



Free Evangelical
Lutheran Synod
in South Africa

Sermon- Sunday Jubilate (Proper 3B) 2018

*Jesus comes into the midst
of the doubting disciples!*



St. John's Lutheran Parish
Shelly Beach

• **Greeting:** Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.** (*ESV 1Cor 1,3*)

• **The Word of God for this Sermon is written in Lk 24, 36-49:**

- ^{ESV 36} As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you!"
- ³⁷ But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit.
- ³⁸ And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?"
- ³⁹ See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."
- ⁴⁰ And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.
- ⁴¹ And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?"
- ⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish,
- ⁴³ and he took it and ate before them.
- ⁴⁴ 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 and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."
- ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,
- ⁴⁶ and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead,
- ⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.
- ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.
- ⁴⁹ And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

• **Let us pray:** *Come Holy Spirit, open our ears and give light to our minds and our hearts so that we will understand the Scriptures and crave after Your pure Word and realise Your real presence amongst us! Amen.*

• **Dear beloved of God!**

- Maybe you can relate to the following scenario: A Christian family gathers for devotion after dinner. "Are we singing tonight", asks the daughter? "I am so tired." The father says: "Yes, Mary, we are singing tonight. Remember we are singing to

the Lord.” “But, not all verses, says the youngest son Ben.”

- Now, let us consider this scenario, which I made up, which could be quite common, amongst those families who still hold devotions. Let us consider this in the light of our Gospel Word for today.
- Jesus had risen and, whilst the two disciples of Emmaus were on their way on the day of Jesus’ resurrection, they were discussing what was for them a great tragedy, Jesus’ crucifixion. As they were conversing with one another, a stranger joined them. We know it was Jesus, who only revealed Himself while He was breaking the bread at table. Then Jesus disappeared. He came supernaturally and went supernaturally.
- They couldn’t keep it to themselves and ran back to Jerusalem to notify the other disciples. When they were all gathered together talking about Jesus being alive Jesus came into their midst- to us humans- supernaturally. And He spoke: “Peace be with you!”
- And now let us pay close attention to the reaction of the disciples [37]: *“But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit.”* They were shocked, but, they knew He was alive! How could they be frightened when He did appear? And, they thought He was a spirit, a ghost! In other words, not alive, belonging to the world of the dead!
- Jesus reprimanded them about this. He asked them, “why are you troubled,” and “why do doubts arise in your hearts?” Why does this shock you that I am present amongst you as the living resurrected Jesus? Didn’t you believe the word of the other disciples telling you about me being alive?
- What an important question Jesus directs towards us today! Why do doubts arise in your hearts and in my heart when the Word tells us most clearly that Jesus is really present amongst us, when we gather around His Word and are guests at His table? Let’s be honest who would not be shocked if Jesus would reveal His presence to our eyesight, today!
- We have the clear pattern: He accompanied the two disciples on the road. When they recognised Him in the breaking of the bread, He disappeared. But, He disappeared only from their eyesight, because that same day He re-appeared with His resurrected body, what we would call supernaturally, in the midst of the

disciples. He greeted them and spoke to them, Law and Gospel, reprimanding them and comforting them. And then He ate before them. And the food was contained by His resurrected Body. Then, at the end He left them supernaturally. He went away from their eyesight to be with them in the new way.

- So, when disciples of Jesus meet for devotion or Divine Service, when they discuss His person and work, when they hear His Word and come to His table, He is really present with them! Just not visible!
- If we now go back to our family devotion scenario in the beginning of the sermon, can you see how embarrassing those comments are! We assemble to be with Jesus, receive His Word, praise and pray to Him and often we are only concerned about the length of the hymn. Out of a day of 24 hours we want to limit our devotion time to as short as possible. And we do this in the presence of the Lord. He is there and He hears us! How totally embarrassing!
- The reason, for it all: We have problems reckoning with the fact that He is really present with us. We forget it. We don't think. By nature, we assume, its just us. But, no, this is not true. He is not dead. Where His disciples gather around His Word He is most certainly present amongst them giving Grace! Jesus would say, naturally, according to God's nature. He says to us, people, you should not even be astonished or shocked about this fact. That is how it was in the beginning. That is how it should be. That is natural as God had designed it!
- Haven't you heard that it is written- already in what we call the Old Testament- [46] *"that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem."*
- God facilitated repentance and the forgiveness of sins through Jesus' death and resurrection. And still God continues to facilitate His reconciliation with us. You have participated and witnessed Confession and Absolution today, you have heard His Word. And we will be guests at His table. Its still continuing, going out to all nations, without age, class or colour restrictions, because Jesus is really alive and present. He still comes to His disciples as their Lord, as their host. He is faithful. It is His service for us and to us.
- And also, when we sit around the dinner table and pray, "Come Lord Jesus be

our guest”, you can be 100% certain that He attends, because He heard you and He wants to come!!

• Dear congregation, in every Divine Service, mysterious things, spiritual things, to high for our mind, really happen. We are not alone here. The faith God gives us, created through His Word, realises this, how weak it may be. Remember, a little bit of the right faith, the size of a mustard seed, can move mountains, can believe that as we gather in His Name, heaven comes to earth! It must be the right seed—the Word of God.

• Such a faith opens our minds that we understand the Word of God, which enables us to see the new reality that Christ has established for us. Notice how Jesus opened the minds of His disciples to understand the Scriptures. Only then did they believe Him. Even when they had seen Him, even touched Him, they still disbelieved.

• This reveals, that the way our old Adam claims to believe, namely by first seeing then believing is a hoax. Its Satan’s deception. It doesn’t work! It is a false premise. All seeing is always interpreted by my mind and my desires. Therefore, believing is seeing. We only realise what we believe in! That is why, when we see something extraordinary, which is going against our natural faith and mind, we say, I cannot believe it!!

• This is what the Word of God gives to us, it creates a new foundation, a new temple, a new shrine, a new most holy understanding, an infallible absolute truth, namely trust in the death and resurrection of Jesus, which opens up our minds for the whole of the Scriptures. And in this new reign, it is not unnatural for God and man to be united, it is not supernatural any-more, but natural. According to the new nature, God is present with us, as it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever!

• This is our fountain of comfort and deep spiritual, never-ending joy. Jubilate, indeed: Glory be to the Father, Glory be to the Son and Glory be to the Holy Spirit! *Amen.*

• “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” *Amen.* [2 Cor 13, 14].