

Sermon for the Third Sunday of Easter, 30.iv.2006, 10:00 a.m.
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saint James the Apostle / Bregue, Pennsylvania
Acts 3:12-19; Psalm 4; I John 3:1-7; Luke 24:36b-48
Holy Communion, LBW - Setting 2

J. J.!

Grace to you and peace from Him Who is and Who was and
Who is to come. ✠ Amen.

*Beloved, we are God's children now;
what we will be has not been revealed.
What we do know is this: when He is
revealed, we will be like Him,
for we will see Him as He is."*

- I John 3:1-7

How will this life finally turn out, our own life and that of those most precious to us? What did God have in mind in creating each one of us, in creating all people and the world itself? The Beloved Disciple assures us that there is a meaning to this existence and that we find that meaning in the way God's purpose and glory has unfolded in the Crucified and Risen Christ.

In His case, it all seemed to have ended badly, in a cruel and meaningless way. I would think that the longer His Disciples

had known Him, the more incomprehensible His death on the Cross would have been. This would have been true for no one so much as His Blessed Mother, who had known Him all His earthly and incarnate life, just as it is true for us to see the life of one we have loved and cared for ruined, or cut short. According to Saint Luke, when the Risen Christ appears to the Disciples, they collectively respond as Thomas did in John's Gospel, with shock and disbelief. But Jesus helps them to overcome their fear and their own reason by inviting them to touch Him and to see Him eat, showing that, as different as He may seem in appearance and manner from the Jesus they knew before the Crucifixion, He is still the person they love and believe, the revelation of the Father's love.

It is important to keep that focus, important for the Crucified and Risen Christ to be our point of orientation in our life before God. Saint John points to this focus of faith as both a mental and a moral focus. Mentally and spiritually, we are not

to lose heart now, regardless of adversity, but to remember instead how different the glorified, Risen Christ was from the humiliated Crucified, and to remember that there is but *one* Christ, but *one* Savior in Whom God's love for us through the suffering of Jesus with us and God's promise to us through the glorified and risen Christ are both revealed. If the Crucified and Risen Christ is the focus of our faith He will also be the focus of our life. John reminds us to be careful and mindful, for we are becoming with everything we do the person we shall finally be.

In the Risen Christ, the possibilities of that becoming are revealed to be glorious as our lives reflect the glory of God's merciful love, a glory that shines through all faults and defects as long as we live our lives by faith, as long as our focus is on Christ. If we choose another center for our lives, or, as is more often the case, if we choose no focus at all, then the light of Christ can go out in us, extinguished by sin, as we choose to let

ourselves become so much less than our Heavenly Father had hoped and intended when we choose darkness rather than light.

Let us pray. Holy Savior, Jesus Christ, You are the true Light that shines in our darkness. Remove from our lives the darkness of despair, sadness and sin, and replace them with the joy of Your radiant love. For you are the light of our salvation. Blessing and glory to You now and always and forever. ✠Amen.



Now to Him Who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood, and has made of us a Kingdom, priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. ✠Amen.

