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| **The Lessons Appointed for Use on the** | http://www.lectionarypage.net/Art/Newshield.gif |
| Third Sunday of Easter |
| Year BRCL |

[Acts 3:12-19](http://www.lectionarypage.net/YearB_RCL/Easter/BEaster3_RCL.html#ot1)

[1 John 3:1-7](http://www.lectionarypage.net/YearB_RCL/Easter/BEaster3_RCL.html#nt1)

[Luke 24:36b-48](http://www.lectionarypage.net/YearB_RCL/Easter/BEaster3_RCL.html#gsp1)

[Psalm 4](http://www.lectionarypage.net/YearB_RCL/Easter/BEaster3_RCL.html#ps1)

**The Collect**

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 for ever.*Amen.*

**The First Lesson**

**Acts 3:12-19**

Peter addressed the people, “You Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk? The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him. But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you.

“And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer. Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out.”

**The Response**

**Psalm 4**

***Cum invocarem***

1 Answer me when I call, O God, defender of my cause; \*
you set me free when I am hard-pressed;
have mercy on me and hear my prayer.

2 "You mortals, how long will you dishonor my glory; \*
how long will you worship dumb idols
and run after false gods?"

3 Know that the Lord does wonders for the faithful; \*
when I call upon the Lord, he will hear me.

4 Tremble, then, and do not sin; \*
speak to your heart in silence upon your bed.

5 Offer the appointed sacrifices \*
and put your trust in the Lord.

6 Many are saying, "Oh, that we might see better times!" \*
Lift up the light of your countenance upon us, O Lord.

7 You have put gladness in my heart, \*
more than when grain and wine and oil increase.

8 I lie down in peace; at once I fall asleep; \*
for only you, Lord, make me dwell in safety.

**The Epistle**

**1 John 3:1-7**

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Everyone who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.

**The Gospel**

**Luke 24:36b-48**

Jesus himself stood among the disciples and said to them, “Peace be with you.” They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, “Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence.

Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

Fear is not the only sin there is, and some might say it isn’t really a sin. It’s true that fear is not something that is done. Some have asked ‘if it happens only in your head, does it count as sin?’ Some would answer “yes”, and some would say “no”. What I would say is that the fear factor is behind and causes so, so many of our actions, that it is hard to separate. Many, myself included, have characterized sin as anything that keeps you from God and if fear causes us to be away from God, then perhaps it is a sin. Today’s readings dance around fear or the lack of fear on many levels. Fear of the other keeps us from loving our neighbor. And in today’s readings, fear of God, can even keep us from God in Christ Jesus.

This week we hear another post-resurrection encounter, this time from the Gospel of Luke. Jesus is traveling around the region rather quickly and just appearing out of no where, zipping around wherever he pleases. There is a way Jesus has of re-introducing himself. He first brings an offering of peace. He tries to calm the disciples fears. He has them take stock of themselves. asking in effect, — what has you so wound up? It’s me.; it’s still me, it’s just me He shows his feet and hands to prove that (a). he is not a ghost and (b). that it is he— he has a body that is wounded (how we know it is he), and it is still his body. And then he does what he seems to do all the time in the Gospels, he eats with people. This is not a ghost. This is a human experience of the resurrected, holy one. And it is only after fear has left the disciples, or at least their fear is a lot less, that they can come to the point that Jesus can open up the scriptures and explain the scriptures to them.

One cannot learn when one is fearful. Even without any psychological training, we know that. We know witnesses are not very reliable when they are afraid. It’s like everything goes out the window in terms of making sense of the world if we are afraid. Jesus follows his dialing down the fear factor and says that “It is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.” Jesus must dispell their fear so that they may know God in Jesus; fear has to be dispelled so that you can witness, witness for Jesus.

We have a reading from Acts as an example of this. The proclamation of the healing works is made *after* the veil of fear is lifted. The acts of the apostles are not so much acts of apostles as acts of the Holy Spirit working through the apostles to be witnesses to the power of God. Peter’s answer to the questions from the crowd is to point out that it is not something that he has done that they should be frightened or worried about magic, but it is something so that God’s glory can then be revealed… and this can only happen once fear is lifted. It can’t happen if the disciples are still huddled in the upper room.

Psalm 4 shows us another way to be that is not fearful. Psalm 4 is one of the choices in our prayer book for compline service. It is one of the longer choices, so of course, it is not often picked. However, as we fall asleep, holding an assurance of God’s love for us and God’s protection is a peaceful place to be. The demand to know God, and landing peacefully asleep is truly living without fear.

From one bookend : Answer me when I call, O God, defender of my cause; \*
you set me free when I am hard-pressed;
have mercy on me and hear my prayer.

to the other: I lie down in peace; at once I fall asleep; \*
for only you, Lord, make me dwell in safety.

The first letter of John, although unnamed, still touches on how we act in the world, to God and to others on a backdrop of our relationship to fear. It is unnamed, but fear is still there as a driving force. . If we still hold, and I do, that many sins occur with fear as their fuel then being afraid of not having enough, that someone will take what is ours, that worshipping the world is easier that putting oneself on the line and worshipping God, then put this way,the phrase—“No one abides in him sins”… is kind of like ‘people who aren’t afraid and know that God has provided all don’t act out of fear and don’t hurt the other.’ If you are not afraid, then you can be in communion with God. It is as if you are a child, a child of God, if you are not afraid, you can be open to God’s love and open to share that with others without conditions.

But of course we do sin, and try as we may, we ARE afraid. God has a remedy for that too. If you confess your fear, the God who calmed the disciples can release you from fear too. You will be as a child who does not fear, a child of God.

The way to know God and our neighbor, to be children of God is to not fear.