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[0:00] In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. That is, Thomas summarizes the whole thing by looking at Jesus and saying, My Lord and my God.

Next Sunday, among Anglicans, is generally called Good Shepherd Sunday. But today doesn't have a special name. However, I think today could be aptly subtitled Reality Sunday. Reality Sunday. Because what we have is the second part of the Emmaus story. Most of us know the account of the two disciples, discouraged, leave the group, head out, on their way toward Emmaus, probably beyond.

They meet the stranger. They begin to talk to him. He begins to unfold the fullness of the Old Testament scriptures in describing the mission and work of the Messiah.

And pretty soon they come to the Emmaus Hilton and they say, It's getting dark. You better stay with us. And he does. And they sit down at the table.

[1:54] He takes the bread. Just as they remembered him doing it at the Sea of Galilee. And he fed the 5,000. He took it.

And he blessed it. And as he had done at the Last Supper, broke it. And then as he had done before, he gave it to them. St. Luke tells us their eyes were opened.

And they recognized him in the breaking of the bread. And that's always read on the third Sunday of Easter in year A.

That was last year. So you all remember that last year. This year, we pick up. Jesus vanishes from their sight.

You see, they've recognized him in the breaking of the bread. And as he, in a sense, celebrates the first post-resurrection Eucharist. Feeds them with himself.

[2:53] They no longer need to see him with human eyes. They turn around. Even though it's getting dark, they head back to Jerusalem. They get to the upper room.

They get in. And while they're trying to report what's happened to them, the disciples who are already in the upper room are saying, the Lord has risen. He's appeared to Simon Peter.

And they're trying. They're all filing their reports simultaneously. Finally, they said, we saw him. And our eyes were opened. And we knew him in the breaking of the bread. At which point, the exchanges are all interrupted by the appearance of you-know-who, Jesus.

And they look up and they are startled. And some are afraid. And some are befuddled. And he says to them, Peace to you.

[3:57] And what we begin to have is Jesus speaking a word of reassurance. Because in his appearance there, he reasserts in their presence his physicality.

This isn't theology. This isn't contemplation. He says, look, see, behold my hands and my feet.

And they look at him. You know, the truth is you don't need extraordinary faith to see somebody in front of you. I don't need faith to see Pat Digg.

But they began to see more than that. They saw a man they knew was dead. And suddenly, he begins to say to them, Do you have anything to eat?

St. Luke says, they disbelieved for joy. It is so great. It is incredible. Now, incredible means it's not believable. But we use that language that something is so great.

[5:16] It's virtually incredible because it's true. And this is what they see. The risen Lord before them. And they are just overcome with joy.

And he eats. They give him some broiled fish. And it's interesting. In a lot of the original old Greek manuscripts, it also adds fish and honeycomb.

And as I read that, it's not printed in a lot of the Bible. Sometimes in the ESV, it's a footnote. But you think about what God promised, what the land would be that he was giving to his people.

A land flowing with milk and honey. And in fact, you know, in the early church, it was not uncommon when people were baptized at Easter.

After they made their first communion, they were given a spoon of honey and a drink of milk to affirm they had arrived in the land of promise.

[6:22] Because it's not geography anymore. It's Jesus. And so what we have then is Jesus picks up his catechism lesson.

Remember on the road he was explaining to the two of them on the way to Emmaus what the law and the prophets and the writings pointed to, how Jesus was revealed in the Psalms.

Here he begins, he picks up the lesson, and he says, all this was fulfilled. He opened their minds. He opened their minds to understand the scriptures.

He not only opened their minds, he obviously opened their hearts. The Messiah would suffer. He would die. And on the third day, he would rise from the dead.

And on top of that, forgiveness, repentance, would be proclaimed in his name to all the nations. Now, it's interesting what St. Luke adds then.

[7:30] It would be proclaimed from Jerusalem. From Jerusalem. I think if the modern church were doing this, they'd be encouraging people to rush to the airline office and buy a ticket and fly into Jerusalem so they could receive these blessings.

