

Zion Lutheran Church Worship Service: April 29, 2020

In Christ Alone

**In Christ alone, my hope is found,
He is my light, my strength, my song;
This Cornerstone, this solid Ground,
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease.
My Comforter, my All in All,
Here in the love of Christ I stand.**

**In Christ alone, who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless babe!
This gift of love and righteousness,
Scorned by the ones He came to save.
Till on that cross as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied.
For every sin on Him was laid,
Here in the death of Christ I live**

**There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world by darkness slain;
Then bursting forth in glorious Day,
Up from the grave He rose again.
And as He stands in victory,
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me;
For I am His and He is mine,
Bought with the precious blood of Christ.**

**No guilt in life, no fear in death,
This is the power of Christ in me.
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man
Can ever pluck me from His hand;
Till He returns or calls me home,
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand.**

CCLI Song # 3350395

Keith Getty | Stuart Townend

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INVOCATION

PASTOR: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

ALL: Amen.

PRAYER

PASTOR: O God, whose blessed Son made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread: Open the eyes of our faith, that we may behold him in all his redeeming work; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

CONFESSION OF SINS

PASTOR: Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God our Father, beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

Confess with me:

ALL: O almighty God, merciful Father, I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment.

But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.

PASTOR: Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

ALL: Amen.

INTROIT: *Psalm 66:1-3*

Shout joyfully to God, all the earth, alleluia;
sing a psalm to his name, alleluia;
praise him with magnificence, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.
Say to God: "How awesome are your deeds, O Lord!
In the greatness of your power,
your enemies will be convicted of lying to you".

FIRST LESSON: *Acts 2:14, 26-34*

But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words.

Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified." Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you 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 for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

SECOND LESSON: *1 Peter 1:17-25*

"And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; for "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever." And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

HOLY GOSPEL: *Luke 24:13-35*

"That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." And he 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, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

APOSTLE'S CREED (spoken in unison)

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Turn Your Eyes

**Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace.**

**Turn your eyes to the hillside
Where justice and mercy embrace;
There the Son of God gave His life for us
And our measureless debt was erased.**

**Jesus, to You we lift our eyes.
Jesus, our glory and our prize.
We adore You, behold You, our Savior ever true;
Oh Jesus, we turn our eyes to You.**

**Turn your eyes to the morning
And see Christ the lion awake.
What a glorious dawn, fear of death is gone,
For we carry His life in our veins.**

**Jesus, to You we lift our eyes.
Jesus, our glory and our prize.
We adore You, behold You, our Savior ever true;
Oh Jesus, we turn our eyes to You.**

**Turn your eyes to the heavens,
Our King will return for His own;
Every knee will bow, every tongue will shout:
All glory to Jesus alone.**

**Jesus, to You we lift our eyes.
Jesus, our glory and our prize.
We adore You, behold You, our Savior ever true;
Oh Jesus, we turn our eyes to You.
Oh Jesus, we turn our eyes to You.**

CCLI Song # 7120053

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SERMON: *Walking with the Risen Christ*

It was evening on the first day of the week when two disciples of Jesus were walking the seven miles back to their home town of Emmaus. While they were walking, Jesus joined them but they did not recognize Him. Maybe they were too preoccupied, with their shattered dreams, to recognize Him. The last time they had seen Him was when His lifeless body was being taken down from the cross. As Jesus joined them, He asked, "You seem to be in a deep conversation about something; what are you concerned about?" They stopped walking and one of them replied, "Haven't you heard, you must be the only one who hasn't heard what just happened in Jerusalem." "What things?" Jesus asked. The two disciples had possessed great hopes that Jesus was their long-expected Messiah. "We had thought he was the Messiah," they said, "But he was arrested and crucified. This is now the third day. His body is missing, but no one knows where the body went."

The two disciples had all the pieces, but could not put the puzzle together.

- they knew Jesus was a prophet, powerful in word and deed.
- they knew Jesus had been handed over, sentenced to death, and crucified.
- they knew that it was now the third day since all this had happened.
- they knew of the women's amazement, saying Jesus' tomb was empty and that angels had said that He was alive.
- they knew that some of their friends who went to the tomb, also found it empty, but they did not see Jesus.
- they knew that they had hoped he was the Redeemer of Israel.

When they put the pieces together, they made a dismal and gloomy picture. Their hopes were ruined. They thought their dreams had died.

But they were missing the bigger picture! The stranger (really Jesus) said to them, **“How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!”** The truth of the matter is, on our own, we are all spiritually blind and dead. Our sin separates us from God. We have become strangers to him. None of us, by our own ability, can believe what the prophets have spoken!

