

SOME WORDS

ON THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER, YEAR B

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O God. In the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Have you ever puzzled over something, only to discover the answer is very simple, and nowhere close to your conjectures? Or suddenly found, in a life-changing revelation, that what you thought about something all through your years was actually very misguided? I have! As I considered our Gospel lesson for this morning, and the events leading up to it in Jesus' life, it became very apparent that Jesus had encountered a lot of people like me.

Consider how many times in our gospel stories that we have seen Jesus restating the religion of his day in ways which had not been apparent to both his followers and the religious authorities he encountered. His mind-opening way of love and reconciliation was a threat to many, who had a different way of understanding the same scriptures.

Something I saw posted the other day caught my attention. It portrayed Jesus saying, “**You** use the scriptures to understand love. **I** use love to understand the scriptures.”

God's love is apparent throughout the scriptures, the great constant theme. “See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called the children of God; and that **is** what we are.”

However, we children of God **can** make wrong choices (which we call sin) and the effects of those wrong choices tend to work out through time, even when we turn away from them, repenting, yet God's constant love remains, and God is still our father.

That **cycle** of constantly turning and **returning** to love and away from the unloving, hurtful choices is fidelity; faith. So often we confuse **faith** with **belief** ...yet **true faith is belief in action**. Faith is an action word. Therefore, for **each** of us who follow Jesus on this path of God's love, it is worthwhile to consider what opening the **eyes of our own faith** might comprise.

That phrase in our Collect this morning, "Open the eyes of our faith..." brings to mind our hymn, *Torah Song*: Open your ears, o faithful people, open your ears and hear God's word: Open your hearts, o royal priesthood, God has come to you..."

As we continued our readings today, that word, "faith," came to my own listening ears in the miraculous story of recovery of the lame person; it was next held by the word, "repent;" and then in the Psalm, we heard "Know that the Lord does **wonders** for the faithful." Those "wonders" can also be called "miracles" – literally "something to wonder about." When we open our eyes, our ears, and our hearts, we will indeed discover many wonders.

Now, just before the story in our Gospel reading for today, several women heard the story of Jesus' resurrection from the two men at Jesus' tomb who told them Jesus was alive and would meet them in Galilee. They ran and told the disciples, but no one except Peter believed them. **He** ran to the tomb to see for

himself and “went home, amazed.” Later that day Clopas and another disciple were walking along to the village of Emmaus talking about all this, and “Jesus himself came up and walked by their side, though they did not recognize him until, supping with him, he took the bread and said the blessing, and ‘Then **their eyes were opened,**’” and he vanished from their sight, and they headed back to Jerusalem and told the rest.

And in today’s Gospel: ... While they were all talking about this, Jesus himself appeared in their midst and even then, they had difficulty in believing him. Then he asked for food and he ate some fish. And, having eaten, “**he opened their minds to understand the scriptures**” and gave them the mission to preach to **all nations**, repentance and forgiveness for wrong actions, beginning right where they were, in Jerusalem. After this, he told them to wait there in Jerusalem for the gift God would send them. **Finally**, he led them to the edge of Bethany, andbut that’s a story for another day.

If a person asks:

A private service for the reconciliation of a penitent may be found on page 447 of the Book of Common Prayer.