LWML Sunday 10/5/25
Luke 24:44-53 free text

TEXT IS GOSPEL LESSON, FROM THE 24TH CHAPTER OF LUKE'S GOSPEL

In your life, you have those meetings that have great impact on your life. Remember the first time you met your spouse? How about the first time you held your newborn grandchild? There are those meetings that have great impact – eternal impact, in fact – on our lives.

This morning, I want to begin by asking you a question: How will people meet Jesus? The Savior Himself answers that question for us. "*You are witnesses of these things,"* He says. By the power and grace of the Holy Spirit, OUR LORD HAS CALLED US TO BE HIS WITNESSES SO THAT REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS ARE PROCLAIMED IN HIS NAME, SO THAT ALL MAY MEET JESUS.

We look at the disciples and think it was easy for them to be witnesses. After all they had seen Jesus, right there in the upper room. He miraculously appeared in the middle of them, even with the doors locked. It was easy for them; they had walked and talked with Jesus for 3 years, seeing all the great signs and wonders. It was easy for them because they were eyewitnesses.

I. But, it's not easy for us, is it? We're afraid. We sweat at the very thought of being a witness. And, we justify it in our own minds: I don't know what to say. My tongue gets tied in knots. I don't know the Bible well enough. I haven't seen Jesus like the disciples did. It was easy for them. It's not easy for me, is it?

When it comes to being a witness of these things, we often think that the disciples had all the advantages. It's easy to think that they were good

witnesses because they saw Jesus in flesh and blood. But, St. Luke really tells us a different story. Throughout his Gospel, he makes it clear that the disciples had a very difficult time believing. They failed Jesus. They abandoned him when he was arrested. And on Easter Sunday when he rose from death, they had forgotten all the times that He said He would do just that. Right before our lesson for today, in fact, several people have seen Jesus and they hurry to tell the disciples. But, instead of being filled with faith, they were filled with fear and doubt. They were hiding in a dark upper room. Jesus appeared among them, but they were afraid, thinking they were seeing a ghost. "Look it's me!" He says, "But don't believe your eyes, touch me, and handle me. I'm really here. Here are my hands. These are the very same hands you saw heal the sick; the very same hands you saw raise the dead; the very same hands you saw nailed to the cross." Jesus even ate some fish to show that He was alive.

We don't see Jesus like they did. And sometimes we have trouble believing. It's easy to have doubts especially when we are wracked with troubles. "If Jesus is really God, why do I have to suffer?," we say. "God if you're really out there, help me through this!" We think we have doubts because Jesus isn't there for us to touch and feel. We want to see Jesus, like the disciples did. But in spite of the popular saying, seeing isn't believing. Remember Easter Sunday, the disciples had all the seeing they could handle. Yet, doubt reigned among them. The disciples needed more than seeing and we need more than seeing. And gracious giving God gives us exactly what we need.

II. He gives us His own Son. Jesus is the faithful witness. His life is a witness that shows us our compassionate Father's ever-giving heart.

It was written, *"that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise again",* and this is what Jesus fulfilled.

He came not just to talk about salvation, nor even to simply promise it, but to accomplish it. This was his mission, to save the world. To live the perfect life for us and suffer and die and rise for all the sin of every sinner, to pay for each and every one. His mission was and is for you. You are why He came, and did everything that He did.

III. And the Christ who was sent, also sends. At His ascension, Jesus gave His Church an assignment to carry out. That assignment was this, *"Repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His Name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witness of these things."*

That very proclamation of repentance and forgiveness came to you in the new birth of your Baptism. Buried with Him in our baptism, we are united with Him in His resurrection witness. As He gives us faith in the hearing of His Word and feeds us with His precious Body and Blood at His altar, He empowers His people to go into the world. You know how we end our services here at Concordia. There's a reason for that. Yes, God calls us to gather here so that He do His work in us, then as we go live our lives and fulfill our vacations, divine service continues in the world as the people of God are sent forth as witnesses.

This is a monumental, but vitally necessary task, My Friends. You have the immense joy of knowing you have a partner in this work. Today, we remember and rejoice in the work of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League, the LWML. Your LWML works to carry the Gospel to those very people who need to meet Jesus. The *Lutheran Woman's Quarterly* includes Bible studies that have been used by people all over the world. Through that Word, our Lord empowers people for lives of witnessing. Mustard

Seed devotions from the LWML left in hotel rooms, restaurants and greeting cards show how the witness of Christ continues to fill the world. With money collected in mites, the women of the LWML are Christ's witnesses on every continent, as they share the redeeming love of the Savior.

They share the redeeming love of the Savior, as our partners in the Gospel, as they gather blankets to take to those who are going through tragedy. They are the ones who put meals into the mouths of those who have gone through disasters. They are the ones who on your behalf make certain that people in the world over hear and learn the Word of God. They are the ones who become for you, in numerous places, the very heart and hands of the compassionate, merciful Lord who saves, who meets people where they are and grants them life.

You have the joy of an amazing partnership in the Gospel as you give of your treasures, give of your time, and give of your talents, so that people may meet Jesus, for the joy of knowing repentance and forgiveness in His name.

THE LWML is a living witness that each and every one of us is clothed with power from on high to be a bold witness for Christ. We can start in the ways and the places God has given you. Tongue-tied when you try to tell a friend about Jesus? Then, invite them church, where they will hear God's Word. Don't feel comfortable telling someone about Jesus? Start by telling your children and grandchildren how happy you are that you are going to heaven when you die. Can't witness to your neighbor? Start by lending a helping hand. Maybe that will lead to an opportunity to share Jesus. You are witnesses to the things that God has done for us, and is doing for us right now in Christ. Amen.