

Sunday, April 19, 2026

## THIRD SUNDAY IN EASTER

Luke 24:13-35

*Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.*

My friends,  
Who doesn't love a good surprise?

I remember one birthday  
when all my kids were little.  
I walked into the kitchen for breakfast,  
and a tiny toddler voice piped up,  
"Hey Dad! It's your birthday!"

Another child cried,  
"Oh no!  
You ruined it!  
I wanted it to be a surprise!"

Tasha had to step in:  
"It's okay—Daddy already knows what day his birthday is."

In today's Gospel,  
the disciples are surprised  
by something Jesus  
had already told them would happen.  
They are surprised  
by a stranger  
who turns out to be no stranger at all.  
They are surprised by Jesus—  
because He did exactly  
what He promised.  
He rose from the dead.  
Christ is living.  
Christ is risen!  
He is risen indeed, alleluia!

Still, Good Friday had shattered their hopes:

*"But we had hoped  
that He was the one  
to redeem Israel."*

And the news  
of the empty tomb  
only deepened their confusion.

Now,

on the road to Emmaus,  
Jesus comes to them.

In this journey,  
He surprises them with His grace—  
in the Scriptures,  
in His preaching,  
and in the breaking of the bread.

And as we look to these same places today,  
may He surprise us  
with His grace as well.

### **I. Jesus Surprises Us in the Scriptures**

My friends,

First,

Jesus surprises His disciples  
in the Scriptures.

Oh, to have been there!

It must have been the greatest Bible study  
in the history of the world.

*"[Jesus] said to them,*

*"O foolish ones,  
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?"*

*And beginning with Moses  
and all the Prophets,  
[Jesus] interpreted to them  
in all the Scriptures  
the things concerning Himself." (Luke 24:25–27)*

Genesis to Malachi—  
who is it all about?  
Surprise!  
It's Jesus!  
Who is there on every page?  
Surprise!  
It's Jesus!

Do you want  
to understand the Bible?  
Then you need to know  
that it's all about Jesus Christ.  
Even the Old Testament.  
On every page—Jesus is there.

Jesus Christ—  
crucified for our sins and risen from the dead—  
is the key to understanding the Bible  
and applying it  
to our lives.

The Bible was written  
to reveal **Jesus** as our Saviour-King.  
**Jesus** is the fulfillment  
of God's plan  
to save the world.  
To the Jews who refused  
to believe Him,

Jesus said:  
*"You diligently study the Scriptures  
because you think  
that by them you possess eternal life.  
These are the Scriptures  
that testify about Me,  
yet you refuse  
to come  
to Me  
to have life"* (John 5:39)

All of Scripture preaches Jesus Christ crucified and risen!  
Whenever we read the Bible,  
we should ask,  
"Where is Jesus?"  
The holy law reveals our deep need  
for Jesus.  
The great promises reveal Him  
as our Saviour.

This is why Jesus Christ is the focal point  
of our theology.  
Some churches tend to emphasize  
"the Sovereignty of God"  
or  
"how one should live"  
in their teachings.  
The Lutheran Church stresses the Gospel of Jesus Christ—  
crucified for our sins  
and risen from the dead!  
That is the key to understanding the Bible  
and applying it  
to our lives.

On every page,  
there is Christ crucified  
and risen for us!  
O Lord,  
as we read Your Word,  
**"Still surprise us with Your grace!**  
Make each day a new Emmaus;  
On our hearts Your image trace!"

## II. Jesus Surprises Us in the Preaching of the Word

My friends,  
First,  
Jesus surprised His disciples  
in the Scriptures.  
But note  
what Jesus does  
with the Scriptures.

He not only showed them  
where He was  
in the Old Testament.  
Jesus also interpreted these texts  
and opened their meaning  
for them.  
Jesus preached  
to them.

So, second—  
Jesus surprises us  
by showing up  
in the preaching of the Word.  
Jesus enters our ears  
to make His way  
to our hearts.

He comes to us  
in the hearing  
of His Gospel.  
*"Consequently,  
faith comes  
from hearing the message,  
and the message is heard  
through the word of Christ."* (Romans 10:17)

In preaching,  
Jesus surprises us by showing  
how the Scriptures **about** Him  
are **for you**.  
The Scriptures are about Jesus.  
About how He is for **you**.  
About how Jesus is  
for **your** salvation.

This preaching is what we see  
in our First Reading.  
St. Peter preaches  
to the crowd.  
He applies the message  
of Jesus  
to them.  
He proclaims the Good News is  
for them.

*"Peter said to them, '  
Repent,  
and each of **you** be baptized  
in the name of Jesus Christ  
for the forgiveness  
of **your** sins;  
and **you** will receive the gift  
of the Holy Spirit.*

*For the promise is **for you**  
and **your** children  
and **for all** who are far off,  
as many as  
the Lord our God will call  
to Himself." (Acts 2:38–39)*

Jesus established the preaching office  
so you would know  
that He is for **you**.  
Faith comes from hearing—  
but as the Scripture says,  
*"how are they to hear  
without someone preaching?"* (Romans 10:14)  
My vocation,  
as you called  
and ordained pastor, is  
to proclaim  
that Christ's law  
and Gospel is  
for you.  
I am called to apply Christ  
to **you**.

