**Luke 24:36-49**

As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, “Peace to you!” **37** But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. **38** And he said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? **39** See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit 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** And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, 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 before them. **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 and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” **45** Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, **46** and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, **47** and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. **48**  You are witnesses of these things. **49** And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

**“Open Says Me”**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen. Farmers are back at it again and they look for the renewal of creation. It carries the anticipation of fruitfulness in the fields. Such a simple thing the season of the year which follow the cycles of death and life. Yet, this renewal is a standard God has set within all of creation more than in farming. Everyone experiences this personally when we go to sleep only to wake up for another day. Our bodies do well for a time, but eventually they long for refreshment in what we eat and drink. We see renewal even throughout history as generations rise and fall with good and bad times. Without renewal there would no joy in creation.

If God provides such newness in life even after the Fall into sin. How much more has Jesus’ resurrection brought the greater witness? This renewal comes directly from God and His love. It holds eternal weight of glory that is not subject to cycles of life, the decay of death, or what sin can spoil. Jesus brings by His Name the victory accomplished for all by His death on the cross. After Easter, Jesus appeared forty days to His disciples. He kept renewing their lives with faith in Him. This is what Jesus still promises to do for us today by His Word and Sacraments. Repentance lets us see that “times of refreshing” have come by God’s grace. The resurrection of Jesus from death is to renew us with perpetual joy in Him.

Our Gospel reading goes back to the evening of that first Easter. Their “talking” was not about life expectancy, money, or worldly matters. Jesus had already appeared to two disciples on the road to Emmaus. They were now trying to piece together what His resurrection meant. Of course, Jesus appeared with the answer for them of peace in His Name. Their reaction of fear got in the way of Jesus. The source of this deception over Him being a ghost came from within. They could not see it, but Jesus did. He said, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?” Such foolishness had to go, so God let them touch and see the truth of His faithful presence.

Jesus renews our hearts by removing the threat of superstition. Hyper-spirituality is all around and the Old Adam is prone to all kinds of falsity. Plenty of possibilities today exist about the afterlife, good and evil, and mystical things. St. John warns us about the fanciful ways of the sinful nature. “Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous.” No crystal, magic, horoscope, or whatever removes judgment against sinners. Only Christ lets us repent of superstitious fear to hear Him say, “Peace be with you.” God’s Son seeks to renew us with the truth of forgiveness won. He holds out His sacrifice so that by baptism we die to have life in His Name. He lets us touch and see His presence at the Lord’s Supper to lift up our hearts.

Dealing with deceptions of their hearts was only half the problem. This joy in Christ was “too good to be true.” So, after eating before them, Jesus directed their attention to the Old Testament. What He had spoken now found its place in fulfillment to what God said. Everything in the Old Testament witnessed to Jesus. Everything of God’s saving work from long ago centered on Him. Everything about Scripture had life since He gave His stamp of approval. As Jesus had said to the Pharisees, “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me...” (John 5:39). The disciples were to be mindful not to a “new” scripture, but to see by faith the One who stood out in them from beginning to end.

Jesus renews our minds to think freely with God’s Word. The mind finds itself cluttered with all kinds of things today. Much of it stands against God and His Word. Man is seeking to release himself from old religion and outdated morals. Yet, only slavery waits since apart from Scripture none can receive the freedom Jesus gives. Even if there are churches, without God’s Word upheld in truth and purity they become a den of Satan. Peter preaches, “Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that time of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord…” Jesus present in Scripture pulls us away from self-centered lives to focus upon Him. Jesus proves from Scripture rather than bless sin the cure is to forgive the repentant. Jesus rules by Scripture for it all points to Him as the sacrifice so that whoever believes in Him will be saved.

With hearts and minds renewed, Jesus sent His disciples on their way. They were witnesses of all the things that took place. It was more than accepting the facts, but facing how He would carry out His work in their lives. Rather than being troubled by their works, Jesus gave the better work that would be in their lives. He said, “And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you.” With the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, they would be fully equipped. Luther describes it this way saying, “It’s as if he would say, ‘I’ll place armor on you that will withstand every shot.” (Study Bible). Going forward was with power not run by the strength of men, but by the Spirit of God that alone convert and save sinners.

Jesus renews our lives for a truly effective witness in this world. Out of His death and resurrection repentance and forgiveness of sins goes out to ends of the earth. This is the witness of life we received by baptism into Jesus. He lives before us now in what He brings of Himself by Word and Sacrament. Being clothed with the Spirit gives us reason to celebrate. The effectiveness is that God goes with us. He is making the good witness. His power to save is in our lives. The Church has never been or will ever be built by our “rightness.” Jesus alone calls forth newness by the grace He gives to sinners. It happens by His Word rightly working in this world when and where it pleases Him.

As we wait upon creation to bring forth life again, so we wait upon the living Jesus. His promise is to forgive, renew, and save us. The world will call this foolish as it runs off to constructs dead idols for its own enjoyment. Yet, what has come out of the cross is life from God’s Son with joy that has no end. A true victory for us that not even death can silence regardless of what we see. Easter tells us Christ has crushed the cycle and established a new standard has come out of His sacrifice. The resurrection of Jesus from death is to renew us with perpetual joy in Him. Amen. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, Alleluia! Amen.