

Sermon for April 18, 2021

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Today, Carter and Gabe, two of our Trinity youth Affirm their Baptism. We all remember the gift of baptism, baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, named child of God, sealed with the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever. In our service of baptism we are reminded that in bringing our children to baptism we are entrusted with responsibilities:

To live with them among God's faithful people,

Bring them to the word of God and the holy supper

Teach them the Lord's Prayer, the Creed and the Ten Commandments,

Place in their hands the holy scripture

And nurture them in faith and prayer

We hear these responsibilities and then the liturgy goes on to say why we are called to these responsibilities.

SO THAT

your children may learn to trust God,

proclaim Christ through word and deed,

care for others and the world God made,

and work for justice and peace.

This morning, among us here on Zoom and again as they gather with their families and Jerome outside the church, Carter and Gabe make public profession of their faith and of their intent to continue in the covenant God has made with them in baptism. They will be asking God to help and guide them to live among God's faithful people, hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper **SO THAT** they may proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed, serve all people following the example of Jesus, and strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

Today is a special opportunity to remember why we do what we do. We love God because God first loved us. We receive the gift of baptism and therefore can live in response by the power of the Holy Spirit. We gather as God's faithful people, hear the word, share in the supper, learn the prayers and creeds **SO THAT** we may learn to trust God, to proclaim Christ in

word and deed, care for others and world God made, and strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

In today's Gospel reading, following the resurrection, Jesus appears among his disciples. He greets them saying "Peace be with you." In typical disciple response they are startled and terrified. They believe they are seeing a ghost. In these times it was common for people to believe in ghosts, angels, demons, spirits, unexplained mystical beings. The disciples have mistaken Jesus for a ghost in the past when seeing him walk across the water toward their boat, long before Jesus' death and resurrection.

But something unique is happening in this text. There were arguments among the religious groups of this time over the possibility and form of resurrection. While some argued there was no resurrection, others argued that the body and the spirit were separate and the spirit remained after the death of the body. In our text today Jesus states that the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled and "thus it is written that the Messiah is to suffer and rise from the dead." God is doing a new thing in Jesus – the Messiah will "rise from the dead." In this text Jesus shows the disciples the substance of "rising from the dead".

Our text begins "Jesus *himself* stood among them." This is not ghost or spirit; this is fully Jesus; this is a new act of God; this is the fulfilled resurrection. Jesus begins by engaging the disciples' eyes "Look at my hands and feet, see it is I". Then he invites them to "touch," or as the King James version reads "handle me and see". He stresses "for a ghost has no flesh and bones." In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus then goes one step further. When they continued to disbelieve, to wonder, when "they could not believe what they were seeing," Jesus provides a demonstration of God's new work of resurrection. He asks for something to eat and unlike earlier texts in which the food is meant to be a reminder of the last supper, in this text it is simply leftover fish. And we read he ate it in their presence, "right before their eyes." He can eat, further proof he is fully alive, embodied resurrection. Jesus then "opens their minds to understand the scriptures" - to see that all has been fulfilled.

Why does he do these things? Why does he come to them? Why does he offer his peace? Why does he provide for eyes to see, their hands to touch? Why does he give this demonstration of bodily resurrection? Why does he open their minds to scripture? Our text goes on "Thus it is written...that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things." Why? **SO THAT** repentance and forgiveness of sins will be proclaimed to all nations in his name. The disciples witnessed his sharing of the peace, his tangible hands and feet, his ability to eat fully resurrected, the scriptures fulfilled **SO THAT** a new thing, repentance and forgiveness, would be proclaimed to all nations in the name of Jesus.

God wants to provide the disciples with all that they need to believe. Receive my peace, see my presence, touch my body, watch me eat before your eyes, open your minds to this scripture – believe God has done what God has promised "the Messiah is to suffer and rise from

the dead on the third day.” Because there is work to do “repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed to all the nations”.

God wants to provide us with all we need to believe. “Baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit – Child of god, you have been sealed with the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever.” You are called to live among God’s faithful people, hear the word and share in the Lord’s supper, learn the Lord’s prayer, the creed, the 10 commandments, explore the holy scriptures, be nurtured in faith **SO THAT** you may trust God, proclaim Christ through word and deed, care for others and the world God made, and work for justice and peace. There is work to be done.

“You have been witnesses of these things.” **SO THAT.** Thanks be to God.