

EVERY DAY WITH JESUS (November 23-29)

Savor a segment of the gospel each day so that you may...

“...grow in the grace and knowledge of our LORD and Savior Jesus Christ.” “II Peter 3:18)

November 23, Luke 23:50-56 The Hebrew verb ‘shabath’ means to rest. Let’s consider that as we consider Jesus’ life. For thirty-three years he dedicated every second and aspect of his life to worship God the Father perfectly. Then as our great high Priest he sacrificed himself once for all, the perfect sacrifice for sins that alone removes sins (Heb. 10). When Jesus had finished his great work of redemption, he said, “It is finished” and “Father into your hands I commit my spirit,” and then he rested. List various ways that his completed work rest gives us rest.¹

Prayer: Lord Jesus, by your rest you have earned us rest. Thank you for in you it is the case of “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on. . . that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them.” (Rev. 14:13) Amen.

¹ In Jesus we rest from trying to please God, from trying to earn salvation, and from trying to make up for our sins. We have the rest that comes with sins forgiven so we are at peace with God. We have the peace of the sure hope that comes with knowing “It is finished” and that we shall not die, but only sleep, to be awakened by our Savior. Rest also comes from the sure knowledge that heaven is ours.

November 24, Luke 24:1-12 “Grave, where is your victory?” the prophet Hosea asked (13:14) and Paul repeated that question in I Cor. 15. The graves of millions of people are seen by us throughout our lives. Death seems unconquerable. But it is conquerable. Speaking of God Isaiah said, “He will swallow up death” (25:7, 8) and Paul, again in I Cor. 15, said, “Death is swallowed up in victory.” Jesus by his resurrection has conquered death and it the Victor. Consider what it would mean if Jesus had not risen from the dead.¹ Sadly, too many in the world think that talk of Jesus’ resurrection is ‘an idle tale’. But interestingly the same people seriously will discuss the possibility of reincarnation. Puzzling, isn’t it? Let’s not follow them, but with Peter, go to the tomb and marvel at what had happened and what it means for us.

Prayer: Jesus, you are the Resurrection and the Life. This is no myth. Because of you we have hope when we stand at the grave of those who have fallen asleep in you, and as we face our own death. Because of your death for us is but a door to eternal life with you. For this we thank and praise you. For this we live for you alone. Amen.

¹We would have no forgiveness of sins so no acceptance with God the Father. There would be no ‘mansions’ waiting for us. Jesus could not keep his promise to come back and take us home. There is no rest from their labors for the dead in Christ. No wonder Paul says, if Jesus had not risen, believers in him would be the most pitiable of all people.

November 25, Luke 24:13-27 Emmaus part a: Often in the face of death we want to be with someone just to have company, talk, let out our emotions, try to make sense of it all. Two disciples were taking a walk to Emmaus talking about Jesus’ death, and also the latest twist to his death. Why is their conversation so wondrous when we consider and compare it to our conversations with other believers?¹ Note that Jesus entered into the heart and substance of that conversation, not just to talk, but on the basis of Scripture to edify. Why is Scripture so important?²

Prayer: Lord, grant that our fellowship with other believers consists in substance and not fluff that the wind blows away. Let psalms, hymns, spiritual songs fill and lift up our hearts and those of others. Let your Word be that which fills our minds and mouths, so we and others are drawn closer to you and built up by you. Amen.

¹Instead of the small talk we often engage in (sports, fashion, politics, weather, latest breaking news, entertainment, etc.), they spoke to each other and others about matters of substance, concerning their faith, Scripture, the person of Jesus, what happened to him, and what all this of the past days meant. As one preacher says, that is what Christian Fellowship is really about – its heart and substance is Christ.

²Much of talk is based on opinions and collective ignorance. Jesus spoke on the basis of Scripture, the only thing in this world one can really take a stand on, that alone is true, that alone is authoritative. And on that foundation he taught. So can and should we.

November 26, Thanksgiving Day, Luke 24:28-35, Emmaus, part b: The day for the Emmaus disciples was one of confusion. Surely the events and sorrow of Good Friday still lingered in them. But they showed a ‘stranger’ hospitality, a stranger whose conversation about Scripture made their hearts burn within them. That night, gathered around a humble table and a loaf of bread the stranger took the initiative and gave appropriate thanks – perhaps something like the ancient Hebrew prayer, “Blessed are you, LORD, our God, King of the universe, for the fruits of the earth. Amen.” Then he broke the bread. . . . In that moment the blinders were removed and the disciples recognized the one they had been talking about and who had just given them the best Bible lesson ever. The Risen One likewise has come to you and me, and by him we have life. In light of that, have a blessed and joyous Thanksgiving Day!

Prayer: Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his mercy endures forever. Amen.

November 27, Luke 24:36-43 Easter evening, part a: In the room where the disciples gathered in Jerusalem that first Easter evening, there were confusion, mixed messages, emotions wound tight. Now two disciples returned from Emmaus saying, “It’s true, he’s risen.” Imagine the scene in your own mind. Imagine yourself in that scene! There is no real wonder why they were frightened when they saw Jesus. But there he is saying, in essence, “Here I am.” But more than that, he spoke of peace. What peace did he offer them and you and me?¹

Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for the peace your resurrection and presence ever give me. May I be a messenger of that peace to all around me. Amen.

¹He is the Christ, as his resurrection shows; the Second person of the Trinity is for and with us; we are forgiven; by faith we are his brothers and sisters, children of the heavenly Father; we too will rise with him.

November 28, Luke 24: 44-49 Easter evening, part b: While the books are in a different order and at times different classifications¹, “The law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms” that Jesus spoke about comprise the Old Testament books as we know them. By his speaking of these books and teaching from them Jesus places his stamp of approval and authority on them. By faith we have been “witnesses of these things” just as much as the disciples were. How are we doing in our testimony?² Why, perhaps, is our witness weak?³

Prayer: Blessed Lord, you have caused all Holy Scripture to be written for our learning. Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of your holy Word, we may embrace, hold fast and share the blessed hope of everlasting life which you have given us in Jesus Christ. Amen. (TLH, p. 14)

¹ The Hebrew order is: *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy* (“The Law of Moses”); *Joshua, Judges, Samuel* (1 and 2), *Kings* (1 and 2), *Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi* (“The Prophets”). And *Psalms, Job, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles* (1 and 2) (“Psalms”). [Note: *Samuel, Kings* and *Chronicles* each form a single book (scroll) in Hebrew. When translated into Greek their scrolls would have been unreasonably long, so each of these books was divided to form two books each as we know them.]. ²Answers will vary. ³When we fail to be in Scripture to see, experience, know and learn from the One of whom it testifies, we really can’t know him well, therefore we can’t testify about him well either.

November 29, Advent 1, Luke 24:50-53 (read also Acts 1:1-11) “He ascended into heaven” To some this means that Jesus is no longer with us as the God/man, but only as God. But the God/man said, “I am with you always.” From the moment of his conception Jesus will never cease to be both God and man wherever he is. He is in heaven, but he is also with us. What comfort is this to us?¹ What comfort is his ascension to us?²

Prayer: Ascended Lord, ever bless your people with the joy, comfort and strength that only your presence and your peace can give. And on this first Sunday in Advent, we ask you to return soon to judge the living and the dead and take us home. Amen.

¹ He has not left us as orphans, but promised to be with us always, gave us his Spirit, also he and the Father and the Spirit indwell us. ² He still and always rules all things for the benefit of his Church; all is in his control.