

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTERTIDE (APRIL 18TH, 2021)

Readings: Acts 3: 13 – 19; Psalm 4:1,3,6,9; Luke 24: 35 – 48.

Each of the readings from Acts on the first three Sunday of Eastertide in Year B comes from a single narrative – Luke’s account of the healing of a disabled man and its consequences.

So I think it would be a good idea to read the whole of chapters 3 and 4: they are a striking example of Luke’s ability as a storyteller.

Chapter three begins with the account of Peter performing the first healing to be described in detail after the Day of Pentecost (3: 1 – 10). Then comes today’s reading – Peter’s preaching to the crowd (3: 11 – 26) – which is followed by the arrest of Peter and John and their examination by the Sanhedrin (4: 1 – 7). Next Sunday’s reading – Peter’s reply – follows (4: 8 – 12). Luke continues with the response of the authorities (4: 13 – 22), the prayer of the Church after the release of the apostles (4: 23 – 31) and the description of the common life of the faithful, which we heard last Sunday (4: 32 – 37).

Today’s reading is one of a number of speeches which, in different circumstances, set out the community’s faith in Jesus as the unique servant of God, through whom the salvation of the human race has been given. Taken together these speeches have been given the title ‘The Apostolic Preaching’, and they are the basis of the Church’s creeds.

From today’s reading we may take the following points: -

- Jesus is the *servant of God, the Holy One, the Just One*.
- The God of Jesus is *the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob* – that is the God of the Old Testament.
- He has revealed through the words of the prophets his purpose *that his Christ would suffer*.
- It was through their failure to understand God’s purpose that the people and their leaders brought about the death of the *originator / founder of life*.
- God overcame this action when he *raised from the dead and glorified his servant Jesus*.
- The apostles are the first *witnesses* to the death and resurrection of Jesus.
- The response to these acts of God must be a double turning (*repent and turn*) – from what is evil and towards what is good.