Some today are still living as if the Body of Jesus is still missing. They are living as if that were the end of the story. Jesus was born, arrested, crucified, died and was buried. Period. Finished. End of story.

These two followers of Jesus saw the end of all their hopes and dreams. But the Biblical account does not end with verse 24. It goes on to give us the rest of the story.

“And he 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 & all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.”

Wouldn't you have wanted to have been on that walk to Emmaus with Jesus? Imagine Jesus leading you in Bible study. He taught them the prophecy that the Messiah would **“suffer all these things before entering his time of glory.”** He quoted Moses and the prophets explaining the Scripture to them, explaining what all said about himself.

“So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, but they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.” So he went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. Their eyes were opened & they recognized him. He vanished from their sight. They said to each other, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?”

Whenever there is a recognition of love, there is joy. Cleopas and his companion made a marvelous discovery that evening. They recognized the risen Lord. They recognized that He was with them. And this recognition brought joy to their lives. When we reach the point where we recognize God's love for us in Jesus Christ, we, too, are filled with an inner sense of happiness and peace.

Have you had some of your dreams shattered? Things you had hoped for that did not materialize? Have a little talk with Jesus. Ask Jesus to sit down with you and have a Bible study. Search the Scriptures until you find God's answer. Your heart will be strangely warmed. The poet William Blake wrote,

Unless the eye catch fire God will not be seen.

Unless the ear catch fire God will not be heard.

Unless the tongue catch fire God will not be named.

Unless the heart catch fire God will not be loved.

Unless the mind catch fire God will not be known.

The disciples reflected on their walk with Jesus, "**Didn't our hearts feel strangely warm as he talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?**" The two disciples recognized Jesus and had a complete turnaround in their attitude and outlook. THEIR HEARTS CAUGHT ON FIRE. They burned within them. They ran the seven miles back to Jerusalem. They had smiles on their faces and new energy in their steps.

Their gloom was transformed into excitement and joy. The resurrection of Jesus announces that where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. Easter announces that righteousness, decency and kindness are stronger than sin, human corruption and violence. The tomb is not only empty, but Jesus is alive.

As you walk the road of this life Jesus will join you and walk by your side. He has promised to never leave you nor forsake you.

We are not asked to believe the doctrine of the Resurrection. We are asked to meet this person raised from the dead.

John Wesley was an ordained clergyman in the Church of England. He tried many ways to find peace with God. He tried the way of reason, but after two years of studying various philosophies he did not find his answer. He then studied the writings of the mystics and pored over classic literature. He sought peace with God through religious exercise. He fasted three times a week and prayed two hours every morning, but did not find inner peace.

Then on May 24, 1738 he wrote in his journal. "In the evening, I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, when the teacher was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

At the end of John Wesley's life in 1791 there were 130,000 Methodists in England and a million Methodists in America. John Wesley was brought to faith by personally encountering Christ. And that is the work of the Spirit of God. Without the Holy Spirit, we are unable to receive input from God.

St. Paul wrote in I Corinthians 2:14, "**The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.**"

Those two Emmaus disciples were touched by God's Spirit. Jesus opened them up to the Scriptures.

- He began with Moses and all the Prophets.
- He explained what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.
- Afterwards they would say, "Were not our hearts burning within us?"

Jesus opened their eyes. When Jesus put the pieces together for them, they finally saw the "Big Picture." We all need our eyes opened to Jesus on a regular basis, just as those early disciples did.

In one church, there is a sign that is taped on the inside of the pulpit. It is in a place where only the Pastor can see it. It quoted the words of John 12:21, "**Sir, we would like to see Jesus!**" That's the work of those of us who know Jesus. To help other people see Him as well. The miracle of God is that Jesus is still revealed to the eyes of faith wherever & when-ever the Gospel is proclaimed. Jesus is no longer a stranger. He is a friend. He is our friend.

Jesus is a stranger to many people in the world today. But he is a stranger who wants to be a friend to them, too. In a way, to the unbelieving world, we who follow Christ are also like strangers!

It says in 1 Peter 1:17 and following, "...**live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.**"

We are different from the people of the world. We might look the same, but our words, actions, priorities, and attitudes give us away. Why do we stand out? Life without Christ is empty. Life with Christ has given us new meaning. It has given us a life of hope. It is a life lived knowing that he loves us and is with us every step of the way of life's journey, whether we see him or not!

As we rub shoulders with others along the way, the Holy Spirit still works through the Word of God to help them put the pieces together.