Sometimes,  
it's easy to believe that the law  
is for someone else.  
Boy—does **Susie** need to hear this!  
Sometimes,  
it's easy to believe the Gospel  
is for someone else.  
Yes, certainly Susie can be forgiven.  
But I'm worse.  
How could **I** ever be forgiven?

But God is for **you**.

On Friday,

we buried Ardella Witte.  
For her funeral,  
we used her favourite verse:

*"For God so loved the world  
that He gave  
His only begotten Son,  
that whoever believes  
in Him  
should not perish  
but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)*

"The world" is billions of people.  
But you are not lost  
in the crowd of billions.  
God has sent you pastors  
to preach to you  
what John 3:16 means.

*"For God so loved [you]  
that He gave His only begotten Son,  
that [you, who believe]  
in Him  
should not perish  
but have everlasting life."*

The 'world' isn't a faceless crowd.  
The 'world' means no one is excluded.  
No one can be excluded.  
Therefore you must be  
and are included.  
God loves YOU.

As a called servant of Christ,  
I apply the promise  
to you personally.  
Through preaching,  
absolution,  
and the sacraments,  
Jesus applies God's love,  
forgiveness,  
and everlasting life  
to you.  
God loves you  
and knows your name.  
And He draws each of you,  
personally,  
individually,  
into His holy family.

O Lord, as we **hear** Your Word,  
**"Still surprise us with Your grace!**  
Make each day a new Emmaus;  
On our hearts Your image trace!"

### III. Jesus Surprises Us in the Breaking of the Bread

My friends,  
First,  
Jesus surprises His disciples  
in the Scriptures.  
Secondly,  
He surprises them  
in the preaching of the Word.  
And now,  
He surprises them  
in the **Breaking of the Bread.**

*"Now it came to pass,  
 as He sat at the table with them,  
 that He took bread,  
 blessed and broke it,  
 and gave it to them.  
 Then their eyes were opened  
 and they knew Him" (Luke 24:30–31a)*

Surprise, surprise!  
 Jesus is revealed  
 in the breaking of the bread.  
 They share a meal with Jesus,  
 and there He is!

You, too,  
 share a meal with Jesus.  
 Vanderhoof today—Zion next Sunday.  
 And Jesus certainly promised  
 to be there.  
*"This is My body. This is my blood."*  
 And lo and behold—  
 it is given to **you**.

In the Sacrament of the Altar,  
 Jesus has promised  
 to be there.  
 He has promised  
 to be there  
 in the bread  
 and wine.  
 There  
 with His very body  
 and blood  
 to surprise you  
 with His presence  
 and gifts.

Together—

**you** receive Christ.  
 Christ is given  
 to **you**.  
 And where Christ is,  
 forgiveness of sins,  
 life,  
 and salvation are there too.  
 And **you** receive it.  
 It is given **for you**.  
 To **you**.

And in this deeply personal meal—  
 where we receive Christ individually—  
 we are gathered together  
 into one corporate body.  
 Your personal faith  
 in Christ  
 is corporate.  
 Your personal relationship  
 with Christ  
 is a family relationship.

*"The cup of blessing that we bless,  
 is it not a participation  
 in the blood of Christ?  
 The bread that we break,  
 is it not a participation  
 in the body of Christ?  
 Because there is one bread,  
 we who are many are one body,  
 for we all partake  
 of the one bread." (1 Corinthians 10:16–17)*

And this one body is the body of Christ.

*"For where two or three are gathered  
in my name,*

*there am I among them,"* says our Lord. (Matthew 18:20)

Jesus continues

to surprise us

with His merciful presence.

O Lord, as we gather at Your table,

**"Still surprise us with Your grace!**

Make each day a new Emmaus;

On our hearts Your image trace!"

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My friends,

Jesus resurrection

from the dead

is surprising!

But Jesus doesn't stop there.

Jesus is constantly surprising us.

He keeps showing up

in the most surprising places!

And yet,

we shouldn't be shocked.

Jesus always shows up

where He has promised

to be.

He surprises us

**in the Scripture.**

He surprises us

**in the preaching of the Word.**

He surprises us

**in the Lord's Supper.**

And Jesus shows up with presents!  
Surprise, surprise!  
The Lord gives you forgiveness,  
life,  
salvation,  
and the family of God.

The disciples on the road  
to Emmaus  
thought they had met a stranger.

"Who are you? Our hearts are opened  
in the breaking of the bread—  
Christ the victim, now the victor  
Living, risen from the dead!  
Great companion on our journey,  
**Still surprise us with Your grace!**  
Make each day a new Emmaus;  
On our hearts Your image trace!"  
—*Who Are You Who Walk in Sorrow* (LSB 476)

*The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord, amen.*