

## Luke 24:36-49 - "Jesus' New Resurrection Presence"

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The theme for today's sermon is "Jesus' New Resurrection Presence." As we have been hearing the good news of Jesus' resurrection from the dead this Easter season, did you notice that the first ones to let Jesus' disciples know that Jesus had risen wasn't Jesus. On that first Easter morning, the first one to tell the women at the tomb that Jesus had risen was an angel. A little later, the first ones to tell the other disciples know that Jesus had risen were the women.

Why do you suppose Jesus decided to use others to first announce His resurrection, instead of announcing it Himself? As I thought about that question, it occurred to me that Jesus was there announcing His resurrection from the dead, according to His new resurrection presence, which He continues to use today. Instead of announcing this good news Himself, He uses His body the Church, which is virtually the same thing, it's His body. And notice the two main occasions He is present through His Church to give us His gifts of salvation. He emphasizes these two occasions in Luke 24 by making Himself visible right at these two times.

In our Gospel reading our Lord emphasizes the first and main way He is present with us to give us His gifts of salvation. We're told that the disciples "*were talking about these things.*" If you look at the verses just before our text you'll see that the things they were talking about were Jesus' resurrection appearances. It was right at that time when they were talking about the good news of His resurrection that "*Jesus Himself stood among them, and said to them, 'Peace to you!'*"

The very same things are happening this morning. We have gathered together on the first day of the week, like Jesus' first disciples, and we're "*talking about these things,*" about Jesus' resurrection, through the words in our liturgy, readings and hymns. Where is Jesus? Right here with us, speaking to us through you and me, according to His new resurrection presence.

When you confessed your sins earlier, our Lord, using my voice said, "*I forgive you all your sins.*" That's why I used first person language. "*I forgive you all your sins.*" The "*I*" was not referring to me, but to God who was speaking through me as His called and and ordained (and recently installed) servant of Christ.

Those words, "*I forgive you all your sins,*" are "just as valid and certain," as if Jesus were standing here instead of me, speaking those words Himself (Lutheran's Small Catechism, Office of the Keys). And in fact He is, even though we can't see Him with our physical eyes, but only through the new eyes of faith that God has given us. Think of me as a mask that Jesus is wearing. And when it comes to Jesus forgiving our sins, it's always good to remember that, as has been said by others in the past, "God always has more forgiveness than you have sins."

Let me give you something else to consider when it comes to Jesus, in His new resurrection presence, speaking to us this morning. Turn to someone close to you and exchange the greeting of our Lord from our Gospel reading, saying, "*Peace to you,*" or "Peace be with you."

Some of you, when you spoke these words of our Lord to others, may have also made some sort of bodily contact, whether it was a handshake or maybe even a hug. Now, consider that through this contact and/or the exchange of these words, the Lord was coming into contact and/or speaking to you, and through you to others. As the Lord said, "*'as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me'*"

(Matthew 25:40).

But remember, you are both a saint because of Jesus' presence with and in you through your baptism and God given faith in Him, and a sinner because of your inborn sinful nature. So, when you choose to ignore others or speak to them in a way that reveals your dislike or unforgiving attitude toward them, who do you think is at work through you, trying to separate that other person from our Lord and His gifts of salvation? It's not the Lord, but your sinful nature, which patterns itself after the devil. Our Lord's presence in us through our baptism and faith, enables us to speak words of love and forgiveness to others, leading them to eternal salvation through Jesus Christ. Our sinful nature's presence in us leads us to speak words of hatred and unforgiveness to others, hoping to separate them from God forever. That's why we daily repent of our sins (drowning our sinful nature), and seek our Lord's forgiveness and strength to follow Him; to do what He wants and enables us to do.

The second way that our Lord comes to us to forgive and strengthen our faith in Him was emphasized by our Lord when He revealed Himself to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (which happened just before our text). If you remember, Jesus opened their eyes so that they could see Him right at the moment when He "*took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them*" (Luke 24:30). While this doesn't appear to be an actual celebration of the Lord's Supper, Jesus' words and actions were certainly bringing the Lord's Supper to mind, where He promises His physical presence when He says, "*this is my body...this is my blood...given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins*" (Matthew 26:26-28).

And even though the meal of "*broiled fish,*" which Jesus ate in the presence of His disciples in our text, wasn't the Lord's Supper either, it does remind us of another meal Jesus ate with His disciples; the feeding of the five thousand. If you remember, the fish in that meal didn't run out; and neither does Jesus' presence in the Lord's Supper. Instead, He continues to feed us with His crucified and risen body and blood, to strengthen our faith in His divine presence and forgiveness.

What, then, are the two ways that our Lord, according to His new resurrection presence, comes not only into contact with us but enters into us to purify us from all our sins and give us His eternal salvation? Through His Word and Sacraments as they are spoken and delivered by people like you and me. Through Jesus' new resurrection presence in us, His body the church, He continues to work in our world today to make disciples of all nations when we share with others through our words and actions the good news that "*God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life*" (John 3:16).

This is especially important to remember in the midst of all the insane things that are currently being promoted in our world today. One of the ways God is working through these troublesome times is to enable people to jump out of this world's "anything goes" love boat. If or when they do jump out of this world's "anything goes" love boat, God wants us to be there for them, sharing with them His words of rescue through Jesus Christ's death and resurrection, which lifts them into the boat or ark of His church.

All glory be to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

[Children's Sermon] Do you remember from the sermon the main time when Jesus lets us know that He is right here with us giving us His gifts of salvation? When people like you and me are talking about the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection, which we learn from the Bible.

To remind you of this, I have this magnet which shows a girl or boy reading the Bible, which tells us that Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sins, and that He rose from the dead to give us new and eternal life. On the back of this magnet is a picture of Jesus to remind you that Jesus is with you speaking to you when you read the Bible. And when you tell others this same good news, Jesus is speaking through you to give others eyes of faith in Jesus, just like He has given you.