

**THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER 2020**  
**Minnesota Valley Free Lutheran Church; Pastor Tom Olson; April 26, 2020**

HYMN: "STAND UP, STAND UP FOR JESUS" George Duffield, Jr. (1818-1888)

Stand up! stand up for Jesus!  
Ye soldiers of the cross;  
Lift high His royal banner,  
It must not suffer loss:  
From vict'ry unto vict'ry  
His army shall He lead,  
Till every foe is vanquished  
And Christ is Lord indeed.

2  
Stand up! stand up for Jesus!  
The trumpet call obey;  
Forth to the mighty conflict  
In this His glorious day.  
Ye that are men, now serve Him  
Against unnumbered foes;  
Let courage rise with danger.  
And strength to strength oppose.

3  
Stand up! stand up for Jesus!  
Stand in His strength alone;  
The arm of flesh will fail you;  
Ye dare not trust your own.  
Put on the Gospel armor,  
Each piece put on with prayer,  
Where duty calls, or danger,  
Be never wanting there.

4  
Stand up! stand up for Jesus!  
The strife will not be long:  
This day the noise of battle,  
The next the victor's song;  
To him that overcometh  
A crown of life shall be;  
He, with the King of glory,  
Shall reign eternally.

PRAYER

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE: *Luke 24:31 Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight.* Masks, a lot of people are wearing them now...(put on a mask) can you recognize me now? Sometimes we are hidden for a good reason. Jesus kept them from recognizing until He has time to show them from the Scriptures what they had missed. God hides himself for the purpose of being found.

GOSPEL READING: *Luke 24:13-35 Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. 14 They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. 15 As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; 16 but they were kept from recognizing him. 17 He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?" They stood still, their faces downcast. 18 One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you only a visitor to Jerusalem and do not know the things that have happened there in these days?" 19 "What things?" he asked. "About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. 20 The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; 21 but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. 22 In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning 23 but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. 24 Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." 25 He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. 28 As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther. 29 But they urged him strongly, "Stay with*

*us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. 30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. 32 They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" 33 They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together 34 and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." 35 Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.*

**CONFESSION OF FAITH:** *I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ, His only son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit; born of the virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate; Was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven; And is seated on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From where He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; The holy Christian Church; the Communion of Saints; the Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body, And the Life everlasting. Amen*

**MESSAGE: EMMAUS: FROM GRIEF TO GLORY** Pastor Tom Olson, 4/26/20

**WALK:** Sometimes it is good to get out of the house and take a walk. Lots of people are walking. My dad was a firm believer in walking and sponsored a hiking club for many years. They walked hundreds of miles! One man who suffered from suicidal depression told me that the thing that saved his life many times was long, slow walks. Simon Peter and Cleopas could not stay cooped up in Jerusalem. They went for a walk to Emmaus. Perhaps that where Cleopas lived. As they walked, they talked about Jesus, the crucifixion, the empty tomb. They tried to figure it out. Then Jesus joined them and their slow, sad, walk from Jerusalem ended up with a midnight run back to Jerusalem. From Grief to Glory! Let's talk about it.

## **I. DEBILITATING GRIEF**

*Luke 24:20&20 The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; 21 but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel.*

Peter and Cleopas were overcome with grief. They had hoped that Jesus would redeem Israel. They had hoped he would deliver them from the Romans and restore the glory days of King David. There certainly are Scriptures that pointed to that. *"The lion lies down by the lamb." "They shall learn war no more." "He shall sit on the throne of his Father David." "Jerusalem shall be raised up above all cities."*

But they could not see what the prophets said must come first. *Isaiah 53:5 "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed."*

They were kept from recognizing Jesus. Their unbelief darkened their eyes to the point that they could not see Jesus, who was there. For 14 years I stared at an altar painting in my home church of Jesus dying on the cross and I did not see it for what it was. All I saw was a dying man, just like Peter and Cleopas. Activities kept me from noticing that the answer to my fear of death was right in front of me every Sunday. Jesus was there and I didn't notice him either.

What about you dear friend? Is Jesus near you and you don't notice him? Are you so caught up in the cares of life that His promises don't mean anything? Do you needlessly worry, rather than peacefully trust? I know of one man who was almost destroyed by the death of his granddaughter. He built a bench by her grave and just

sat there and grieved. Yet her grave behind the church should have given him hope of seeing her again, forever, in joy and perfect health.

***I Thessalonians 4:13&14 “Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. 14 For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.”***

First, we see DEBILITATING GRIEF and the blindness that came as a result.

## **II. ENLIGHTENING GRACE**

***John 20:27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.***

I have pondered on why Jesus didn't reveal Himself right away and I think I know why. They would have gone right back to looking to him as the deliverer from Rome and a political king, even more so. They needed to go deeper and they were finally in a state of mind that they could listen. Jesus, once AGAIN, went through the Scriptures about why the Messiah must suffer and die. And their eyes slowly opened up to the point that they could see Jesus for who He is. It was in the breaking of the bread. Communion. The Passover Lamb. The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the whole world.

God's Word brought grace that creates faith. I have recently noticed again the marvelous effect of the Word of God on those who take time to study it. I have noticed some people getting more peace and more power over Satan as they absorb the Word of God. Jesus could have explained to them but instead He used the Scriptures and gave us the example of how to share the powerful Word of God with unbelievers.

***Romans 10:17 “Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.”*** When revival came to my home town in the early 1970's people bought Bibles, carried Bibles, read the Bible and lives changed. Lives changed so radically that it was the talk of the town. Heavy drinkers and wild men turned into youth ministers and traveling musicians with the Lutheran Evangelistic Movement. God's Word is powerful and Satan tries hard to keep us away from it.

Peter and Cleopas experienced ENLIGHTENING GRACE from the Word of God and we can too, if we simply read it.

## **III. OVERFLOWING GLORY**

***Luke 24:32-34 They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" 33 They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together 34 and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon."***

Peter and Cleopas were transformed. Their grief was met with faith and they were transformed “from glory to glory.” I suspect their hike of seven miles back to Jerusalem took less than two hours! They probably ran the last mile. When they arrived, they “sang” for the first time “Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia!”

That is what happens when you personally meet the risen Lord Jesus Christ. Your life is transformed and you are never the same. Perhaps you are overcome with grief right now. Please hear the good news. Jesus died to forgive all your sins. He rose from the dead. He is in heaven preparing a place for you. He is coming back to

receive all who believe in Him forever. BELIEVE THE GOOD NEWS. Fifty thousand people have reportedly died of the Corona virus. One Hundred Fifty thousand people die every day in the world. Every one of them who believes in Jesus goes directly to the unspeakable joy of heaven. We have good news...let's get out of here and run back to our Jerusalem and tell the grieving world the good news of the Gospel. Salvation for a friend or neighbor may only be a letter or phone call away. So, take a walk with Jesus soon, take your Bible and sit on a bench or under a tree and read Christ's Word, and you too will go from grief to glory by His grace. Amen

*CLOSING PRAYER & LORD'S PRAYER: Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, The power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen*

BENEDICTION: The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you, the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and grant you peace. Amen

**DOXOLOGY: Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below; Praise him above, ye heavenly host: Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen**