



All About Jesus

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A new religious leader, Gregory of Nazianzus, came to Constantinople in 379 A.D. to preach the Good News. He wrote in 381 A.D. about his Lord Jesus in a way that revealed his all-encompassing belief in the Savior while countering the pagan teachings.

**Jesus began his ministry by being hungry, yet He is the Bread of Life.
Jesus ended his earthly ministry by being thirsty,
Yet He is the Living Water.**

Jesus was weary, yet He is our rest.

Jesus paid tribute, yet He is the King.

Jesus was accused of having a demon, yet He cast out demons.

Jesus wept, yet He wipes away our tears.

Jesus was sold for thirty pieces of silver, yet He redeemed the world.

Jesus was brought as a Lamb to the slaughter,

Yet He is the Good Shepherd.

Jesus died, yet by His death He destroyed the power of death.

The confession of St. Gregory proclaims his relationship with Jesus in the words he spoke and the way in which he lived. His faith was all about Jesus.

Friends, when you and I accepted Jesus into our hearts, minds and souls, we committed to following him with our every step. Our lives have to be all about him and to remember what he did for us when he went to the cross, laid in the tomb, and rose from the grave. The relationship we have with him must be a life completely serving him.

The Lord is calling us to make him known throughout the world and in our relationships. We must see Jesus in every aspect of our lives regardless what we are going through today.

The gospel lesson from Luke is one where two disciples were so wrapped up in the emotions and distress about the death of Jesus that they failed to see him coming towards them on the road to Emmaus. Scripture says they were¹⁴...**talking with each other about all these things that had happened.** ¹⁵**While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them,** ¹⁶**but their eyes were kept from recognizing him.**

The Risen Lord broke in on their conversation, ¹⁷...**“What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?”** With sadness they stopped and stood there looking at this man. One of them said **“Are you the only**

stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?"

Jesus ¹⁹...asked them, **"What things?"** They began to retell all that had happened to Jesus when he was put to death and then his resurrection. There were the events of the women who went to the tomb where they found the stone rolled away and angels confirming that he was alive. The women then shared the news that he was resurrected and alive. The disciples remembered all the things that happened to the Lord. Yet, their minds were still trying to get their thoughts straight as they walked to Emmaus.

At that point in the conversation, Jesus confronted them because they were so blind to what the Lord said he would do to be the Savior of the world. They failed to see the acts of God in the resurrection of the Lord. ²⁵... **"Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! ²⁶was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?"** It was at this point in their conversation that he interpreted all that scripture revealed. Yet, they still did not see him because they were so wrapped up in themselves.

As the Lord prepared to leave, they asked him to stay with them because it was near evening. As they gathered around the table, Jesus ³⁰...**took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.** It was ³¹**then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight.**

The Lord then left their presence and they began to share the strong feelings that were stirring within them ³²...**"were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?"**

The thrilled disciples returned to Jerusalem to share with the others their experience. They said, ³⁴...**"The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!"** ³⁵**then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.**

The mere act of breaking the bread opened the disciples' minds and eyes to the glory of Christ. So moved were they that the passion of their hearts stirred them to believe in the Risen Lord. Friends, one just never knows when the Risen Lord makes himself known to us.

Karen and Michael were a young, loving couple who enjoyed life and traveled to many places. One could tell that their love for one another was full of joy. Their beautiful life was captured in the words from her obituary. "While working together Karen met the angel and love of her life, Michael Vincent Spencer of Phillipsburg, PA. Next to Jesus Christ, she considered this her biggest gift from God. A wonderful, patient and ever-loving husband, no one could ever ask for a better groom."

A few hours before she died, Karen, Michael, their families and I shared in the Lord's Supper. What you don't know is that she had an organ transplant a few years before and struggled with infection after infection as her body continued to fight its presence in her body. Throughout all the surgeries, hospitalizations, and rough times at home, he was there for her

After Karen's death, Michael became incapacitated with deep grief, depression and darkness. He and I would visit often as he shared his loneliness

and loss. He chose to remain apart from the church community and friends. As a congregation, we always invite him to events and dinners in our homes. Nothing seemed to work. He became more overwhelmed with depression.

Then two years later, I noticed one Sunday morning that Michael was a different person as he smiled and brightness returned to his eyes. He stayed back after worship to visit with me. And he began to share with me with tears in his eyes about an experience he had the day before.

Michael gave me permission to share his story. He said, "I was pretty lonely yesterday and my depression was gripping me with darkness. My grief was strangling me as I left the restaurant. As I walked to my car, a homeless man asked me for money. I gave him a few dollars to get rid of him. But he continued to follow me to the car. He was standing and watching me from the other side of the car as I unlocked the door. The man then said, 'Michael, everything is going to be alright.' I was surprised that this homeless man knew my name. And as I looked up, he was gone and was nowhere to be seen.

"It was at that moment that I felt the weight of darkness, depression and grief leave me. My life has been bright and full of life since that time. I believe that the homeless man was an angel or maybe Jesus.

"So Reverend Medina, who do you think that homeless man was? I said that I believe the Risen Lord came to you and set you free. Your eyes and heart saw him and gave you your life."

my dear brothers and sisters, like Peter in the passage from Acts we must continually witness to the Risen Lord in our lives. We just never know when he will reveal himself to us.

Everything about our lives must be more about Jesus.

Celtic spirituality has a way to expand our relationship with the Risen Lord by recognizing him in everything around us. The St. Patrick Breastplate Prayer gives us a greater belief in the all-encompassing Lord. The last part of this sermon is to be sung by Linda Freeman. So let this partial song be our prayer to close this sermon.

O Christ, surround me! O Christ, Surround me!

*A website to hear the song: <https://youtu.be/VBJDWsufLPg>

Christ with me, Christ before me,
Christ behind me, Christ in me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down,
Christ when I arise, Christ in the heart of every man
Who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks to me,
Christ in every eye that sees me, Christ in every ear
That hears me.

Amen.

Scriptural Support:

Luke 24:13-35 (NRSV)

¹³Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, ¹⁶but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷And he said to them, “What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?” They stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?” ¹⁹He asked them, “What things?” They replied, “The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. ²¹But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. ²²Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, ²³and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. ²⁴Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.”

²⁵Then he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! ²⁶Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?” ²⁷Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. ²⁸As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. ²⁹But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. ³²They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?” ³³That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together.

Acts 2:14a, 36-41 (NRSV)

¹⁴But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them,..³⁶Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

³⁷Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?” ³⁸Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.” ⁴⁰And he testified with many other arguments and

exhorted them, saying, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” ⁴¹So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added.