

April 18, 2021 - Third Sunday after Easter

Acts 3:12-19 Health and forgiveness through the risen Jesus

Verses 6-8 – Peter said, “I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk.” And he took him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. Jumping up, he stood up and began to walk, and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God.

Song from Lutheran youth ministry in the early 70’s

¹²[Peter] addressed the people, “You Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk?”

¹³The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him.

How could you account for the tremendous change that has taken place in Peter from the evening when he denied Jesus in order to save his own skin except by believing that Peter had seen that Jesus was alive?

¹⁴“You rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you.

¹⁵“You killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses.

¹⁶“His name has made this man strong, whom you see and know; the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you.

“Whom you see and know” and “In the presence of all of you” – cf. Mark 5: 19 – Jesus’ telling the demoniac to go home to his friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for him

¹⁷“And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. ¹⁸In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer. ¹⁹Repent therefore and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out.”

Psalm 4 The Lord does wonders for the faithful

¹Answer me when I call, O God, defender of my cause;
you set me free when I was in distress; have mercy on me and hear my prayer.

When and how has God answered you when you have called?

When and how has God set you free – what has God set you free from – when you were in distress?

³Know that the LORD does wonders for the faithful; the LORD will hear me when I call.

When and how has God done wonders for you?

⁷You have put gladness in my heart, more than when grain and wine abound.

⁸In peace, I will lie down and sleep; for you alone, O LORD, make me rest secure.

When and how has God put gladness in your heart?

Are you able to lie down in peace and sleep?

*If so, what makes you able to do that?
If not, what prevents you from being able to do that?
How does God – or how could God – make your rest secure?*

1 John 3:1-7 The revealing of the children of God

¹See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are – cf. John 1: 12-13

²Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is.

³And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

Luke 24:36b-48 Eating with the risen Christ

This incident happened on Easter Sunday evening – after Jesus had spent some time with two of His followers on the road to Emmaus.

Verses 33-35 – They got up and returned to Jerusalem and found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They said, "The Lord has risen indeed and has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

I believe this is the same time as the appearance of Jesus to His disciples recorded in John 20: 19ff (the Gospel reading for last Sunday), when Thomas was not with them.

^{36b}Jesus himself stood among [the disciples] and said to them, "Peace be with you." ³⁷They were startled and terrified and thought that they were seeing a ghost. ³⁸He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?"

For those who are afraid of the future Jesus gives unmistakable evidence of His resurrection

³⁹Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." ⁴⁰And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. ⁴¹While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" ⁴²They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³and he took it and ate in their presence.

For those who are afraid of the past He gives the promise of forgiveness of sins

⁴⁴Then 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, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." ⁴⁵Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸You are witnesses of these things."

For those who feel powerless in the present He promises power from on high

⁴⁹ And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.