

## Repentance and Forgiveness

King of Glory Lutheran Church  
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Year B: Easter 3: Luke 24: 36b-48  
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While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.”<sup>37</sup> They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. <sup>38</sup>He said to them, “Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? <sup>39</sup>Look 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.” <sup>40</sup>And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. <sup>41</sup>While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” <sup>42</sup>They gave him a piece of broiled fish, <sup>43</sup>and he took it and ate in their presence. <sup>44</sup>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, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” <sup>45</sup>Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, <sup>46</sup>and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, <sup>47</sup>and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup>You are witnesses of these things.

*The resurrected Christ, commissions the disciples (in Luke’s Gospel) to a mission of repentance and forgiveness of sins. He isn’t a ghost, Jesus has a resurrected body, as we will have. (read 1 Cor. 15) They become witnesses to the resurrected Jesus so they can carry on this new mission and tell His story. Who do we need to forgive today?*

God’s grace be with us today.

Let’s imagine for just a moment that we – you and me – are each one of the disciples. We’ve heard the news from Cleopas and another disciple, they’ve seen the risen Lord. We can’t believe it; then suddenly Jesus appears in the room.

There Jesus is. He isn’t a ghost. Jesus invites them to touch His body, to know He is real. Then to further show them He isn’t a ghost... “Do you have any food?” He eats some fish. Your eyes, my eyes, your mind and mine, can hardly comprehend what we are seeing. There Jesus is...in flesh and blood. He’s alive!

In ancient Jewish thought, resurrection would be an embodied life. After all the bones, sinews, muscles and blood had dried up and decayed, God would create a whole new creation. A whole new created body.

We know by Jesus' ability to appear and disappear at will, that this is a new kind of body. Yet, He still bears the physical scars of His old body. He can eat and swallow. This is not resuscitation, this is truly resurrection!

Anyone getting tired of their body? Anybody getting tired of forgetting things or aches and pains? The first lesson we heard was from 1 Corinthians 15. Paul talks about the truth that we – you and me – will have newly created bodies, after we die also. Now that's something to look forward to.

Jesus tells the disciples to carry on His mission. In St. Matthew's Gospel, the mission is: 'Go into all nations, baptizing in my name.' (Mt 28: \*\*) Here in Luke's Gospel, Jesus' directive is different. "...repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in His name.." (Lk 24:47)

How are we doing with repentance and forgiveness? In Luke's Gospel, this is now the mission of the church. How are we as individuals, a church, or community, or nation, doing with repentance and forgiveness?

Repentance...we confess we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you God, in word and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways to the glory of your holy name. Amen.<sup>i</sup> That's repentance.

A mother finds her five year old with his hand in the cookie jar 30 minutes before dinner. "Jackson, you know we don't eat cookies 30 minutes before dinner time!"

"Oh, Mom, I'm not eating them, I'm just touching them." Not repentance.

Repentance...the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa under Desmond Tutu.<sup>ii</sup> The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada whose purpose was "documenting the history and lasting impacts of the Canadian Indian residential school system on Indigenous students and their families."<sup>iii</sup> The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification which states that the churches (Catholic and Lutherans) now share "a common understanding of our justification

by God's grace through faith in Christ." To the parties involved, this essentially resolves the 500-year-old conflict over the nature of justification which was at the root of the Protestant Reformation.<sup>iv</sup>

Repentance. Repentance and forgiveness. These kind of systemic acts of reconciliation through forgiveness take commitment. Integrity. Courage. Persistence. Examination of self and community. This isn't easy work. But it is the work, the Risen Lord Jesus called those Easter disciples to and the work, Jesus calls we Easter disciples to.

Anytime we can intentionally let down the walls we put up between one another, or groups, resurrection is at work. Salvation comes in new ways to all parties. It doesn't take very long to figure out that conflict is a stubborn bed partner. Each side wants to claim ultimate power and authority. Each side wants all the revenge without saying they might be in the wrong. Repentance and forgiveness goes against our sinful nature. Only through the Risen Christ – the real embodied Risen Christ, can we do the work of repentance and forgiveness.

Anytime a preacher speaks to this issue, it can sound like we know all the answers. The last thing I want you to leave with today, is that, 'no matter how I've been harmed, I have to forgive, right now, ...and it's easy.' No. Please don't hear that.

The ways we humans can hurt or violate one another, can take years to recover from and that's with good therapy! If you or I can forgive another person out of God's love and it comes fairly easy, then thank God. Literally. If we need time to sort out what is our and what isn't ours...if we need time to heal before we can even look at our wounds...if we need the support of others to come alongside and we haven't found those safe people yet...God understands all of that. God understands. God yet loves.

Story from Tattoos on the Heart; the Power of Boundless Compassion by Father Gregory Boyle. Homeboy Industries.

Repentance and forgiveness can change the world. One person at a time, one community at a time. One nation at a time. We're Easter people. God will help us. Who or what is God nudging us to forgive? Amen

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<sup>i</sup> Evangelical Lutheran Worship: Holy Communion; Setting One. Pg 95

<sup>ii</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Truth\\_and\\_Reconciliation\\_Commission\\_\(South\\_Africa\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Truth_and_Reconciliation_Commission_(South_Africa))

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<sup>iii</sup> ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Truth\\_and\\_Reconciliation\\_Commission\\_of\\_Canada](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Truth_and_Reconciliation_Commission_of_Canada))

<sup>iv</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joint\\_Declaration\\_on\\_the\\_Doctrine\\_of\\_Justification#](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joint_Declaration_on_the_Doctrine_of_Justification#)