

# A LONGER LOOK AT THE LESSONS

## Study Guide and Leader Guide

for Pericopes as Listed in *Lutheran Service Book*

Series A

Lent 1–Easter 7

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# Lesson 7

## The Resurrection of Our Lord

### The Holy Gospel: Matthew 28:1–10

Matthew mentions only Mary Magdalene and “the other Mary”—wife of Clopas and sister of Mary the mother of Jesus—but there may have been others who witnessed the empty tomb.

108. Why was there the element of urgency in the women’s going out to the tomb?

109. What does it say about the Gospel records that only Matthew tells about the earthquake, the angel rolling the stone away and sitting on it, and the fearful guards?

The angel’s message is basically the same in all the Gospels. First there is his invitation to \_\_\_ and \_\_\_, and then there is the instruction to \_\_\_ and \_\_\_. Both Matthew and Mark add the promise of Jesus that they would \_\_\_ Him in \_\_\_. Also, Jesus had told them of that meeting with them even before His death (see Matthew 26:32).

As the women hurried away, suddenly Jesus appeared to them. His greeting was a common one, which they no doubt had heard many times from His lips. The New King James Version appropriately renders “Greetings!” as “Rejoice!” That is truly the byword and the result of Easter.

110. How did the women react to the presence of their risen Lord? What assurance and promise did Jesus give them once again?

111. What is the significance of Jesus’ referring now to His disciples as His brothers?

### The First Lesson: Acts 10:34–43

On this Easter Sunday and throughout the Sundays of Easter, the Old Testament Lessons will be replaced by readings from the Acts of the Apostles—telling of Jesus’ continuing ministry through those who were chosen to be eyewitnesses of His resurrection. Acts 10 is a breakthrough chapter in Acts. It tells of the Spirit leading Peter to awareness that Jesus is Savior and Lord not just of Jews but of all nations. Peter was given a vision that he could interpret in no other way (see Acts 10:9–23). Then Jesus immediately called Peter to a situation in which he had to apply the change of outlook the vision required. He was sent into the

home of Cornelius, a Roman centurion, to proclaim the Good News of Jesus to him and his family and friends. Peter stated his new conviction in the opening words of this First Lesson. Though the issue was not decided once for all by this vision from God, it was the first step that led to the Good News of Jesus being brought to the nations—our ancestors included.

“God shows no partiality” is an acceptable way of putting it, but the Greek really says, “God does not judge by appearance”—whether or not He likes “the looks” of a person. His judgment goes beyond outward appearance to the inner relationship of a person with Him—a new relationship that may be found, Peter said, “In every nation anyone.” Peter’s saying “who fears Him” goes beyond being afraid of God. In biblical usage, it means “revere,” “trust,” “obey.” “Does what is right” is a rather weak translation of words that literally mean “works righteousness.” It does not refer just to doing just a *few* right things but to the dedicated attitude and actions of a disciple who has caught his Master’s spirit and sincerely desires to be right with God in *all* of life.

Cornelius evidently was a “God-fearer,” a proselyte of the gate, a Gentile who had accepted the principles of Judaism and was known in Caesarea for his piety and generosity. He had been led by the Spirit to “work righteousness.” In bringing his message to Cornelius, Peter referred to the Good News of peace through Jesus Christ as “the word He sent to \_\_\_\_.” But in the same breath, he said that Jesus is \_\_\_\_.

Franzmann wrote in *The Word of the Lord Grows*, “The apostles are not religious geniuses, whose insights enrich and enlarge the accumulated religious stores of mankind. They are recipients of revelation, witnesses to a Person and an act in history. . . . They receive divine power for one purpose only, for witnessing” (pp. 7–8).

112. What was the report about Jesus that Peter presumed Cornelius and his friends had already heard? What additional Good News was Peter hurrying to tell about Jesus?

113. Why did Peter specify about himself and the other witnesses that they “ate and drank with [Jesus] after He rose from the dead”?

114. Why would Peter, in witnessing to Gentiles, point to Jesus as “the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead” instead of just calling Him “the Savior of all”?

