

Third Sunday of Easter

April 14, 2024 (Year B)



PROCLAMATION POINTS

The following are some thoughts and questions to be used for a text study on the weekly lessons, or for jump-starting the imagination of the preacher and hearer in preparing for the proclamation event.

This is also learned from the nature of the Gospel, for the Gospel is a message and a testimony, which declares how the Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead, that he might remove sin, death and all evil from all who believe on him. If I recognize him as such a Savior, I have heard the Gospel aright, and he has in truth revealed himself to me.

– Martin Luther –

Church Postil, 1524

Acts 3:11–21

Through the healing power of Christ a man who was lame from birth became able to get up and walk. People who had gathered there were surprised by this turn of events and looked at the two disciples with amazement. Peter immediately addressed them so that there was no mistake; it was not their power by which this man was healed, but through the one who was crucified and risen from the dead. Peter called the people to repent of their sins and submit to the one whom the prophets foretold.

- In what ways do people like us get caught up in the admiration of human beings who are doing God's work, rather than attributing the power to Jesus?
- Was the faith of the lame man the product of his own will and power? By whose power do we stand in faith?

Notice the emphasis in these verses on the “name” of Jesus in verse 16. Looking back to Acts 3:6, this same emphasis on the “name” of Jesus is seen in the actual healing of the lame man.

- A quote attributed to St. Francis says, “Preach the Gospel at all times, and if necessary, use words.” In what sense is the name of Christ always necessary in preaching the Gospel?
- How do Peter and John give us an example of what it means to share our faith? Who are we sent to talk about?

Psalms 4

Psalms 4 not only shows us the prayer of a person in need of God's help, it actually shows us God's response. The psalm serves as a kind of dialog of an internal and external Word.

- In verse 2, how is the fundamental human problem described by God? How does this primary sin cause all manner of other problems in our lives?

This psalm is not just an expression of human words, but as Scripture, it is also God's Word to us in response.

- How does God use a psalm like this to actually create and nurture our faith, as modern day readers of Scripture?

1 John 3:1–7

John said that the very fact that we are called children of God is a sign of His gracious love in Christ. John also said this is something the unbelieving world does not understand.

- The word Christian means “one who belongs to Christ;” the word atheist literally means “no god.” In what sense does

faith shape our understanding, not simply of religion and our world, but of ourselves?

John affirmed that even though there is much we do not know now, we will be like God and see him as he is. When God reveals himself to us, it transforms our lives.

- In what sense does seeing God revealed in Christ actually make us more like him? In what sense is this already happening to us in faith?

John went on to speak about the way faith and action are related — either for the good or for the bad.

- What does verse 4 mean when it says “make a practice” of sinning? Is this different than simply saying “those who sin”? Explain.
- How does our “practice” of righteousness follow from the fact that God himself has made us righteous? In what sense is our action based on our identity, rather than vice versa?

Luke 24:36–49

Last week we heard John's account of Jesus coming among the disciples and offering them peace. This week we hear Luke's version of the story, where the disciples feared that Jesus was a ghost. Jesus proved to them that he was not a spirit or ghost by insisting that they touch him and feel that he is truly flesh and bone. Since some of the disciples still were stuck in disbelief, Jesus took his proof one step further by asking for a meal. They knew that a ghost does not need to eat, nor is capable of eating.

- Many people think they would be able to believe if Jesus would only appear to them as he did to the disciples. Do you think this is true? Is faith that easy?
- Why are we humans so slow of heart to believe, even when there is physical evidence right in front of us?

Sometimes when we learn new things it is only information until we have the chance to put it into action. We can learn about a technique or process in a book but until we have to execute the steps ourselves, and even do them over and over again, it simply does not make sense to us. As the disciples gathered together after his resurrection, Jesus reviewed with them all that he taught them when they were together. It was now time for them to put theory into practice. The time for “book learning” was over.

- In what ways do we often “know” what needs to be done in the kingdom but fail to be able to put ministry in motion? What holds us back from acting on Jesus' teachings and commissioning?