

“Easter Revelation”

When the Small Catechism says the following – is it referring to Good Friday, or Easter? “I believe that Jesus Christ ... has redeemed me a lost and condemned person, 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.” Good Friday, or Easter?

Obviously it's Good Friday. That's when you were redeemed – that's when the Sacrifice that atones for the sin of the world was offered up – that's when Jesus, speaking of the Father's plan of salvation, says: “It is finished.”

So why does Easter get all the attention? I don't know of a Christian church that doesn't typically have services on Easter – but there are more than a few that do not have services on Good Friday. If that's when – “It is finished” – shouldn't it be the high feast day in the Church's calendar?

As Dr. Luther would say – if Christ offered up His life for the redemption of the world, and His body remained in the grave – then who would know that the redemption of all things was accomplished?

Easter is important. The Resurrection of Our Lord is the biggest, boldest sermon – preaching to all that sin is forgiven! Good Friday shows that Jesus has taken our sin upon Himself. Where there is sin – there is death. But what Good Friday doesn't show – is that His death, His holy, precious blood – redeems us from sin. The Resurrection of Jesus on the third day shows forth that the sin He had taken upon Himself – is gone, atoned for, forgiven – and you are redeemed!

Some have used another analogy to describe this. Most people assume that a touchdown has been scored when the football breaks the plane of the goal line – but that's not really true. A touchdown is scored only when the officials signal that a touchdown has been scored. The work is done – the ball has broken the plane already – but you don't know it's a touchdown for sure (especially with replays) until the official proclaims that a touchdown has been scored.

Good Friday and Easter. In our text today, Easter Jesus (the Resurrected Jesus) walks alongside some of His disciples headed to Emmaus – “but their eyes were kept from recognizing Him.” Jesus purposely hides His identity from them. Unlike the women at the tomb – these two disciples have no idea that this man walking alongside of them is Jesus.

While we might wonder WHY Jesus would do that – let’s first look at what He does. He comes to these two disciples who are absolutely crushed. They had been followers of Jesus – they believed that He was the Christ, the Messiah, the Savior who is come into the world, the One to redeem Israel. They had great hopes – and yet, with the crucifixion and death of Jesus – their hope is gone.

“O foolish ones,” Jesus says to them, “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?”

Then Jesus begins the intensive catechesis – showing them from the Scriptures how all that had happened these past few days were in accord with the Father’s plan of salvation. He connected the dots for them – showing that what the prophets had foretold – was accomplished in this Jesus of Nazareth.

To say it another way – He connects Good Friday and Easter together – showing how both are necessary. And yet, all the while – His identity is purposely hidden from these two disciples. This is curious, indeed.

Even more curious is how Jesus’ identity is revealed – and what happens after that! Reclining at Table, Jesus “took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them” – sound familiar? “And their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him.”

To make sure we are not missing the point, St. Luke records what these disciples report to the other disciples back in Jerusalem – that Jesus was “known to them in THE breaking of THE bread.”

This is Lord's Supper language. The Resurrected Jesus reveals Himself to them with the Lord's Supper. All the Catechesis – all the preaching and teaching leads up to the Lord's Supper – and then – Jesus “vanished from their sight.” Actually, a better translation might be – He “became invisible to them.” Vanished sounds like He's left and gone somewhere – “invisible” lends itself to Jesus being present, but hidden.

Dearly beloved, the Lord's Supper is the Resurrected Jesus coming to you – revealing by His Word that He is present in this bread and wine with His own body and blood – and yet, you cannot recognize him with your eyes.

The Lord's Supper is the preaching that Good Friday is FOR YOU – that all your sin has been paid in full, that your salvation is won, “it is finished” FOR YOU – so says the Resurrected Jesus who comes to you at the Table.

The Lord's Supper is the preaching that the Resurrection of Our Lord is FOR YOU – for where sin has been taken away – so has death. What remains for you, is life, everlasting life – and, the resurrection of your body on the Last Day.

This is why the Lord's Supper is so important – dare I say, “essential” – for Christians. Jesus preaches and teaches the Word of God to us – and with it – He leads us to the Table, to THE breaking of THE bread.

Yes, the Word alone proclaims that Christ is risen – but with the Lord's Supper – He reveals that the Resurrected Jesus is with us, by our side in this life, leading us to life everlasting.

Dearly beloved, Christ is risen! [He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!]

The peace of God which passes all understanding, guards your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.