

In Jesus' crucifixion, God takes upon himself the evil, and pain, and brokenness of the world. Only the crucifixion of Jesus is able to absorb evil, death and revenge. The old order of endless cycles of greed, one-upmanship, vengeance, rivalry, and death are disarmed and defeated on the cross. And with resurrection comes a new era. Death no longer has the final word. Love, peace, compassion, selflessness, justice, hope are all released through the Spirit filled presence of Jesus in a people who are born again. Forgiveness, the kind that stops evil in its tracks, is the new order of the day. With the resurrection of Jesus, the New Creation has begun.

And together as his followers we tangibly display that new life to others.

PRAY: Praise God for putting to death the old order of sin, and raising to life the new order of the Spirit. Pray that more of this new life will flow through you!

FRIDAY MAY 13

Read: Luke 24: 48-49

Some time in the first century, about a 100 or so years after the resurrection of Christ, we read in an early Christian document, known as the Epistle to Diognetus, how Christians are like and different from others. It is a wonderful testimony to the kind of witnesses we are called to be.

The difference between Christians and the rest of mankind is not a matter of nationality, or language, or customs. Christians do not live in separate cities of their own, speak any special dialect, not practice any eccentric way of life. ... They pass their lives in whatever township—Greek or foreign—each man's lot has determined; and conform to ordinary local usage in their clothing, diet, and other habits. Nevertheless, the organization of their community does exhibit some features that are remarkable, and even surprising. For instance, though they are residents at home in their own countries, their behavior there is more like transients. ... Though destiny has placed them here in the flesh, they do not live after the flesh; their days are passed on earth, but their citizenship is above in the heavens. They obey the prescribed laws, but in their own private lives they transcend the laws. They show love to all men—and all men persecute them. They are misunderstood, and condemned; yet by suffering death they are quickened into life. They are poor, yet making many rich; lacking all things, yet having all things in abundance. ... They repay [curses] with blessings, and abuse with courtesy. For the good they do, they suffer stripes as evildoers."

PRAY: Pray that increasingly the church will give this kind of witness.

SATURDAY MAY 14

Consider coming to morning prayer today at 6:00AM

WEEKLY DEVOTIONS GUIDE

MAY 8-14, 2011

BY: PASTOR ANDREW BEUNK

NEW WEST CRC

SERIES: "A TANGIBLE DISPLAY PEOPLE: JOURNEY WITH JESUS IN LUKE"

SERMON: "PEACE PROCLAIMERS, emPOWERED"

LUKE 24: 36-49

PASTOR ANDREW BEUNK

SUNDAY MAY 8

KEY THEME OR TAKE-AWAY:

MONDAY MAY 9

Read: Isaiah 65: 17-25; Luke 24: 36

One of the very first words that Jesus utters after his resurrection is “peace.” In Hebrew it is *shalom*—a full orb ed peace that the prophets of the OT wrote about many times.

Cornelius Plantinga in his book *Not the Way Its Supposed to Be*, writes, “[the prophets] dreamed of a new age in which human crookedness would be straightened out, rough places made plain. The foolish would be made wise, and the wise, humble. They dreamed of a time when the deserts would flower, the mountains would run with wine, weeping would cease, and people could go to sleep without weapons on their laps. People would work in peace and work to fruitful effect. Lambs could lie down with lions. All nature would be fruitful, benign, and filled with wonder upon wonder; all humans would be knit together in brotherhood and sisterhood; and all nature and all humans would look to God, walk with God, lean toward God, and delight in God.”

That is the prophets’ picture of “peace.” And the Great Prophet, having been raised from the dead, inaugurates the advent of a new age, the age of *Shalom*. Because sin, death and hell have been defeated, although not with finality, the age of Peace has been opened up. A new morning has dawned. It’s a new day!

PRAY: Praise be to the Father for sending the Prince of Peace. Pray that shalom would fill your heart, your family, your church, your community, and the world.

TUESDAY MAY 10

Read: Luke 24: 36-43; 1 Corinthians 15: 35-44

In this letter of Paul where he insists that the Christian message is established upon the bodily resurrection of Jesus from the dead, we read about the resurrection body. Limited by words and language, Paul tries to describe the reality of the new bodies that believers will receive on the day of the Great Resurrection that will surely come when Christ returns. And the appearance of Jesus, as described in Luke, is the first fruits of that resurrection.

Luke insists that Jesus arose not as a ghost, or an apparition, or a phantom, but as a real, living, flesh and blood, food-digesting person. And once the disciples got past the shock and disbelief, they recognized him. They recognized that the one with them was Jesus, raised from the dead.

A question that I’m periodically asked is this, “do you think we will be able to recognize and know our loved ones when we are in heaven?” Some believe the answer is no because seeing or not seeing those we knew on earth would bring memories of pain and sadness, and there can be no tears in heaven. I don’t think that’s right. I believe Paul is describing

theologically, what Luke describes physically. If we are wondering about the bodies we will have when we physically rise from the dead and are with Christ in eternity on the renewed earth, why not look to Jesus’ body when he arose? And if his loved ones could recognize him, will not that be true of us? I think so. On the new earth I eagerly anticipate seeing Jesus, and Moses, and Mother Theresa, and my father, my Opa and Oma, and all those who have gone before. That, for the believer, is a most blessed hope indeed.

PRAY: Thank the Father that because Jesus rose bodily from the dead, we too shall rise with a resurrection body. And take comfort and joy in knowing that we will be reunited with those who have gone before.

WEDNESDAY MAY 11

Read: Luke 1: 19-20; 24: 44

The first and last chapter of Luke have numerous parallels. Both contain the posture of prayer/worship; Zechariah and the people praying in ch.1, the disciples worshiping/praying in ch.24:52-53. Both contain a miraculous appearance; Gabriel in ch.1, Jesus in ch.24. Also, the events in each chapter take place in Jerusalem, and more specifically at the temple. Moreover, each chapter describes the promise of, or the reality of, *fulfilment*.

In ch.1 Gabriel announces the birth of John the Baptist and in v.20 says that words of that promise will “come true” or more literally, “be fulfilled” in their proper time. And in ch.24 Jesus says, “everything must be fulfilled.” Actually, the theme of fulfilment is an important theme in Luke. Jesus shows his disciples how the whole OT, the Law (first 5 books of OT), the Prophets (all prophets, former and latter, major and minor), and the Writings (the word Psalms denotes the whole; the book of Psalms and all the Wisdom books), all point to the events of Jesus’ life and ministry, the cross and resurrection, and the outpouring of the Spirit on the church.

The entire OT, a collection of stories, poems, and writings that span more than 1500 years all have as their common thread, the goal and climax of Jesus. Jesus is foreshadowed, promised, predicted, depicted, and anticipated in and through the whole OT story.

Only a Master Planner, Sovereign over history, yet One who works intimately through history, could accomplish this magnificent historical event.

PRAY: Praise God for the fulfillment of centuries of history and promises, and stories in the person of Jesus!

THURSDAY MAY 12

Read: Luke 24: 45-47

At the centre of human history lies the world changing event of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. The whole OT points to this event, the whole NT flows out of this event.