

Third Sunday of Easter

April 19, 2026



Now when we are called again to the Word of God, our hearts burn and are kindled as the Scriptures are opened to us; but we recognize Christ first only when he breaks to us the bread of his Word, that is, when he becomes a teacher in every heart, and he sets before us the bread, i.e., his Word.

– Martin Luther –

Sermon on the Chief Article of Our Faith, 1524

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.

Acts 2:14a, 36-41

Peter's declaration that Jesus is the Messiah cut his hearers to the heart. This revelation caused them to see that they were in rebellion against God. They had rejected the one God had sent.

It's easy to condemn the people of Israel for this blindness. But before we let ourselves go down that road, we must recall that prior to the Resurrection, the hold that sin, death, and the devil had was complete. It was unchallenged and unrecognized. It is only in the light of Christ's rising from the dead that this hold is broken.

In that light — when the people hear who Jesus really is and what he is really doing — they are moved to repentance immediately. The Holy Spirit grabs hold of their hearts as Peter delivers the Good News to them.

- *What does this episode in Acts show us about the power of preaching the law, and how it holds us accountable for our sin? (Compare Romans 3:19.)*
- *Was it necessary for Peter to add, "whom you crucified" to his identification of Jesus? What effect did that have?*

It's hard to imagine seeing 3,000 people baptized in one day. Few of us will see 3,000 baptisms in a lifetime. The work of evangelism in our contexts is a bit slower, a bit less dramatic, somehow not quite as spectacular — or, at least, that's how we tend to think of things. But if we think again about what is happening among us, we realize that every single instance of baptism is dramatic, spectacular, wondrous. In every instance, a sinner is put to death and raised up to newness of life. Sins are forgiven. The Holy Spirit takes hold. All whom the Lord calls to himself receive these wondrous gifts.

- *What are some ways we try to control the work of the Holy Spirit, rather than simply trusting that the Spirit does indeed have the power to call and forgive?*

Psalm 116:1-14

The psalmist reminds us that God hears our prayers and our cries for help and he answers us, bringing us out of death to new life.

- *How might this particular psalm be helpful to use when talking to someone who isn't sure they believe in God*

1 Peter 1:17-25

We often stumble or even fall when we run into passages

like this one from 1 Peter. If the Father judges all people according to their deeds, what becomes of the Gospel? What becomes of our conviction that we are saved by faith and not according to our deeds? If we stop with the first verse of our reading, we will have real difficulty preaching the truth of the Gospel. We get hung up wondering if we are sufficiently obedient, sufficiently genuine, sufficiently faithful.

It is then that we must be reminded that our lives are no longer our own. In baptism, we are born anew in Christ. As a result, we are seen by the Father as possessing the righteousness of Christ himself. We have the faith of the one who was faithful even unto death. That is the Word and promise that endures forever.

- *What kind of theological trouble do we get into when we focus on a single verse without considering the whole context of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus?*

Luke 24:13-35

There's something quite comical about the scene on the road to Emmaus. The disciples, downtrodden and filled with doubt, have a firsthand encounter with the risen Lord but don't recognize him. They even mock Jesus a bit, marveling that he doesn't seem to be aware of what has happened in Jerusalem. Finally, they presume to tell Jesus the story of himself! Unfortunately, in their hands, the story of Jesus stopped short of Easter. They couldn't bring themselves to boldly tell this stranger that their Lord had risen from the dead. They just weren't sure yet.

- *Why couldn't these disciples recognize Jesus? Why were they reluctant to proclaim that Jesus had risen from the dead?*
- *Do you ever find it difficult or strange that our faith rests on the literal resurrection of the dead? Are there other aspects of Christianity that are easier to focus on?*

Jesus teaches his disciples as they continue down the road, but they still do not recognize him. It is not until they share in the breaking of the bread that their eyes are opened. For those of us who weren't there that first Easter morning and didn't get our own firsthand encounter with Jesus, we have been given a different assurance of his presence with us. In his Supper he comes to us, once again, and shares all of himself with his chosen ones.

- *How is our experience of the Lord's Supper like or unlike the experiences of the first disciples?*
- *Do you ever wish for a more clear presence of Christ among us, or more concrete proof of our faith? What if you never get it?*