement and they proved their actions later on. But Jesus was in their midst. This just could not be. He must be a ghost. It couldn't be Jesus. Jesus addressed their troubled hearts and spoke to their doubts by inviting them to look at his hands and feet. This is Jesus the one who died on the cross. Jesus invited them to touch him and see that he had flesh and bones. He wanted to remove all their doubts and all their fears.

Jesus when he recognizes their joy and amazement which caused confusion ate some food. He wanted to prove to them that he was the same Jesus who was born at Bethlehem and walked this earth with them in his ministry. He was the same Jesus who died on the cross. Jesus did want them to be sure of what had happened by using the same proof that you and I have to search and study and to trust. He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." 45 Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. 46 He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Not only is this the same person who ate and drank with his disciples during his earthly ministry; his message is the same. Jesus reminds them of how his entire ministry is a fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures. The first public sermon preached by Jesus as recorded by Luke began with this thematic statement: "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (4:21). Jesus moves through the various books of the Old Testament, opening the minds of his disciples to show how all has been fulfilled in himself. The Old Testament is promise; the New Testament is fulfillment. The message is the same: repentance and the forgiveness of sins.

Jesus took time to reassure his disciples with his presence and with the Scriptures. Could Jesus have used these words of Isaiah 52? It is certainly possible. Isaiah wrote “See, my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted. 14 Just as there were many who were appalled at him--his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness-- 15 so will he sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him. For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand (Isaiah 52:13-15).” Could Jesus have quoted Psalm 16? IT is certainly possible. The Psalmist wrote: “I have set the LORD always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. 9 Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, 10 because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. 11 You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.(Psalm 16:8-11).”

Jesus uses the testimony of those same disciples along with the Old Testament Scriptures to give us a firm footing in our faith in the slippery doubts and confusion of life that cause us to be fearful, anxious, worried, uncertain, and slowed down in sharing the certainty, confidence and sure hope of salvation Jesus wants us to share. Jesus before he appeared to the disciples had just opened the Scriptures to the Emmaus disciples. Their hearts burned while he spoke to them. Jesus opened the Scriptures once again to his disciples who were hiding behind locked doors because of real fears and troubled hearts.

When the rich man in hell requested that someone from the dead should go and speak to his five brothers, Abraham replied that “if they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead” (16:31). When Jesus appears here to his disciples, he does not simply show himself to be a living person; he opens their minds to an understanding of the Scriptures. Today we do not have the privilege of seeing the body of our risen Lord face-to-face, but we have the Old and New Testament Scriptures, which bear witness to him. These are sufficient for our faith and our witness. The Powerful Word Makes Everything Clear. Even in the presence of fear and amazement

Think of those things that can overwhelm us in our Christian walk with the Lord. It is so easy to be entangled in sinful thoughts words and actions. When we are it is to lock the door of forgiveness by hiding behind our guilt. Jesus wants today to be the day that those doors of fear and guilt are unlocked. He wants to set us free with the message of his death and resurrection.

I have seen that locked door open many times in my ministry. I have seen it in a Bible information class when people hang on to the misunderstandings of the past and their own desire to make themselves right with God. I have seen the door of fear and guilt unlocked and the certainty of salvation embrace the troubled soul with the certainty of forgiveness and the certain expectation of eternal life with Jesus. I have

seen many an elderly person troubled by the failing body and the pain of disease overcoming their confidence be set free from the locked doors of worry and fear by the trusting promises in Jesus their Savior.

Jesus wanted his disciples to be sure of who he was and what he had done and how it was all a fulfillment of the Scriptures so that they could use that same message to set free the people in Jerusalem and Samaria and all parts of the world. Jesus concludes by giving to his followers a command and a promise. Their task will be to preach to all nations, witnessing to all they had seen and heard. It is an awesome assignment that Jesus gives, but along with it comes the promise that the disciples will be “clothed with power from on high.” The book of Acts (also written by Luke) tells the story of how the Holy Spirit empowered the disciples to go with the gospel. The journey of Jesus ended in Jerusalem; the mission of the church will begin in that same city and finally reach to the ends of the earth.

In the same way Jesus wants us to absolutely sure of our relationship with him that we might not spend all our time worrying about our uncertainty but be able to be instruments of God in bringing that message to people who have been deceived by those who have rejected the message that Jesus is the Son of God who really died on the cross at a time in history. There are people who are being lied to that Jesus did not rise from the dead. There are really people who believe that Jesus if he did live still has a body lying in a tomb in Jerusalem. Not true. Why? The Law of Moses, the prophets and the psalms proclaimed that Jesus had to suffer and die and rise again so that this message of repentance and forgiveness would be preached to all nations.

The Powerful Word Makes Everything Clear. Even in the presence of fear and amazement. So that we see clearly our Risen Lord. Even though we find fear filled disciples behind those locked doors. We also find a Risen living Lord who removes doubts and fears by opening up the Scriptures to the truth of who he is and what he had to do to suffer, die and rise again for us and all people. Today at a time when we can't go to this house of the Lord as a congregation of believers we can go to the Scriptures. There in the Scriptures we return to Jerusalem to find certainty and confidence for our daily lives in the comforting words and direction of our living Lord and Savior. In this times of lockdown and Covid 19 fears we can go directly to our Lord for prayers of healing and wisdom. Why? Because Jesus suffered for our sins, died on the cross and rose from the dead on Easter just as the Old Testament and New Testament Scriptures declare. Confident Jesus is with us every day let us use these challenging times to witness to Jesus' death and resurrection.

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