

## Third Sunday after Easter 19 Apr 2015

[Easter 3B April 19, 2015](#) Textweek

Acts 3: 12-19

Psalm 4

1 John 2: 15-17, 3: 1-7

Luke 24;36-48

In today's gospel, Luke announces the good news of Easter; *"he [Jesus] 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 in their presence."*

Following the enormity of the Easter events we have a report of what Jesus is given to eat even though at this gathering of the disciples we're told they were *"startled and terrified,"* and some were frightened and doubted...

In this fear-filled gathering Jesus asks *"Have you anything here to eat?"* And it is then reported that *"They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate in their presence."*

This is hardly the 'breaking news' report that we have become accustomed to seeing flash across the TV screen..

What Luke is underlining here is the reality of resurrection, and it follows the question that Luke has Jesus speak; *"Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?"*

For centuries theologians and faithful people from all denominations have sought to understand Luke's underlined reality; and in most cases the 'understanding' or the search for understanding has been reduced to 'did Jesus physically rise from the dead?'

Our understanding of resurrection has however been distorted by the very same underlining that Luke and the other gospel writers have added to flesh out the mystery of resurrection.

Verses 39-43 provide us with Luke's illustration of Jesus as a living, tangible reality; and that serves to also illustrate the reality of resurrection.

But then in verse 44 he takes us off in a different direction:

*"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, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, 46 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,"*

Rather than exploring resurrection, Luke goes back into his tradition and seeks to offer proof that Jesus is the Messiah, he is the one that the tradition has been waiting for.

The very same distortion takes place in the first reading from Acts; Peter is addressing the crowd who have just witnessed the healing of a man who could not walk, the crowd obviously attributing the healing to Peter and John.

Now through the words of Peter, Luke tells us that the healing came through faith in Jesus.

Luke makes much of this, and even throws accusations at the crowd to make his point:

*"13 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. 14 But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, 15 and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead."*

Luke then brings the crowd back onside with a well-crafted explanation:  
*"17 "And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. 18 In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer."*

Once again, Luke begins with a reality of resurrection, the healing of the man who could not walk, and then takes us off in a different direction to again offer proof of the Messianic identity.

The gospel writers are Jewish, the disciples are Jewish, Jesus is Jewish and although Jesus revealed a reality that went beyond their Jewish tradition, he has been imprisoned in the tradition by these distortions of resurrection.

The early church, a small group within the Jewish tradition, wanted to hold on to their tradition, they could not let go of long held beliefs, even though they clearly also believed in the life and teaching of Jesus.

And the Christian tradition was formed and shaped by holding on to those same past distortions.

To use the reality of resurrection as a proof of Jesus being the Messiah, is both missing the point of resurrection, and diminishing all that Jesus revealed by shoehorning it into the very tradition he sought to reach beyond.

The second reading from 1 John offers a very different perspective, and yet it is also seeking to clarify the reality of resurrection, the true teaching of Jesus to an audience that has been fragmented by different understandings.

in the middle of today's second reading we have a much more open appreciation of encountering resurrection: *"1 See 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. 2 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"*

What is important for us today is that we ask the initial question from the gospel for ourselves;

*"Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?"*

As a post-Easter community, we, like the disciples, have an opportunity to encounter resurrection, and to live in the light of resurrection.

*We are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed.*

That sentence is worth saying everyday

*We are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed.*

Of course those who look backward to the tradition will know what has been revealed and so for them there is no future; however, the bottom line truth is:

*We are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed.*

I want to finish with a helpful illustration of resurrection, especially as we have had only distortions through the readings today....

Jesus message, and his revelation, was not about him, nor was it about him being a saviour or liberator of a group of people; Jesus teaches us who we are and opens us to our becoming.

Picture a goldfish in a bowl as a metaphor for our life, we know the world we inhabit, we have a familiarity with that world, we are safe and have an established routine.



The resurrection places that goldfish bowl in the ocean.

Hence some become "*startled and terrified*," and some are frightened and doubted

Some will stay in the bowl, and have no idea or experience of the ocean; others will be tempted to swim... knowing that *what we will be has not yet been revealed*.