

Holy Trinity Penn, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2018, 8:00 a.m.

### Luke 24:36b-48 - Jesus Appears to the Disciples

Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."

<sup>37</sup> They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. <sup>38</sup> He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? <sup>39</sup> Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."

<sup>40</sup> When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. <sup>41</sup> And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" <sup>42</sup> They gave him a piece of broiled fish, <sup>43</sup> and he took it and ate it in their presence.

<sup>44</sup> He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

<sup>45</sup> Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. <sup>46</sup> He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, <sup>47</sup> and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

<sup>48</sup> You are witnesses of these things.

### Luke 24:36b-48 - Jesus Appears to the Disciples

These Sundays after Easter sometimes seem to have no particular significance, other than filling the gap from Easter to Pentecost. Last Sunday is even known as Low Sunday.

But these Sunday's and their gospel readings are some of the most important for our faith as Christian believers. It is the Bible readings for these Sundays which bring us the eye-witness accounts of Jesus' resurrection. And it is on the resurrection that our faith is based.

It was important that Jesus was born at that first Christmas.  
It was important that he died on the cross on Good Friday.

But it was even more important that he was raised on the third day, which we celebrated as Easter Sunday. But if we read the gospel accounts, not many people saw him on that first Easter Sunday, and all of the other eye-witness accounts of the resurrection occur over these next 40 days.

Those eye-witness accounts are important, because the resurrection is the single most important event on which our faith is based.

St Paul makes that clear in 1Corinthians 15:17 where he writes, "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men."

**But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead**, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive."

The resurrection, that Jesus **was** raised from the dead, is the most important fact of our faith, and believing in the resurrection can be the most difficult step to take. The reading from Luke's gospel tells us that even with the risen Jesus standing in their midst, his disciples found it difficult to believe.

These gospel accounts, and others, like the two disciples meeting the risen Jesus on the Emmaus road, which immediately precedes today's reading, are some of the most important in the whole Bible. They are the first-hand evidence we have for the resurrection, and they have the power to change lives.

And that is what Christianity is about, changing lives. When we become a Christian, we pass from death to life, new life in Jesus, through his resurrection from the dead.

We can learn a lot from these passages. Firstly, Jesus wasn't recognised by the travellers on the Emmaus road as he walked alongside them. In our reading today, Jesus showed them his hands and his feet to convince them, as he did with Thomas in John's gospel.

How often, I wonder, do **we** fail to recognise Jesus as he meets with us, as he walks alongside us.

In a few minutes we will share Communion, where we will break bread in Jesus name.

As we do, let us remember that Jesus said to us, "For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."

Jesus is our risen Lord, and He is not constrained by time or space. He is here with us now.

**Let us pray ....**

Lord Jesus, we thank you for your death, and for your glorious resurrection which changed our lives. We thank you for the many witnesses who have gone before us and passed on to us the truth of your risen presence. We thank you for your presence here with us today, may we like those who have gone before us proclaim you to a broken world. To your glory, **Amen**.

Peter Strutt, 15/4/2018