

Word of God – Word of Life

Luke 24:1-53

Jesus Lives! In Us, Among Us, For Us and Through Us

One way of letting Luke's magnificent, multi-layered account of the first Easter shape our lives is to let each of the three sections first speak for themselves – making connections with our own Easter faith.

In each section Luke shows people moving from sorrow to joy; from bewilderment to understanding; from unbelief to faith. They (and we) are asked to remember the words of Scripture and the very words of Jesus.

Luke 24:1-12 – Faithful, but broken-hearted women discover an empty tomb and hear a message of incredible hope and joy. Their witness, while true, is dismissed.

Luke 24:13-35 – Two disciples on the road of broken dreams and shattered hopes hear words that begin to burn away their sorrow and fears. They receive in the breaking of bread more than their dreams could contain.

Luke 24:36-53 – One emphasis here is that the Risen Lord is none another than the servant-minded Jesus who was betrayed, forsaken, suffered and died. Keeping Cross and Empty Tomb together empowers our mission of proclaiming repentance and forgiveness to all people.

Luke ends the story of Easter and his entire Gospel on notes of blessing, of joy and of continuing worship in community.

The suggestion is that you spend one week with each section perhaps reflecting on how your own faith journey includes both sorrow and joy, perplexity and understanding, doubts and faith. You might also be alert to ways that the Risen Lord is present in your life and in our congregation.

Week Three – Luke 24:36 – 24:53

*Repentance and forgiveness are to be proclaimed
in Jesus' name...*

In this third scene of the first Easter, Luke skillfully weaves connections with the first two scenes and with his entire narrative. The women at the tomb, the disciples on the Emmaus road, and now the disciples are chided for their doubts. By showing how unbelief became joy filled faith, Luke is able to show that the truth of Jesus' resurrection is based both in physical reality and on the Scriptures, as well as Jesus' own prior testimony.

Luke again ties teaching of Scripture together with a meal. This has been and continues to be the chief pattern of Christian worship. In the gathered community, again and again, we hear Jesus through the Living Word and experience Jesus' presence in the Meal.

Here are some of the connections with the rest of Luke's Gospel:

- Luke begins and ends with worship in the Jerusalem Temple. The priest, Zechariah, like the disciples with Jesus, reacts with fear and doubt. Zechariah cannot speak a blessing over the people. Jesus blesses his followers.
- The Baptist proclaims a baptism of repentance and forgiveness of sins (3:3). The disciples are to give the same witness. They will be clothed with the Spirit just as the Baptist promised (3:16).
- Jesus, in his sermon at Nazareth, applied Isaiah 61:1-2 to his own mission (4:18-19). Now he opens the minds of the disciples to how the entire Scriptures are fulfilled in his suffering, death, and resurrection.
- Perhaps the connection most important to Luke is that the Jesus of Nazareth who taught and healed, who attended to the poor and needy and proclaimed the reign of God, suffered and died in solidarity with broken humanity, is the Risen Lord.

One suggestion for meditation and conversation on Luke's Easter narrative is to write down one to three phrases that stir some sort of response (24:41 *While in their joy they were disbelieving...*), place the paper in your pocket, and every so often ponder and/or discuss what God might be saying to you at that very moment.

May the peace of the resurrected Jesus dwell in you richly.