



“And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” St. Luke 24:27.

The Emmaus disciples did not recognize Jesus as He walked with them that first Easter Day. Later, after they invited Him to stay with them, He was at table and blessed the bread giving it to them. **“And their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him” St. Luke 24:31.** Jesus then vanished from their sight and they said to each other, **“Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us on the road, while He opened to us the Scriptures?” St. Luke 24:32.**

This is the reason God gives His Word to us, that we would know Him, who is our Savior, Jesus Christ, our Lord. We continue through the first half of the Church Year learning about the life and ministry of Jesus our Savior. Through this first half of the church year, we have the Scriptures opened to us, from the work of the Holy Spirit to reveal everything God does for us through Jesus for our salvation. We continue in the season of Easter celebrating the victory of Christ over sin, death and the power of the devil by His Triumphant Resurrection! Each Sunday of Easter recalls the Resurrection with emphasis on the mercy of Christ bringing Thomas from unbelief to belief, along with Christ our Good Shepherd who watches over us. Ascension Day falls within the Sixth and Seventh Sundays of Easter leading up to Pentecost: thus the 50 days of Easter are a continuous celebration of Christ's Resurrection while each Sunday of the entire year is a celebration of the Resurrection pointing to our forgiveness given from Christ our Savior.

The very center of Christianity is the death and Resurrection of Our Lord, Jesus Christ. The chief blessing given to us through Him is the forgiveness of sins which distinguishes Christianity from all other religions of the world because they teach salvation is made through doing good works, not upon Christ's work on the cross.

Like the Emmaus disciples, we would be in a state of bewilderment without God's Word given to deliver Jesus to us; to open our hearts and minds to the knowledge of Christ as our Savior. **“Faith comes from hearing and hearing through the message of Christ” Romans 10:17 teaches.** This is what God's Word, spoken by Christ Himself did for the Emmaus disciples who could not recognize Jesus on their own, but their eyes were opened by Him; the work of the Holy Spirit.

Easter is not just one particular Sunday in the year but the foundation of the Christian faith. God declares sinners righteous for the sake of Christ. Our sins have been charged to Christ the Savior and His righteousness is credited to us; we are justified before God through the work and merit of Christ. This is the most important teaching (doctrine) of scripture which separates the Christian faith from the false religions of the world that teach human efforts save. The teaching of justification by faith, given by grace, gives enduring comfort to the penitent sinner as Jesus said, **“Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven” St. Matthew 9:2.** Therefore, each Sunday through the entire Church Year is the bold proclamation of Christ's victory over death giving the sure and certain hope of everlasting life with Him.

When we are in doubt and our sins trouble our conscience, we can rely on the central teaching of God's Word; that we are saved by faith in Christ alone. This is the reason The Resurrection of Our Lord gives such great comfort, for we can be sure of God's forgiveness given through Christ's death and Resurrection. Jesus stated on the cross that the work of Redemption was completed by Him, then the Resurrection on that First Day of the week is the Father's acceptance of the sacrifice of Christ for our sin. Jesus shed His precious blood for our forgiveness, which means there is nothing left for us to do or add giving even more comfort to us who sorrow over sin because everything is done in Christ: **“The blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin” 1 John 1:7b.** Paul also states in **Ephesians 1:7 “In Him (Christ) we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.”** These passages of Scripture and many more teach the Easter message of forgiveness in Christ's work on His cross and from the empty tomb give assurance that Christ's death and Resurrection is our death and resurrection; the promises of God given in **Christ, who is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

Our faith is given by grace to us and then relies on God's Word keeping our faith secure in Christ as the hymn writer illustrates:

**I know my faith is founded
And this my faith confessing,
Man's reason cannot fathom
Who trusts her subtle wisdom
God's Word is all sufficient,
And trusting in its wisdom,**

**On Jesus Christ, my God and Lord
Unmoved I stand upon His Word.
The truth of God profound;
Relies on shifting ground.
It makes divinely sure,
My faith shall rest secure.**

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