



Sermon for the Third Sunday of Easter, April 2021

St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Coeur d'Alene The Rev. Glenda Empsall

lectionarypage.net: [Acts 3:12-19](#), [1 John 3:1-7](#), [Luke 24:36b-48](#), [Psalm 4](#)

God of love and compassion, for whom all things are possible, be in our midst and enlighten us to see those who seek your love. Make us your gracious servants, that the world may know you. Amen.

There are so many ways to approach interpreting scripture! We can go crazy researching what scholars say about the book, its author and particular verses, and investigating the English meanings of the Aramaic, Hebrew, Greek or Latin words.

Or, we can let the Spirit intervene. Don't interpret scripture, but prayerfully consider how scripture speaks to us.

In the weeks since Easter, we have read stories about encounters with the resurrected Jesus. The details in each meeting differ enough that you might not be sure if it is a separate occasion, the same story from a different perspective, or a blend of the two.

The people who meet Jesus in these stories don't recognize him right away. Perhaps Jesus was somehow transformed, like a Forsythia that looks like sticks all winter then in springtime bursts into golden flowers. Perhaps they don't recognize Jesus because he was out of context. Have you ever seen someone you know casually from work or school at the grocery store and thought, "Who IS that?" The women and the disciples were told that Jesus had risen, but they didn't expect to see him "in person" – at least not right then and not right there.

Mary Magdalene only recognized Jesus when he called her by name. The disciples, including Thomas, recognized Jesus when they saw and touched the wounds from his crucifixion. In this reading from Luke, the disciples at first were "startled and terrified." Jesus asked why they were afraid and doubtful. When they saw the wounds, they were overjoyed by the possibility of Jesus with them, but still weren't sure that it was really Jesus.

They only realized Jesus was not a ghost when he ate the fish in their presence. Perhaps asking for something to eat was Jesus' way of saying, It is really me. I'm not going to disappear. Slow down. Take a deep breath and pay attention. Let's eat.

Today's Collect tells us that Jesus "made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread" or, in this case the broiled fish. How is Jesus revealed to you?

- In the Eucharist?
- As you pray?
- In contemplation of scripture?
- In the selfless service of someone you know and love?
- In music, art or nature?
- In the trusting face of a child?
- In a still, small voice?

Jesus instructed the disciples to proclaim repentance and forgiveness of sins in his name to all nations. We are witnesses of these things, even though we have not seen. You know in your heart, even though your head may be doubting, that as followers of Jesus we have been sent and we are blessed to share this good news. This is the essence of Jesus' message.

I urge you to find a small group at St. Luke's where you can share your experiences of revelation and discovery. If there are no offerings that suit you, suggest one that would! Think of "possibilities" to be together, to share together and to pray together.

In gratitude for these gifts, trusting in a power beyond our own, let us witness to the truth of Jesus' constant love and God's infinite grace as we continue our journey with resilience and hope. Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia! Amen.