

Notes on the readings for Easter 3

For the old Testament: Acts 3: 12-19

The reading from Acts this morning follows on from the healing of the crippled man by the Beautiful Gate of the Temple. The man had asked for alms and Peter, having no money, grasped him by the hand and told him to get up. He did and found he could walk, and followed Peter into the Temple leaping and dancing. This attracted a crowd, whom Peter addressed. He told them that God's power was at work, seen in the resurrection of Jesus, and now active through the Church. Peter refers to the founding fathers of their faith, blessed by God – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The same God who brought them out of Egypt was at work today for the salvation of his people through Jesus Christ whom they had crucified and whom God had raised from the dead in fulfilment of the scriptures. If they put their trust in Jesus, they would find forgiveness and hope and a renewed faith.

Epistle: 1 John 3: 1-7

Because of our faith in Jesus Christ, we have been brought into fellowship with God, the same fellowship God shares with Jesus. As God's children, we are not recognised as such by the world, because the world does not know Jesus. There will come a time when we shall see Jesus (v2). This must shape the way we behave day by day. Sadly, we are all too aware that we are not free of sin, and perhaps the meaning of this passage (v6), as S. Smalley suggests is "because we cannot avoid the fact of sin, we can avoid it practice." As John Proctor has said: "Sin may impose its company upon us, but it has no claim on our hospitality. It is a nuisance, but should not become a guest."

Gospel: Luke 24: 36b-48

The end of Luke's gospel tells what happened when the two whom Jesus met on the road to Emmaus returned to the upper room where the disciples were gathered – a group larger than just the twelve. And then Jesus is among them again and they are terrified. The truth of the resurrection had not yet sunk in. Jesus then invites them to touch him and see his wounds to prove that it really is he. Finally, he asks for a piece of fish, which he eats in front of them, driving home the fact of the resurrection. Then Jesus explains how the scriptures had foretold of his coming and that the Messiah had to suffer and rise on the third day. The assembled company were the witnesses to these things and had the responsibility of telling the news to the nations, preaching repentance and forgiveness in his name.