



**ADULT  
BIBLE  
STUDY  
15 APRIL  
2018**



St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
Canton Ohio + USA

**Title:** Supper at Emmaus, 2001<sup>4</sup>

**The Col-lect** [Year (cycle): B RCL]

**O** God, whose blessed Son made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread: Open the eyes of our faith, that we may behold him in all his redeeming work; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

1. Our Collect was actually prepared by the Reverend Dr. John W. Suter, Sr., for the 1928 BCP as the Collect for the Monday in Easter Week. In the current BCP it now serves as the Collect for the Wednesday of Easter Week and, in addition, has become the assigned Collect for the Third Sunday of Easter. Cont'd on page 11

2. This Collect reminds us of two great truths: First, **faith** is a gift from God, and that's why we ask God to "Open the eyes of our **faith**." Second, **faith** is experiential, not blind: the disciples on the road to Emmaus really had encountered and really had eaten with Jesus before their eyes were opened. The gift of **faith** enabled them to *know* what they had experienced and whom they had encountered.

<http://stgregoryschurch.typepad.com/stblogorys/2014/02/>



# **R**eadings Year B Sunday 15 April 2018

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### **FIRST LESSON: Acts 3:12-19**

Introduction: It was a great moment, and Peter, the unlearned Galilean, the former cowardly renegade, rose at once to the occasion. Truly it was given him in that hour what to speak. His sermon is distinguished by its undaunted charging home the guilt of Christ's death on the nation, its pitying recognition of the ignorance which had done the deed, and its urgent entreaty. We here deal with its beginning only. 'Why marvel ye at this?'-it would have been a marvel if they had not marvelled. The thing was no marvel to the Apostle, because he believed that Jesus was the Christ and reigned in Heaven. Miracles fall into their place and become supremely 'natural' when we have accepted that great truth.

MacLaren's Expositions: <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/acts/3-1.htm>

<sup>1</sup>One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, at three o'clock in the afternoon. <sup>2</sup>And a man lame from birth was being carried in. People would lay him daily at the gate of the temple called the Beautiful Gate so that he could ask for alms

from those entering the temple. <sup>3</sup>When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked them for alms.

<sup>4</sup>Peter looked intently at him, as did John, and said, ‘Look at us.’

<sup>5</sup>And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. <sup>6</sup>But Peter said, ‘I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk.’ <sup>7</sup>And he took him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong.

<sup>8</sup>Jumping up, he stood and began to walk, and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. <sup>9</sup>All the people saw him walking and praising God, <sup>10</sup>and they recognized him as the one who used to sit and ask for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

<sup>11</sup>While he clung to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the portico called Solomon’s Portico, utterly astonished.

### Acts 3:12-9

**W**hen Peter saw it, he addressed the people, ‘You Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk?’

<sup>13</sup>The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him. <sup>14</sup>But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, <sup>15</sup>and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. <sup>16</sup>And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you. <sup>17</sup>

‘And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. <sup>18</sup>In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer. <sup>19</sup>Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out,

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<sup>19</sup>Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out, <sup>20</sup>so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Messiah appointed for you, that is, Jesus, <sup>21</sup>who must remain in heaven until the time of universal restoration that God announced long ago through his holy prophets.

<sup>22</sup>Moses said, "The Lord your God will raise up for you from your own people a prophet like me. You must listen to whatever he tells you. <sup>23</sup>And it will be that everyone who does not listen to that prophet will be utterly rooted out from the people." <sup>24</sup>And all the prophets, as many as have spoken, from Samuel and those after him, also predicted these days. <sup>25</sup>You are the descendants of the prophets and of the covenant that God gave to your ancestors, saying to Abraham, "And in your descendants all the families of the earth shall be blessed." <sup>26</sup>When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you, to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways.'



### THE RESPONSE: PSALM: Psalm 4 *Cum invocarem* [When I call]

Introduction: In both the KJV and the Masoretic Text below, 'defender of my cause' is translated as *O God of my righteousness*. The psalm expresses general confidence in God, and a general sense of security. The writer is conscious, indeed, that he has enemies, and that they would "turn" his "glory into shame" if they could; that they are false men who seek his ruin by detractions but still he has confidence in God that all will be well. - Barnes Notes on the Bible<sup>3</sup>

**A**nswer me when I call, O God, defender of my cause; \*  
you set me free when I am hard-pressed;  
have mercy on me and hear my prayer.

