

**MINISTRY BY MAIL**  
**Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship**  
[www.lutheranlccf.org](http://www.lutheranlccf.org)  
**First Sunday after Easter, April 3, 2016**

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)  
Hymns: 197, 53: 1-3, 194, 552, 53: 4-6.  
Lessons: Job 19: 25-27, 1 Peter 1: 3-9, Luke 24: 33-49.  
Text: Luke 24: 13-32.  
Sermon by Pastor Robert Mehlretter  
(See Ministry By Mail sermon for April 19, 2009)

In the name of Jesus Christ, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

How often don't we have to be told things over and over again? As children and younger people, haven't we all heard "I've told you that a hundred times!" from someone trying to teach us?

If you are like me, there are times that someone who is teaching me something has to explain it repeatedly. Then there are the times when I don't really understand the full application of what I am told. For example, it is not until one suffers that he really understands and can make full application of words of comfort we find in the Bible. Jesus' disciples were no different. He had to explain many times what his life was all about, and specifically what certain of his activities meant. But he had a printed pattern for what he told them. He had the sacred scriptures we call the Old Testament.

The world of Jesus' closest followers had been turned upside down. Our Gospel lesson and sermon text record events that took place the very evening of the day that he rose from the dead. His followers had found the tomb empty that morning. Some of them had even claimed to see him.

The two people in our sermon text, and one is even named, the man "Cleopas", were walking, possibly going home to Emmaus on that evening. They told the third man who had joined them on this road: "***The chief priests and our rulers handed [Jesus] over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him.***" They said "***but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel.***" They tell the stranger: "***And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.***" These men just didn't understand.

But you and I, we know the rest of the story. We know who the stranger really was. It was Jesus himself, who had come back to life, who had been raised from the dead, who left the tomb empty in his victory over death, over the devil, and over sin and the power of hell. Today let's join them with Jesus on the road

**FROM JERUSALEM TO EMMAUS**

- 1. We see Jesus – always the teacher.**
- 2. We see Jesus – always the Redeemer.**

There are those who claim Jesus was a great teacher and nothing more. But he is both a teacher and something much better, greater, more than a teacher. He is the Redeemer.

Jesus was teaching with words while he was on earth. Jesus is called "the Word of God": "***In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.***" John 1:1-3.

We learn from words, and we learn from Jesus who is called "the Word". Not everything can be taught by "doing" or "hands-on" learning. And except for the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which use

earthly elements in addition to the Word of God, God uses words almost exclusively to teach mankind today the way of salvation. God tells us in Romans 10:17 ***"Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ."*** Christ performed miracles, but they were done so that people might come to faith in him and believe his words.

What was going to happen in Jesus' lifetime was written down in the books the Old Testament. Even God's Law is essential to understand Jesus' mission on earth. God's law, as summarized in the Ten Commandments, makes clear why Jesus had to come. And why did he have to come? Because all men and all women and all children are sinners who have broken God's commands. This is the use or purpose of the law as a Mirror: to show our sinfulness. We also read in Galatians 3:24: ***"So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith."***

The Gospels and the book of Acts contain about 30 uses of the words "teach" and "instruct" in speaking of Jesus' work of teaching. For example, Matthew in chapter 10 writes of how Jesus gathered his disciples and taught them, and we read in Mt. 11:1: ***"After Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in the towns of Galilee."*** He spent the better part of three years in his public ministry on earth teaching. He taught what the Old Testament scriptures meant and how they would be fulfilled in him. Jesus kept teaching up until he died, and that didn't end his teaching while he was on earth. His teaching continued after his resurrection.

He is teaching these two disciples on this very day he rose from the dead. In the words following our text we read that when Jesus appeared to the rest he ***"told them, 'This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.'"*** Lk. 24:46-47 (NIV) Notice that he points to the Holy Scriptures that had been written for mankind's learning. In this session that might have lasted for a few hours as they walked about seven miles from Jerusalem to Emmaus, he taught them what the scriptures had to say about himself.

