

Lesson 9

Third Sunday of Easter

The Holy Gospel: Luke 24:13–35

Mark referred to this incident just in passing, but Luke told the details about the two who left Jerusalem on the afternoon of Easter Sunday to walk seven miles to Emmaus. They evidently thought it was all over. Their high expectations regarding Jesus had not materialized. He had been crucified and buried. The women had reported finding the tomb empty and there was some nonsense (24:11) about seeing and hearing angels—but they had not seen Jesus. As they walked, they talked about the disappointing turn of events. In their depression, they were kept from even recognizing their risen Lord when He joined them and talked with them.

138. How did they express their disappointment and feelings of disillusionment?

The “stranger” forcefully began to explain to them that it was prophesied that the Christ would enter ___ by way of having to ___. (See John 12:23–33; 17:1, 5.) The Greek *edei* says clearly, “It was necessary!”

139. What made it necessary for the Christ to “suffer these things and enter into His glory”?

As they walked together, Jesus “interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” These two knew Moses and the Prophets but not in the way Jesus now opened these teachings up for them!

140. What was Jesus’ purpose in giving them this lengthy exposition of Scripture? In what way do we Christians today have an advantage over the first Christians in interpreting and understanding the Old Testament Scriptures?

As they neared Emmaus, the two practiced good Jewish hospitality and invited the interesting “stranger” to stay with them because it was almost evening.

141. As they sat at the table to eat supper, how did Jesus reveal Himself to them? What was their reaction when at last they knew that the women had been right, that Jesus is alive and it was He who had instructed them along the way?

142. Why did Jesus not stay with them for a time after they had recognized Him?

143. What can we learn from the experience of the two from Emmaus for our own Easter walk with the Lord?

The First Lesson: Acts 2:14a, 36–41

“Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain” is a very formal statement heavy with significance and authority. For emphasis, the sentence begins with the Greek words translated “for certain.” “Let know” is an imperative. What Peter was commanding them became vibrant with Spirit-power when he added: “That God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified!” *Kurios*, “Lord,” was used in the Septuagint, the translation of the Old Testament’s Hebrew into Greek, for *Yahweh*, the “I AM” name by which God revealed Himself to the patriarchs and to Moses. Those who heard Peter recognized fully that he was identifying Jesus as their covenant Lord, Yahweh, in action to fulfill the covenant. *Christos* is the Greek equivalent of “Messiah.” Placing these titles ahead of “this Jesus whom you crucified” gives them added emphasis. Peter was boldly announcing that Jesus is the Anointed One, the promised Savior-King.

144. What had Peter pointed to that had fully established Jesus as Lord and Christ? (See 2:32–35; Romans 1:1–4.)

Peter’s “whom you crucified” impacted with strong judgment against the Jewish people for their unbelieving rejection of their Messiah.

145. What was the effect of this on those who heard Peter’s words? What keeps us from just putting *all* the blame for Jesus’ crucifixion on these Jews and their leaders? (See Acts 2:23; Matthew 20:28; 1 Peter 2:24.)

“Repent” called for a change of heart and mind, a turnaround in the whole direction of life. “Be baptized” sounded the first call to Christian Baptism, the first implementation of Jesus’ instruction in the Great Commission (see Matthew 28:19). Both Greek verbs are present imperatives, calling for a continuing thrust. This was Spirit-powered New Testament preaching. It urged people to do something that was beyond their spiritual capability, something that God Himself had to bring to effect in them. But in that very urging God’s Word was active—and God’s Word is always Spirit-power to make things happen! God engages us today with the same Spirit-powered Word.

146. In Jewish tradition, baptisms were for outsiders coming into the faith or for apostates returning to the faith. What, then, was Peter requiring of them with his call to be baptized “in the name of Jesus Christ”?

147. What blessings were promised to those who would repent and be baptized?

148. How extensive was the offer God was making through Peter?

149. What was the result of Peter's Spirit-powered preaching?

The number of people who received Christian Baptism on this occasion indicates something about the method used in baptizing them. The logistics involved in baptizing three thousand people in an area without a large body of water argue that the Jewish tradition of cleansing by pouring or sprinkling water on people was carried over into Christian Baptism.