<sup>2</sup> "You mortals, how long will you dishonor my glory; \*  
how long will you worship dumb idols  
and run after false gods?"

- <sup>3</sup> Know that the Lord does wonders for the faithful; \*  
when I call upon the Lord, he will hear me.
- <sup>4</sup> Tremble, then, and do not sin; \*  
speak to your heart in silence upon your bed.
- <sup>5</sup> Offer the appointed sacrifices \*  
and put your trust in the Lord.
- <sup>6</sup> Many are saying, "Oh, that we might see better times!" \*  
Lift up the light of your countenance upon us, O Lord.
- <sup>7</sup> You have put gladness in my heart, \*  
more than when grain and wine and oil increase.
- <sup>8</sup> I lie down in peace; at once I fall asleep; \*  
for only you, Lord, make me dwell in safety.



**OR** from The Hebrew Bible According to the Masoretic Text and the JPS 1917 Edition [<http://www.mechon-mamre.org/p/pt/pt0.htm>]

**1** For the Leader; with string-music. A Psalm of David.

**2** Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness, Thou who didst set me free when I was in distress; be gracious unto me, and hear my prayer.

**3** O ye sons of men, how long shall my glory be put to shame, in that ye love vanity, and seek after falsehood?

**4** But know that the LORD hath set apart the godly man as His own; the LORD will hear when I call unto Him.

**5** Tremble, and sin not; commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still.

**6** Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD.

**7** Many there are that say: 'Oh that we could see some good!' LORD, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us.

**8** Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than when their corn and their wine increase.

**9** In peace will I both lay me down and sleep; for Thou, LORD, makest me dwell alone in safety.



**THE EPISTLE: 1 John 3:1-7**

Introduction: *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.* [KJV] Both S. John and S. Paul tell us that the fundamental relation of believers to God is a *filial* one: but while S. Paul gives us the legal side (adoption), S. John gives us the natural side (generation). The latter is the closer relationship of the two. But we must remember that in the Roman Law, under which S. Paul lived, adoption was considered as absolutely equivalent to actual parentage. In this 'unique apostrophe'<sup>4</sup> in the centre of the Epistle, two of its central leading ideas meet, Divine love and Divine sonship; a love which has as its end and aim that men should be called children of God. [http://biblehub.com/commentaries/cambridge/1\\_john/3.htm](http://biblehub.com/commentaries/cambridge/1_john/3.htm)

**S**ee what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. <sup>2</sup>Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet 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. <sup>3</sup>And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

<sup>4</sup> Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. <sup>5</sup> You know that he was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. <sup>6</sup> No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him. <sup>7</sup> Little children, let no one deceive you. Everyone who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.

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1 John 3: 8 -24 Everyone who commits sin is a child of the devil; for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The Son of God was

revealed for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. <sup>9</sup>Those who have been born of God do not sin, because God's seed abides in them; they cannot sin, because they have been born of God.

<sup>10</sup>The children of God and the children of the devil are revealed in this way: all who do not do what is right are not from God, nor are those who do not love their brothers and sisters.

<sup>11</sup>For this is the message you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. <sup>12</sup>We must not be like Cain who was from the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. <sup>13</sup>Do not be astonished, brothers and sisters, that the world hates you.

<sup>14</sup>We know that we have passed from death to life because we love one another. Whoever does not love abides in death. <sup>15</sup>All who hate a brother or sister are murderers, and you know that murderers do not have eternal life abiding in them. <sup>16</sup>We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. <sup>17</sup>How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? <sup>18</sup>Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. <sup>19</sup>And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him <sup>20</sup>whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. <sup>21</sup>Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; <sup>22</sup>and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him.

<sup>23</sup>And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. <sup>24</sup>All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.