We live in difficult times – the Bible calls them the Last Times. While these are trying times, we have one important thing going for us: Jesus, chosen before the creation of the world to be our Redeemer, has now been revealed for our sakes. He has given us His Spirit who opens the Scriptures for us, who opens our eyes to see Jesus so that our "faith and hope are in God!" We recognize His voice as He speaks to us in His Word. We also recognize Him in the breaking of the bread whenever we celebrate His Supper.

Jesus was willing to stay with the Emmaus disciples. Through Baptism, He also willingly abides in us! Today we will go on our way as strangers in the world with heaven as our home. Our humble prayer is that others who do not yet see the "Big Picture" of who Jesus is and what He has done for us – those lost in the blindness of despair, emptiness and hopelessness – may more and more be able to recognize Him, our risen and victorious Savior, in us – in what we say and do. Amen!

Just As I Am

**Just as I am without one plea
But that Thy blood was shed for me
And that Thou biddest me come to Thee
O Lamb of God, I come, I come**

**Just as I am and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot
To Thee whose blood can cleanse each spot
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.**

**Just as I am poor, wretched, blind
Sight, riches, healing of the mind
Yea, all I need in Thee to find
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.**

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

PASTOR: You have heard our pleas for mercy, O Lord, and given up Your Son to be our Savior. Hear us now as we come to You on behalf of ourselves and all people according to their needs.

Our hearts have burned in us, O Lord, as Your Word has been read and preached. Keep our faith from growing cold and grant us grace, that we may not waver in faith or succumb to temptation. Give to us and to our children receptive hearts, that we may hear and, hearing, believe and, believing, be steadfast in this faith and hope all our days. Lord, in Your mercy,

ALL: hear our prayer.

PASTOR: You have cleansed us, O Lord, with water and the Word in Baptism, and You have marked us as Your own people. Give to us grace, that we may live out this faith in holy lives, lifting up Your name in word and works for as long as we live. Guide us, that with souls purified by obedience to the truth, we may love one another earnestly from a pure heart. Lord, in Your mercy,

ALL: hear our prayer.

PASTOR: Bless Your Church, O Lord, that she may welcome the stranger in Christ's name and manifest the unity of the faith in the bonds of love. Gather together those who are separated, and preserve their faith by Your Word until all precautions and shelter measures have passed. Lord, in Your mercy,

ALL: hear our prayer.

PASTOR: Guard our nation, O Lord, that we may enjoy peace and security in the face of threat and danger. Bless our president; the Congress of the United States; our Governor; and all state and local officials, that they may fulfill their offices faithfully. Bless all emergency and medical workers and the members of the armed forces who protect us, and teach the nations the ways of peace. Lord, in Your mercy,

ALL: hear our prayer.

PASTOR: Deliver us from all our afflictions, and grant us strength to bear all our burdens, O Lord. Hear us in particular for _____ and those whom we name in our hearts. According to Your gracious will, heal the sick, relieve those who suffer, comfort the grieving and give peace to the dying. Lord, in Your mercy,

ALL: hear our prayer.

PASTOR: Stay with us, O Lord, and be our strength in weakness and our hope in time of despair. Your gracious will once kept the saints in faith even unto death. Keep us, we pray, with them in Your faith and fear, that we may be found faithful when Christ comes again in His glory to bring to fulfillment all things, once and forevermore. Lord, in Your mercy,

ALL: hear our prayer.

PASTOR: These and whatever other things we need, O Lord, we pray You to grant us in the name of and for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose death has made full atonement for our sin and whose resurrection has granted to us the promise of our own joyful resurrection to eternal life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, we pray.

ALL: Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER (spoken in unison)

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven' give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

BENEDICTION

PASTOR: May the Lord bless you and keep you, may He lift up His countenance upon you, and grant you peace.

ALL: Amen!

In the Garden

**I come to the garden alone,
While the dew is still on the roses,
And the voice I hear falling on my ear,
The Son of God discloses.**

**And He walks with me, and He talks with me;
And He tells me I am His own;
And the joy we share as we tarry there,
None other has ever known.**

**He speaks and the sound of His voice,
Is so sweet the birds hush their singing,
And the melody that He gave to me,
Within my heart is ringing.**

**And He walks with me, and He talks with me;
And He tells me I am His own;
And the joy we share as we tarry there,
None other has ever known.**

**I'd stay in the garden with Him,
Tho' the night around me be falling,
But He bids me go thro' the voice of woe,
His voice to me is calling.**

**And He walks with me, and He talks with me;
And He tells me I am His own;
And the joy we share as we tarry there,
None other has ever known.**