

<sup>on</sup> Sermon 15 April 2018 'But Jesus showed up' 1 John 3:1-7 Luke 24:36b-48

Prayer: Creator God, send your Spirit to create in us anew this day. Open us to the transformation that Jesus, our Risen Christ offers and then move us in new ways and directions for the Gospel's sake. Amen.

Welcome to Luke! Today we heard Luke's version of Jesus appearance to the main grouping of the disciples –**after his crucifixion**. We've had John, Mark - now Luke. So you *should have heard* echoes, similarities between the presentations. **And** you should be aware of differences, For example: remember how Mark is set on the 'new' church starting where Jesus ministry began – *in Galilee*? That he sends the disciples back to Galilee to wait for Jesus. Luke is a Jerusalem boy, **it** all happens in Jerusalem... I put the emphasis on '**it**', I am not too worried where – just completely reassured it happened, it started! <sup>off</sup>



If I *think you should* be aware of difference, I also think you can be comforted by the similarities. For me these become clear indications of event-truth moments. Jesus died. He had horrendous scars from the experience! These scars **identify** him as being him-self. He was known by his scars – and so are we to be known as real people, deeply immersed **in** living, **in** the world **and** we have the scars to prove it. <sup>on</sup> *Don't deny*, avoid, ignore **the scars and** how we live into the future with them, they **make** Jesus real through us!

In his own time, his scars made him real – they could not deny it was him – even when terrified! <sup>off</sup> Luke remembers the first thing Jesus did though, was to "say" Peace. To say a word was/is to send it **out to do** its business. In saying 'Peace' Jesus **was doing** Peace... for / on / with them. But *almost* before peace could settle, Luke also remembers being startled and frightened; - this was unknown territory, mysterious / other-worldly *and literally translated* this sentence reads in English: <sup>on</sup> <sup>1\*</sup> "They were seeming to see a spirit." The Greek word is *pneuma*, which most translate here as "ghost," but everywhere else as "spirit."!



*They were seeming to see a spirit* – and Jesus asks something along the lines of: <sup>1\*</sup> "Why have you been thrown into confusion, why are internal deliberations rising up in your hearts? **Well**... I wonder if I'd been there I might have had the courage to say some of the things that spring to my mind / from my heart / from my internal deliberations... what about you? Do you think you might have? This is a thing of faith for us – we have not seen – we were not there – we **are** troubled **and** doubts arise. <sup>off</sup>

Do not fear doubt or doubts arising in our minds as *we ponder* on the things of faith. <sup>2\*a</sup> Theologian Paul Tillich, wrote: "Doubt **isn't** the opposite of faith; it **is an** element of faith." And "When author Madeleine L'Engle was asked, 'Do you believe in God without any doubts?' she replied, 'I believe in God **with all** my doubts.'" <sup>2\*</sup> Jesus said: "Why are you troubled?" "And why do doubts arise in your hearts? And then proved beyond reasonable doubt for them, *through* his scars – he was!



But the trauma for them is not over yet. They are still not quite sure what is happening **but** joy is creeping in! Jesus eats something and then leads them in **Bible Study**. <sup>on</sup> He opens the scriptures for them. It would seem that essential in the experience of the development or establishment of the church was Bible study – they were blessed, *as blessed* as the two disciples on the road to Emmaus **because** Jesus led them in it.

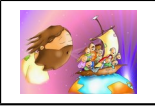
Emmaus Road story is just before our verses today, it was another experience of the Risen Lord, where Jesus presence was <sup>2\*b</sup> "mysterious but real. It eludes human perception, and yet is no human fabrication". Both of these stories describe the very earliest Christians hearing and doing the very same things that 21st-century Christians do: journeying, questioning, fearing, but also feeding and being fed, listening for and receiving God's call, and, of course, like any good church community, doing Bible study.

**Now** the **challenge** of chapter 24 in Luke increases as they do their Bible study which places Jesus is firmly within their traditions – the Law of Moses, the Prophets, the Psalms... Jesus was a 'fit' for them.