## THE GOSPEL: Luke 24:36b-48

The resurrection narrative in Luke 24 consists of five smaller stories:

- (1) the discovery of the empty tomb by the women ([vv. 1-12](#))
- (2) appearance of Jesus to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus ([vv. 13-35](#))

- (3) appearance of Jesus to the eleven and their companions (vv. 36-43).  
(4) the commissioning of the eleven (vv. 44-49)  
(5) the ascension of Jesus (vv. 50-53). **SEE BOOKLET 'COMMENTARY ON THE TEXT'**

**Luke 23:** 54-56

It was the day of Preparation, and the sabbath was beginning. <sup>55</sup>The women who had come with him from Galilee followed, and they saw the tomb and how his body was laid. <sup>56</sup>Then they returned, and prepared spices and ointments. On the sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

**Luke 24:**1-35

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. <sup>2</sup>They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, <sup>3</sup>but when they went in, they did not find the body. <sup>4</sup>While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. <sup>5</sup>The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. <sup>6</sup>Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, <sup>7</sup>that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.'

<sup>8</sup>Then they remembered his words, <sup>9</sup>and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. <sup>10</sup>Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. <sup>11</sup>But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.

<sup>12</sup>But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.

<sup>13</sup> Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, <sup>14</sup>and talking with each other about all these things that had happened.

<sup>15</sup>While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, <sup>16</sup>but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. <sup>17</sup>And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad. <sup>18</sup>Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?' <sup>19</sup>He asked them,

‘What things?’ They replied, ‘The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,<sup>20</sup> and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him.<sup>21</sup> But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning,<sup>23</sup> and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive.<sup>24</sup> Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.’

<sup>25</sup>Then he said to them, ‘Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! <sup>26</sup>Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?’ <sup>27</sup>Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

<sup>28</sup>As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. <sup>29</sup>But they urged him strongly, saying, ‘Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.’ So he went in to stay with them. <sup>30</sup>When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.

<sup>31</sup>Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. <sup>32</sup>They said to each other, ‘Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?’

<sup>33</sup>That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together.

<sup>34</sup>They were saying, ‘The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!’ <sup>35</sup>Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

## Luke 24:36B-48

**W**hile 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.

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<sup>49</sup> And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

<sup>50</sup> Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them.<sup>51</sup> While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven.<sup>52</sup> And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy;<sup>53</sup> and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

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<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/lectionary-calendar>

The omitted verses for the readings are taken from <http://bible.oremus.org>

<sup>1</sup>Headings from <http://trinityconcord.org/CollectCommentaries/Easter3B.shtml>

<sup>2</sup><http://biblehub.com/commentaries/barnes/psalms/4.htm>

<sup>3</sup> In literature, apostrophe is a figure of speech sometimes represented by an exclamation, such as “Oh.” A writer or speaker, using apostrophe, speaks directly to someone who is not present or is dead, or speaks to an inanimate object. It is an arrangement of words addressing a non-existent person or an abstract idea in such a way as if it were present and capable of understanding feelings.- <https://literarydevices.net/apostrophe/>

<sup>4</sup>**Notes:** Dr. He Qi is a professor at the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary and a tutor for master candidate students in the Philosophy Department of Nanjing University. He is also a member of the China Art Association and a council member of the Asian Christian Art Association.

<http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=46124>



Concord, MA

<http://trinityconcord.org/CollectCommentaries/Easter3B.shtml>

O God, whose blessed Son made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread: Open the eyes of our faith, that we may behold him in all his redeeming work; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. AMEN.

As a natural concomitant of Christ’s resurrection, we have been reading in this Easter season the accounts of Christ’s reappearance to the Disciples. We certainly know from the Gospel writings of Christ’s life that the shared meal was a principal focus of his ministry; not just with the disciples and the poor, but with the tax payers (as many of us have just been), in addition to the tax collectors!

Our Collect was actually prepared by the Reverend Dr. John W. Suter, Sr., for the 1928 BCP as the Collect for the Monday in Easter Week. In the current BCP it now serves as the Collect for the

Wednesday of Easter Week and, in addition, has become the assigned Collect for the Third Sunday of Easter.

The Petition Clause; “Open the eyes of our faith,” is so central to our faith. So it has been with so many whose, “eyes were opened,” or were, “...blind but now can see,” that we were able to experience our Lord for the first time and to be in fellowship with him. Truly, it was a wondrous moment when we first believed! The aspiration of the Petition Clause is a reward beyond belief. With the eyes of our faith fully open, we are truly inspired by the witnessing of Christ’s redeeming works in all our lives. The original Result Clause, which has been subject to a slight enhancement, read, “...that we may behold thee in all thy works.” Three short lines, but what a stirring Collect!