Jesus is still teaching us today. What he did and why he did it should be all so clear to us today. We have not only the written Old Testament but we also have the written New Testament translated into our own languages. And by the providential preservation of God, we can have confidence that God speaks to us in the good translations we have available today. There is no excuse for not knowing that Jesus suffered for our sins, that he rose from the dead, and that this is the message we are to preach – and to live – wherever in the world we go. The Christian accepts it all as a matter of faith. There may be parts of scripture we don't understand. There are things we don't do because we do not believe, or trust, or completely rely on God. But that is not God's fault. That is our fault, even though our sinful human flesh always wants to blame someone else for everything that isn't just exactly the way we think it should be. That is part of our sinfulness, and for that we must repent, as Jesus taught, that ***"repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations."***

Jesus Christ is the only spiritual teacher we really need and want to abide with us. We need his words. And we need to be reminded of his words more than we think. How easily don't we forget things in our daily life? So much more Satan tries to make us forget teachings from God's Word! How often does our sinful flesh tell us 'you already know God's Words'. How often does the devil tell us 'Why do you need to hear or read God's Words again?' The people in the world around us tell us 'Why are you bothering to go to church or Bible Class again?' The unholy three: devil, world, and our own sinful flesh keep telling us: 'You don't need that. You have much more important stuff to do. You can't take time for God's Word.' But we must take time to learn from Jesus' words.

But Jesus is more than just a great teacher. Remember that a teacher just teaches. Learning is different from teaching. The teacher doesn't guarantee that the one being taught really learns. A teacher can teach the listeners the same truths a hundred times but that doesn't guarantee that they learn. Jesus is more than a teacher who just uses words and illustrations. He is also the Redeemer. And we have the comfort that the words he teaches us are powerful words from God. For God himself tells us in Hebrews 4:12: ***"the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."***

We must also never forget that he is the Redeemer! In this teaching lesson which lasted long enough to walk about seven miles, what did Jesus teach about? He didn't talk about the weather. He didn't talk sports or politics. He didn't talk about food. He talked about things that really matter. He talked about the redemption of mankind. ***"And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself."*** Remember that ***"they were kept from recognizing"*** that it was Jesus himself who was talking to them. He explained about what had happened and what it meant. He explained what the Word of God said about himself – of course they didn't recognize yet that he was talking about himself.

These men had expected Jesus to ***"redeem Israel"***. Well, he had come to redeem Israel and the rest of sinful mankind. They perhaps didn't know what kind of Redeemer he really was. The concept of a redeemer was clear to the Jewish people. They had used words translated "redeem" in their civic and personal dealings since the time of Moses. Redeem was a synonym for "ransom". Those words both mean to buy back, to purchase, especially something that is being held hostage in some way. They mean to rescue, to release, and to preserve.

When God created man and put him into the garden of paradise, he told him not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, with the warning that he would surely die if he ate from it. And Eve and Adam ate of it and that placed them in the power and under the control of death, and Satan, and sin. They probably thought that they didn't die, or weren't going to die. But they were now in the power of death, and they would die physical deaths eventually. And they had died spiritually. They were no longer free and sinless. No way could they redeem themselves. No way could they, by themselves, attain the perfection they had once known before sin. They were, along with us, as scripture plainly teaches, ***"dead in your transgressions and sins."*** Eph. 2:1.

So mankind had to have someone to redeem them, to buy them back, to rescue them, to pay the ransom so they could be made free from the slavery of sin and death and the power of the devil. In scripture God repeatedly uses the picture of his chosen people being slaves in Egypt to show how all humans are slaves of sin and death and under the power of the devil.

So mankind needed a Redeemer. And Jesus was that Redeemer. He is the one who would crush the head of Satan, and these two disciples are given as examples of humans who didn't understand that it had just taken place! When he said on the cross, just before dying, ***"It is finished"*** (John 19:30) he meant it. He told all mankind, as recorded in his word, the Bible, that their salvation was finished. They were redeemed. That is repeated for us in passages such as Galatians 3:13-14: ***"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit."*** We also read in Galatians 4:4-5: ***"But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons."*** Paul writes to Titus: ***"[Jesus Christ] gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good."*** Titus 2:14.

Jesus redeemed all mankind, and he is your personal Redeemer, too. We confess together that "He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death. All this he did that I should be his own, and live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as he has risen from death and lives and rules eternally. This is most certainly true." Jesus is still your Redeemer! Believe it and you will be saved!

For that redemption, for the fact that Jesus redeemed you, you rejoice! Rejoice and share that blessed good news with anyone you can! That redemption gives eternal life! Amen.