The next challenge is as the proof texts show in faith steps that combine text and person – he was **also a ‘fit’** as the Messiah. <sup>off</sup>

The next challenge is for the little, vulnerable, church. Those disciples, gathered in the upper room, terrified and yet with joy seeping through, internal dialogue still ringing in their ears and yet with amazement dawning in their hearts, these fishermen, workers, non-academic’s, **doing Bible study**... are told they are to go and offer forgiveness to the whole of the world, in his name – beginning in Jerusalem.

Last week John told us the same thing. The risen Jesus **sent** his disciple out **to forgive** sin. <sup>on</sup> In John’s account last week- Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit on them, re-creating them with the breath of the creating God from Genesis. This week in a few verses beyond our reading Luke tells them to stay in Jerusalem and wait until they are ‘clothed with power from on high’ (v49).



They had seen, touched, felt, experienced so now they had to go and live. Not to stay hidden, avoiding life in the real world where pain, persecution, betrayal, scars would be gained.... Now they had to act, **but and it’s** the only reprieve they get – they had to act **once** they were clothed in power (Luke), breathed upon (John) **then** they were to go and do. <sup>off</sup>

It is at this point I think the 1 John reading has offerings for us. Yes, I would agree with anyone who might think it is frustrating, black and white in its interpretations ... confusing in what it is trying to teach... but it has a point – it is <sup>3\*</sup> basically saying – go and do, don’t just **talk** about it.

The passage uses a whole lot of ways to say this, for example there is the idea that people become what they look at – there is truth in this for us – right? We look at our hero’s, maybe the younger we are the more impressionable we are- but role models are important and just how much advertising is based on the fact that we become what we look at?



Having a focus is really important: so what is your focus? <sup>on</sup> **People of the faith**, especially those who have come to faith later in life know how transformational it is to look at Jesus, and as the chorus goes: the things on earth grow strangely dim. It’s true for me – is it for you? More of this thinking is in Paul: Philippians 3:21 and 2 Corinthians 3:18. The more we study him, look at him, for him and his ways, the **more** we will become like him. We know him and his power, those outside of this knowledge have an excuse, **we don’t**. It is a goal in 1 John for us to practice our living attitudes, behaviours, life in Jesus until we achieve completeness/ wholeness/ salvation and are blameless, without sin/ holy and righteous as him.

<sup>off</sup> In 1 John achieving ‘righteousness’ is not an impossible goal nor is it a pious, holier than you attitude we’re to perfect. Here it is a **verb** –<sup>5\*</sup> what we’re taught in school as a ‘doing’ word’. ‘If you bake bread, you are a baker; if you do what is right, you are righteous.’ When we sin we are not living the right way, we are not practicing living the right way, focused on the right role model. 1 John argues that <sup>5\*</sup> ‘we **can** become the kind of people for whom sinning is an unreal option.’

**Don’t kid yourself** you don’t sin, the writer says –**but** Jesus came to destroy all that stops us living Jesus way. Jesus the Christ came to destroy the works of the devil – to destroy all that has no love, is not love, does not come from love – **because** God is love, and we are children of God through Jesus the Christ. Our hope is then to become like Christ in the future and our challenge is to become like him **now**. So don’t just say it – **do it**, with who you are – the real ‘you’ scars, internal debates, joy that seeps in and amazement the shines through because Jesus showed up **then and** he **has ever** since **and** he **will** again.



Those *poor* disciples, *locked* away, in that grey ‘waiting’ period all of those of us who have lived through the shadows of death know so well, **and** in the middle of that grey, heavy waiting **Jesus showed up**. <sup>on</sup> The disciples *thought* everything was going as well as might be expected, almost normal for a crucified friend / family / cousin... But – **and** Luke’s last chapter – this **most important** one for the church – starts

with “But”. But for the disciples and the world, **life** was never going to be ‘normal again – Jesus showed up. Amen. <sup>off</sup>