After healing the crippled beggar, Peter will initially excoriate the amazed Jews for their role in the crucifixion of Jesus. Peter, however, will soften his charge with his sharing, “And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance, ...repent therefore and turn to God.” **The Psalm responds**, “Know that the Lord does wonders for the faithful: when I call upon the Lord, he will hear me.” Continuing our reading of 1 John, we hear first of all the reassuring words, “See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are.” **John sums it up** with the assurance that, “Everyone who does what is right is righteous, just as – He - is righteous.” We conclude with Luke’s account of Christ’s appearance to his disciples. Again, the disciples are “startled and terrified,” even though, “... in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering.” To put them at their ease, Jesus then asks, “Have you anything here to eat?” Reminding the disciples then of how the scriptures had foretold his coming, Christ affirms that they, “...are witnesses to these things.” The foundation has been laid!

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## BREAKING OPEN A DIFFERENT KIND OF BREAD NOTES FOR EASTER 3

April 6, 2015 by Porter Case Taylor

The Collect appointed for the day would fit nicely with the story of Jesus breaking bread with disciples on the Road to Emmaus, but unfortunately that is not the scene with which we've been presented. Instead we have Jesus eating in front of his disciples and then breaking open the Scriptures for them. Remember Jesus' words while in the wilderness: "man does not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." Perhaps we can begin seeing the Scriptures as a form of heavenly manna that sustain us; perhaps we can allow Jesus to break open the Scriptures for us that we might understand him and the Story even more; and perhaps when the Scriptures are opened and we are feasting on the word we will be more able to feast on the Word of God weekly through Eucharist.

### Analysis

#### Collect

*O God, whose blessed Son made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread: Open the eyes of our faith, that we may behold him in all his redeeming work; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.*

This Collect feels a bit out of place in Year B given the Gospel reading. It pairs up much better with the story of Jesus joining the two disciples on the Road to Emmaus when he is truly revealed in the breaking of bread. What really jumps out from this Collect is that we need our eyes to be opened and we need to behold the Lord's redeeming work.

#### First Lesson – Acts 3:12-19

I'll be honest: this is a bizarre selection from the RCL. We are still moving in a non-linear fashion as we encounter Acts during Eastertide. Last week we were in chapter 4 and today we move back to chapter 3; both of these chapters take place after Pentecost and we are still 35

days away from that feast! What's more, this lesson leaves out verses 1-11 and 20-26. It is not that this is a stand-alone *pericope* (passage) and the verses I've just mentioned are dispensable. Rather, the former provide the context and the latter provide further meaning and explanation from the lips of Peter.

Verses 12-19 come on the heels of a healing miracle. Peter has healed a well-known lame man. This man was carried to the gate of the temple (the Beautiful Gate) so he could collect alms. Peter has no money to offer him. Instead he offers him healing *in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth*. People see the healed beggar "walking and praising God" and they want to know more. This is the context of Peter's homily about the person of Jesus. Without verses 1-11 our *pericope* (passage) doesn't make sense.

Peter explains who this Jesus of Nazareth is. The crowd is beginning to attribute healing power to Peter and John but Peter wants to correct this immediately. The power doesn't belong to him, it belongs to Jesus. Peter connects the dots between the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (recalling the mighty works of YHWH's covenant faithfulness) and the Jesus whom they murdered (the Faithful Israelite). YHWH has glorified Jesus even though you killed him.

Peter holds nothing back in his message: "you killed the Author of Life and God raised him from the dead." The Cross and Resurrection—again, see them as one—are the central event in Christianity; indeed they are the hinge upon which the history of the world turns. They killed Jesus but God had the last word: resurrection, new life, new creation...victory.

It is Jesus the Risen One who has made this man well. Not me. Not you. Jesus. I'm reminded of N. T. Wright's strong urging in ***After You Believe*** when he states that we are to build *for* the kingdom. We cannot build the Kingdom just as a stonemason does not build the cathedral. The stonemason builds for the cathedral in whatever tiny way he or she is able; likewise, we don't build the Kingdom—God does—we simply join God in his already active, always present work.

Peter's last line (in this lesson) is scathing: "you acted in ignorance and so did your rulers." But ignorance doesn't get them off the hook. They still need to repent. They need to turn to God. And so do we. Faith in the Son of God means that we can no longer feign ignorance; it means that we are called to proclaim the works of God just as Peter did; it means that we are called to witness to what God has done in Christ.