Jesus says it's not going to run that way. He said it's going out from Jerusalem to all the world. They don't have to come here. There is no more holy city because the holy city is now Christ himself.

And when we are in him and his body, we are privileged with everything. And what does Jesus mean? It means Yahweh saves.

Jesus saves. It is fulfilled in this resurrection appearance. And he said, you, you are the witnesses of these things.

And what do those early Christians do? They write this down. They write this down. And they share it. They pass it around. Later we come to call that the New Testament.

[8:42] And it's reliable. And the people who were alive then, the people who were alive then, were able to testify the things which were written down are in fact true.

And then Jesus says something more. Beyond saying that you're the witnesses, he said, I am going to send the promise of my father upon you.

Everybody getting settled? I remember those days.

The only difference was I got to go up to the altar and Carol sat in the pew with all the kids. So what does Jesus say? He said, I'm sending the promise of my father upon you.

Well, what's the promise? To Abraham, the promise was land and bounty. But for Jesus, the promise is the Holy Spirit.

[10:01] And this takes us from the last chapter of St. Luke's Gospel back to the first chapter of St. Luke's Gospel. The Vedder will be the great historian of English life in the 7th century.

In his sermons, in his articles, wrote about the fact that in the promise of the Spirit, in the experience of that Easter night, we get a recap from the very beginning of Luke's Gospel when a similar situation occurs.

A comparable scenario with fear, being startled, troubled, afraid, and another voice that says, fear not.

And the angel Gabriel comes to Mary. And she says, I don't know, how could this all happen? I am a virgin. And Bede points out that it's the same thing.

The power of the Most High will overshadow you. And therefore, the child to be conceived in your womb will be called the Son of God.

[11:22] And as we refine this in the articles of the Nicene Creed, the Son of God is equally God the Son. The fullness of God, infinite, immeasurable, comes and for a moment exists as a single cell in Mary's womb.

Because God has fulfilled the promise to send the Messiah. What startles them all is that he has come to do it himself. And now, Jesus is saying that he's going to pour out the Holy Spirit afresh on them.

The same Spirit who came on the Virgin Mary is now going to come on these disciples in the upper room that Christ might be formed in us.

Think about it. This is reality. This is reality. The Holy Spirit will do this because this is the fulfillment.

The Trinity sends the Holy Spirit who transforms us on the inside and on the outside. On the inside, by drawing us to holiness of life.

[12 : 41] Being deeper with Christ in the Lord. and on the outside, by making us witnesses to his saving work.

Last Sunday, we heard of Thomas, my Lord and my God, and he disappears to the pages of the Bible. Centuries later, when missionaries arrive in India, they find thousands of people whose lives are given over to Jesus who are called Thomas Christians.

Because Thomas didn't stay in Jerusalem. He followed Christ's direction and brought the gospel to the farthest ends of the earth. In the other reading that's an option for today, there's a little recap after the healing of the crippled man at the beautiful gate.

And Peter says, Peter, Luke says, is filled with the Holy Spirit. Filled with the Holy Spirit. And he says, this guy is healed in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

Because salvation comes only in the name of Jesus. An exclusive claim that Peter articulates and it says, he had a boldness which stunned all because the people knew him to be uneducated and to be a common man.

[14 : 21] The Holy Spirit transforms us inside and outwardly as well. This is the reality that the Lord Jesus is physically risen from the dead with hands and feet that can eat fish and maybe honeycomb.

This is Jesus who was the real presence of the Holy Trinity in the womb of Mary. This is the Jesus who was the real presence in the broken bread of the Eucharist in the road to Emmaus.

This is the real presence of Jesus coming in his Holy Spirit into all our hearts. The eternal plan of God is not for us to get some kind of a ticket punch to go to heaven.

If we read the second letter of St. Peter it's all spelled out in a single verse that his plan is to make us sharers in the divine nature.

He has come down to us that he might raise us to the heights of glory. And we are befuddled by this as was Mary when Gabriel appeared.

[15 : 45] The words of Gabriel to Mary apply to us today. Nothing is impossible with God. in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.