150. How does this First Lesson tie in with today's Holy Gospel?

The Epistle for the Day: 1 Peter 1:17–25

Peter said our Father in heaven “judges impartially.” The Greek suggests being “without respect to a person's face”—not judging just by outward appearance, by “how one likes the looks” of someone. We are to “conduct [ourselves] with fear during the time of [our] exile”—being different from those who do not know and love and serve this impartial Father. Our outlook is to be one of reverence as we stand in awe of God as God and do not divide our allegiance (see Matthew 5:19–20, 23–24, 48; Galatians 6:7–10).

151. What do “foreknown before the foundation of the world” and “was made manifest in the last times” say about the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ?

A great majority of people in the world will say, “I believe in God.” The creation itself and man's inherent sense of moral responsibility testify to God's existence as the all-powerful and holy One to all but those who willfully choose to be atheists (see Romans 1:18–20; 2:14–15). Peter's “who through Him [Christ] are believers in God” takes us well beyond such natural knowledge of God.

152. What qualities of God were revealed in Christ that lead us beyond just acknowledging God's power and holiness to living with Him and for Him?

153. Peter told his readers that they had “purified your souls by your obedience to the truth.” What does “obedience to the truth” mean in this connection?

154. What was the result that gave evidence of what had taken place in these Christians?

When people are brought to obey the truth of God's love in Jesus Christ to the point of evidencing that truth in sincere brotherly and sisterly love for one another, Peter said that they even go beyond that to learn to practice agape love, in which they will love one another deeply from the heart.

155. How do we progress as Christians from a brotherly love for those who have become our brothers and sisters in Christ to a determined love for them that imitates God's own agape love?

156. What did Peter point to as the dynamic behind our being born again of imperishable seed?

Verses 24 and 25 call attention to different forms of God's Word, since the quotation from Isaiah is God's written Word, and the last part of verse 25 talks about God's spoken (preached) Word.

157. Which form of God's Gospel Word is to be preferred?

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O God, through the humiliation of Your Son You raised up the fallen world. Grant to Your faithful people, rescued from the peril of everlasting death, perpetual gladness and eternal joys; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

The Holy Gospel: Luke 24:13–35

We are not told why the two left for home—whether they were convinced it was all over, were perplexed and uncertain, or just needed to get back to their everyday concerns. The Greek suggests Jesus had a hand in their not recognizing Him. It did not serve His purposes to reveal Himself immediately. He wanted to lead them into the Scriptures as they prophesied about Him.

138. Their words revealed their disappointment and disillusionment: “We had hoped that He was the one to redeem Israel.”

Fill-in Answers: The “stranger” explained that the Christ would enter His glory by way of having to suffer these things.

139. What made this necessary is the surprising agape of God that moved Him before the world was created to determine to rescue sinful mankind from death and hell through His Son. Because this plan was consistent with God’s very nature as God, it had to be carried out!

140. Jesus was giving them a solid base for their faith to which they could turn again and again. The prophetic Holy Scripture, now fulfilled in Him, would be a continuing resource to confirm their faith and hope. We can look at the Old Testament through the window of the New. When you know the answer to a riddle, it’s easier to look back and see clues by which the riddle is solved. Looking at the Old Testament in the light of its fulfillment in Christ makes it easier to recognize statements that are prophetic and situations that were prototypical.

141. Jesus revealed Himself in blessing and breaking the bread, something they had seen Him do before—the meal setting pointedly emphasizing the fellowship between Jesus and those who are His own (see Luke 22:14–20; Revelation 3:20). They remembered and reminded each other how their hearts had burned with the new understanding of the Scriptures He had opened up to them.

142. Jesus did not stay with them. He had accomplished His purpose in giving them this personal Easter experience and pointing them to its scriptural base.

143. This Emmaus Easter experience teaches us that Jesus is alive and meets us in the written Word and blesses us at table in the Sacrament of His body and blood. Here’s abundant encouragement to meet Him regularly for heart warming.

The First Lesson: Acts 2:14a, 36–41

144. Peter pointed to Jesus’ resurrection and exaltation to God’s right hand as the basis of His being Lord and Christ.

145. The effect of Peter’s strong words of judgment was that many in the crowd were cut to the heart and asked, “What shall we do?” The *kardia*, “heart,” was seen by ancients as the center of human

personality, its mind and will. They saw their need and wanted help. The fact that all of this happened by God's set purpose and foreknowledge and the fact that our sins took Jesus to the cross as surely as theirs keep us from just pointing a finger of blame at the Jews and their leaders. If "the fullness of time" had been in our own day, we ourselves might have been among those shouting "Away with Him."

146. Peter's call to be baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ" required them to acknowledge their unbelief and turn in faith and hope to the very One whom they had rejected, acknowledging Him to be the Christ.

147. Those who would repent and be baptized were promised that their sins would be forgiven and they would receive the Holy Spirit. Baptism is God's washing away of sins (see Acts 22:16), His gift of rebirth and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (see Titus 3:4–8).

148. God's offer was "for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Himself."

149. The Spirit led three thousand to believe and be baptized, confessing Jesus Christ to be Lord and Christ, their promised Messiah and Savior—and the Christian Church had its beginnings in Jerusalem.

The first Christians "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."

150. Peter's "God has made [Jesus] both Lord and Christ" relates to Jesus' showing that the Christ had to suffer and enter His glory. Both also show hearts warmed by Jesus.

The Epistle for the Day: 1 Peter 1:17–25

What enables us to live as "strangers" and truly to stand in awe of God our Father is His loving redemption in Christ. He paid the price so we now truly belong to God as His children. Luther used Peter's words almost verbatim in his explanation of the Second Article. Motivation is a key factor, for God judges motives as well as actions (see 1 Corinthians 4:5).

151. "He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times" places the coming of Christ in God's fullness of time into the perspective of God's eternal plan of salvation, carried out at one point in history, but effective for all.

152. Through Jesus, we see that God's greatest glory is His forgiving love. The fact that this truth may be seen *only* through Jesus is self-validating as God's own truth (see 2 Corinthians 4:6). Faith in Christ enables us, as Luther put it, to "fear, love, and trust in God above all things." Because Jesus is alive and promises that we will live also, our hope is much more than a vague "everything's gonna be okay." It is what Peter had called "a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading" (1:3–4).

153. Obedience to the truth always begins with believing the Gospel of Jesus. But throughout his letter, Peter emphasized obeying the truth, not just believing it. This emphasized the importance of putting faith into action in every aspect of life so we are moved into Christian discipleship and want to catch the spirit of our Master.

154. Their purifying their souls by obeying the truth was evidenced by the fact that they had developed a sincere brotherly love in which they loved one another earnestly from a pure heart. They were tied to one another by the fact that they were tied to Jesus Christ and to God as their heavenly Father.

155. *Philadelphia* is brotherly love. It is affection for those who are like us, who have a bond with us because of a mutual bond to a loving Father. Peter called for the use of agape, a willed love that seeks the true welfare of others. Having obeyed the truth of Christ that leads to brotherly love, we seek His Spirit's power to go beyond loving those whom we like to a practical love that seeks the welfare also of those whom we find hard to love.

156. The dynamic behind being born again of imperishable seed is the living and enduring Word of God. The Greek here uses the word *logos* and referred to God's revelation in creation and in Scripture. It attaches itself finally to the One who is the *Logos* who made all things and who was made flesh and revealed God's glory in His redemptive love for us. That Word is not static but dynamic, for the power of the Holy Spirit is involved both in leading to natural knowledge of God's existence and in using the Law and the Gospel, "sharper than any two-edged sword," to penetrate with impact into the innermost being and lead people to respond to the message of Christ (see Hebrews 4:12–13; Romans 10:14–17).

157. Strictly speaking, neither God's revelation through nature nor His Law, but only His Gospel Word works spiritual rebirth and sustains spiritual life, and it does so in whatever form it is presented (written, spoken, sung, signed, remembered, etc.). A change in the medium (the external form in which God's Word is presented) or external setting (e.g., whether one is alone or with others) may have a positive effect on one person's willingness to attend externally (i.e., to read, to listen, to watch, to pay attention, to remember, etc.). Thus, parents teaching their children the Word of God, as well as others who want to spread God's Gospel Word, should communicate God's Word in its many and various forms, praying that God's Spirit would in every case impact through God's Word the hearts of those to whom that Word is conveyed.