Again and again in the book of Acts we see Peter (or others) encounter-ing the powers, principalities or peoples of this world who are opposed to the Risen One and he does so with a proclamation that bears witness to who Jesus is and what he has done.

#### Psalm 4

This Psalm of praise and supplication is bookended with remarks about God’s sovereignty. It is particularly meaningful in the context of Easter 3 because it further demonstrates the call to place one’s trust in God. God is worthy of our trust. He has demonstrated time and time again that he is faithful, that he is active, and that he loves his creation.

Verse 2 strikes a discordant note with the rest of the Psalm. Here talk of idols and false worship sticks out like a sore thumb in the context of the living and active God of Israel. But isn’t that the point? How can one worship an idol when he has seen the lame healed, or the blind given sight, or the dead raised to life? How can idols compare to Almighty God? They cannot, but are we offering the world a picture of the triune God that is authentic and awful (in the truest, awe-inspiring sense) or are we giving the world a “Jesus-in-your-pocket” version of Christianity?

The Psalmist declares God to be “defender of my cause”; one who “does wonders”; one who “will hear me”; one who puts “gladness in my heart”; and one “who makes we dwell in safety.” That is a powerful picture compared to lifeless idols of wood, metal, money, or anything else that is not God.

#### Epistle – 1 John 3:1-7

We are children of God and are therefore somehow like God. Not perfectly and not completely this side of Glory, but we are still his children. Some day we will be more completely like him. Justification has happened—we have been made his children through adoption—but sanctification is ongoing and will only be completed through glorification. But let’s talk about sanctification.

As I mentioned last week, 1 John has been used to conjure up some interesting views of postbaptismal (or post-conversion) sin. Here we see John suggesting that no one who abides in him (Jesus) sins. This isn’t to suggest that we are sinless, for that is not possible, but to suggest that we are no longer slaves to sin and therefore we aren’t *in sin* the way we used to be.

We have to believe that in Christ we are new creations and the old has gone (1 Cor. 5:17). We have to believe that God has started a good work in us and will complete that work, but work is not yet completed. This is a prime example of the “already but not yet.” I have already been cleansed of my sins through the blood of Christ and the waters of baptism but I have not yet been sanctified and glorified to the point of being sinless and like Christ. Through the power of the Spirit I am to strive daily to be more like Christ but that is always an imperfect attempt. Rome wasn’t built in a day; it was built daily.

Please, please, please do not use this passage to suggest sinlessness. Take John at this word and understand that we are God’s children (and therefore co-inheritors) and that there is something started in us that will be completed later. We are to strive toward righteousness because Christ is righteous.

### Gospel – Luke 24:36b-48

Here is where things get ‘fun’. The RCL cuts out the first half of verse 36 and therefore severs the tie between this passage and our Collect with the story along the road to Emmaus (don’t get me started on the RCL, it’s like Churchill’s famous description of democracy). Just to recap: Jesus is walking along to the road to Emmaus and meets up with two disciples. They do not recognize him and he asks them why they seem so gloomy. They go on to relate the events that have just (three days earlier) transpired in Jerusalem and about the death of Jesus. Jesus opens up the Scriptures to them and tells them all about what was prophesied and then was fulfilled. Finally he breaks bread with them by “taking, blessing, breaking and giving” and they recognize him as the Risen Lord.

Therefore, in Luke 24:36a the disciples who traveled with Jesus (unknowingly) along that road and then saw him revealed in the breaking of bread have now reached Jerusalem and are sharing the news with the disciples gathered. Without this piece of the puzzle we completely miss what is taking place. The disciples are heralds of the Risen Lord and are sharing this news with the rest. And then Jesus appears.

We know from the second half of verse 36 that others (companions) are gathered with the 11. Jesus appears and speaks, “Peace be with you.” This is not some quaint greeting, but rather it is

the *shalom* of God speaking *shalom* over his people. Jesus is God's peace and he gives it freely to his followers.

