

Let all the house of Bethlehem therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified. Wait a minute, you might think. I wasn't there, I wasn't the one shouting "crucify him," how dare you, Pastor, accuse me of crucifying this man.

The reality is, you did crucify him. It was for you that he became man and was born of the Virgin Mary. It was for you that he loved and honored his mother perfectly, for you that he fulfilled the Law in every way. For you have inherited futile ways, you have inherited sin. Death is what you have coming to you, it is what you have earned for yourself.

It is hard for us to see these things for ourselves. Many would rather hear about how good they can be, how to live a better life, how to be greater in their works, how to best win over people to come into church. These are the things that many in Israel were looking for.

In a time without Facebook, Twitter, or even text messages news spread rather quickly about this man Jesus of Nazareth. These were men who had not only heard about these things but were disciples. They had seen and heard some of the things Jesus had said and done. They were in his midst at various times. And now, here they are speaking and telling of Jesus to Jesus. Their eyes were kept from recognizing him. He was certainly a great man, even a prophet from God. The men on the road to Emmaus even confessed that they had hoped that he would be the one to redeem Israel.

They had hoped he would redeem Israel. But the chief priests handed him over and he was crucified. There was hope that Israel would be returned to a great and mighty nation, free from Roman tyranny, free from the government in place as they were ruled by Pilate. They had hoped this Jesus would bring about many earthly successes. And besides all this it is the third day, three days after his death, the day in which he had said he would rise from the dead.

Some of women found the empty tomb, others were sent to check it out, and sure enough the tomb is empty. Where was the relevance? Where was the glory? Surely there must be more! And Jesus said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"

The Word in flesh was not speaking anything new as he proclaimed why he became man. The Word in flesh was not giving some new relevance to the Word given in the Old Testament. As Christ spoke of these things, he was merely repeating and fulfilling the promise that he had given to his people from the beginning. "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."

This was it. This was the relevance. This is the culmination of the whole thing. The Word of God given in Moses and all the Prophets was not so that Jews or Christians or anyone would merely know how to live a better life. The Word of God

given in Moses and the Prophets was not to give some greater relevance to this life, not give some greater wisdom or achieving knowledge. The Word of God in Moses and the Prophets is for one purpose, they are the things concerning this man Jesus whom you crucified.

So easily does the message of the Scriptures get turned and twisted. Is the Law merely a rule book showing us how we are to be and if you are not you get punished. Or does it show us for who we are, and how we are sinners in need of a Savior. Twisted and taken out of context the Law becomes list of morals in an attempt to earn God's favor, somehow hoping to achieve it. In its full context, in the narrative of all Scriptures, it shows what sin is and points directly at us and the consequence of death and hell that we deserve. But the context is even more than that, yes sin brings death, but the Law is always accompanied with God's promise of rescue and deliverance.

Taken out of its context, all the Scriptures could have various meanings and various messages for us. But all these things, Moses and the Prophets speak of this man Jesus. How sinful man was promised a Savior, how God would become flesh and deliver his people, how the demands of death would be satisfied in him and the promise of the resurrection for all people. And through this man Jesus, your sins are forgiven. This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

And the disciples urged him to stay. Still not recognizing him, but greatly astounded for sure. And besides all this it is evening. So he stays. And when he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed it and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him. Up to this point, they only partly recognized what it was they were receiving. But now, after Jesus' interprets for them all of the Scriptures and in this breaking of the bread do they finally understand the mystery of the resurrection and his abiding presence with them. Teaching and eating. He was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

This Jesus whom you crucified, is both Lord and Christ. The Lord is risen! *He is risen indeed, Alleluia!*

And he vanished from their sight. They confessed their hearts burned. Not just some inner feeling, not like the Mormons or others say your heart must burn to know if you have faith, yet also not something that will be taken care of with some Tums. But within the heart dwelled faith, that this man Jesus is the Christ, and that he was recognized in the breaking of the bread. No longer does Jesus recline at the table with his disciples, with you his people, but he is present in the breaking of the bread.

The breaking of the bread which he gives. The presence he has given himself as he declares this bread to be his body. The same body which was beaten and crucified. The same body which was not present as the women went to the tomb, for Christ is risen! *He is risen indeed, Alleluia!*

He opens the Scriptures, he gives us his Word, for he is the Word made flesh. He is the one who has come and fulfilled the Law's demands, who fulfills the Law perfectly on your behalf. The Son of God has come into the flesh for you. He comes and brings you to repentance and forgives you all your sins. You want relevance, you want more? Here he gives you everything. "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Receive this gift which he freely gives. Here in the mystery of his resurrection he comes to you in water and Word, and forgives you your sins. Here in the mystery of his resurrection he comes to you in humble means of bread and dwells with you and gives you himself for the forgiveness of sins.

Not everyone is satisfied with the forgiveness of sins, many seem to think that there ought to be more. In the midst of death, here is life. What more is there? Relevance, wisdom, knowledge, wealth? "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the Word of the Lord remains forever."

This is the good news, the Gospel, preached to you week after week. Your sins are forgiven. This man Jesus, whom you crucified, is both Lord and Christ and forgives you all your sins. This man Jesus, who was promised to redeem all of Israel is with you in his Word and gives himself to you in His Sacraments. He has suffered and died for you, life and salvation are yours.

The Lord is risen! *He is risen indeed, Alleluia!*