This recounting is contrasted with John's account of Jesus' appearing to the disciples because in John's Gospel there is no need to see the hands and side until Thomas comes into the scene because he doubts. But here the disciples need to be calmed from fear and need to be shown that Jesus isn't a ghost but is the Risen One. And yet it still isn't enough. They have joy but they still have doubts and so Jesus asks for food to fully demonstrate that his risen body is real, is tangible, and yet is transformed.

After eating the bread he begins to open up the Scriptures to his followers. This is exactly like what he has just done for the two on the road to Emmaus. Jesus relates how he is the fulfillment of Moses (law), the prophets and the Psalms. Indeed he is the Faithful Israelite who has kept God's covenant and is the Suffering Son of Man. The disciples can finally understand this reality in the fullest sense because they have experience and encountered the Resurrected One. Fr. John Behr of St. Vladimir's has written an important book on this topic, *Thy Mystery of Christ: Life in Death*. Fr. Behr reminds the reader that we can only fully know Jesus as he is revealed after the resurrection.

### Liturgical Considerations

There is nothing particularly special about Easter 3 in a liturgical sense, but I do think that this grouping of lessons provides a teachable moment for your parishes and congregations. Actually, isn't that the point of Eastertide? We have a 50 day feast to celebrate with great joy that Jesus is risen. Then we will celebrate the Ascension and the Feast of Pentecost: i.e. the ministry of the Holy Spirit. During Eastertide we learn at the feet of Jesus while he appeared to over 500 people.

Most liturgies, regardless of form, can be divided (some more nicely than others) into a "Liturgy of the Word" and a "Liturgy of the Table." Now, some churches make the mistake (yes, I'm preaching now) of trying to highlight one over the other. This is a mistake because (a) they are intimately connected in Christ and (b) because to highlight one is to make the other seemingly deficient.

I believe that a proper liturgy is one that is doubly climactic. The sermon and the Eucharist are both considered high points in the liturgy and one cannot be understood without the other. For the sermon is the explication of the lessons and is fleshed out and applied most fully with

the Eucharist; to have a sermon without the Eucharist is to have a feast of the mind without feasting on the Body and Blood of the Lord (that which gives true spiritual nourishment. Likewise, the Eucharist needs to be “set-up” and “prepared” by the lessons and sermon because the Word of God is known through the revelation of God’s word. To have the Eucharist without lessons and a sermon is to rob the Eucharist of its interpretive meaning and matrix. So, highlight both parts of the liturgy as being equally meaningful and necessary. Jesus broke open the Scriptures for his followers after he gave himself up to be broken. Jesus broke bread with his disciples in the Upper Room and gave us a meal to celebrate often in his remembrance.

*If you are not part of a church that celebrates Communion on a regular basis then perhaps you can consider moving in that direction and use this week’s lessons as the catalyst for that.*

## Synthesis

The Collect reminds us that Jesus has been revealed in the breaking of bread. Jesus also reveals himself by breaking open the Scriptures (and our minds) that we might understand. The intersection of the Collect and lessons this week can be found here: we can encounter the Risen Lord in the bread and wine because he has been revealed in the Scriptures. We cannot, nor should we, separate word from table.

I want your “so what” to become a “now what?” The disciples encountered the resurrected Jesus, they received his peace, they touched his hands and side, they watched him eat, and then they learned from him. Now what? Well, Peter and John go forth and begin healing in Jesus’ name and proclaiming Jesus to all whom they meet. That’s a good application point!

Finally, may we cling to the Risen Lord and learn at his feet for the 50 days of Eastertide before we move into Ordinary Time and the ministry of the Holy Spirit. How can we fast when the bridegroom is with us? May we feast on his words and the divine Word!

<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/thelitururgicaltheologian/2015/04/06/breaking-open-a-different-kind-of-bread-notes-for-easter-3/>

**Patheos** is a non-denominational, non-partisan online media company providing information and commentary from various religious and non-religious perspectives. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patheos>



**Title:** Fresco fragment from a Nestorian Christian church

**Notes:** Western Chinese/northern India area of Eastern Asia known as Khocho (or Qocho) -- along the Silk Road. Subject matter may be Palm Sunday and may also be Three Wise Men.

**Date:** 683-770

**Building:** Museum fur Indische Kunst

<http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=55434>



**Title:** Supper at Emmaus

**Date:** 1628

**Artist:** Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn, 1606-1669

**Building:** Musée Jacquemart-André

<http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=54706>