With his “all the prophets bear witness,” Peter pointed Cornelius to the prophecies of the Messiah as *the* point of Old Testament Scriptures. And then he proclaimed that the result of the Messiah’s coming, His life, death, and resurrection, is that “everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name.” In Greek, the word order is “forgiveness of sins receives through His name everyone who believes in Him.” That sounds odd in English, but this word order in the Greek placed emphasis both on the object (forgiveness of sins) by putting it first, and on the subject (everyone who believes in Him) by putting it last.

115. How does this First Lesson tie in with the Holy Gospel for this Lord’s Day?

## The Epistle for the Day: Colossians 3:1–4

Easter is a celebration of the resurrection of Jesus—but this Epistle takes us a step further and invites us to see ourselves directly involved in that event and its results!

116. How is it that Paul could say to the Colossian Christians and to us, “You *have been* raised with Christ” (emphasis added)?

117. A resurrection is always preceded by a death, so Paul wrote, “For you have died.” When did death and resurrection take place in our lives? (See Romans 6:3–4.)

As is typical of Paul in his letters, he was moving from doctrinal instruction to its practical application to life. In describing what has happened and what fruit it is to bear in our actions, Paul moved from the indicative to the imperative.

118. What is to be the result of our having been raised with Christ? (See Romans 6:8–14.) What does “your life is hidden with Christ in God” say to you? What is the ultimate assurance that stimulates and enables us to set our hearts on things above?

119. How does our having already died and been raised with Christ influence the practice of Christian faith in our worship?

120. How does our having already died and been raised with Christ influence the way we live from day to day?

Religious people, even Christians, can become practical atheists when they get preoccupied with everyday busyness. It seems unrealistic to tell us not to set our minds “on things that are on earth” when our daily work has to occupy a lot of our thought and effort.

121. How can we work at bringing “things that are above” into the fabric of daily living?

# Lesson 7

## The Resurrection of Our Lord

*Almighty God the Father, through Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, You have overcome death and opened the gate of everlasting life to us. Grant that we, who celebrate with joy the day of our Lord's resurrection, may be raised from the death of sin by Your life-giving Spirit; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

### The Holy Gospel: Matthew 28:1–10

108. There was an element of urgency in the women's going out to the tomb because the local climate made bodies decompose rapidly, and Jesus had already been dead much longer than usual before such burial treatments occurred. The women wanted to finish their work before the heat of another day, and (their assumptions about) the condition of Jesus' body, made their work even more difficult.

109. The fact that the evangelists differed in details they included or omitted shows that they and their writings were basically independent from one another in recording their Gospel accounts. It was the Holy Spirit who led Matthew to include facts about the resurrection that the others did not include.

#### Fill-in Answers:

The angel's message is basically the same in all the Gospels. First there is his invitation to come and see, and then there is the instruction to go and tell. Both Matthew and Mark add the promise of Jesus that they would see Him in Galilee.

110. As the women hurried away from the tomb, we're told that they were afraid yet filled with joy. When Jesus Himself stood before them with His joyful greeting, they bowed low at His feet in worship. Their reaction was appropriate to their growing awareness that they were in the presence of the Son of God, the victor over death and hell.

Jesus again told them not to be afraid and instructed them again to go and tell His brothers to go to Galilee, where they would see Him. Jesus was aiming at that formal gathering with all His disciples in Galilee, where He would commission them to the mission to which He sends all His followers and assure them of His continuing presence with them. This did not preclude His revealing Himself to them in the Upper Room and in other circumstances immediately on Easter Sunday nor the appearances in the weeks that followed, but the Galilee experience would be especially filled with meaning for Him and for them.

111. Jesus called His disciples His brothers because the circumstances had changed. They were no longer disciples watching Him carry out His ministry. Now they were the ones He would count on as brothers and apostles involved in representing Him in bringing the Gospel to the world.

### The First Lesson: Acts 10:34–43

**Fill-in Answers:** The message was "the word He sent to Israel. In the same breath, Paul said that Jesus is "Lord of all."

112. Peter assumed that Cornelius had heard about Jesus' ministry of helping and healing in the power of the Spirit. News of His miracles went through the whole region. As a God-fearer in the synagogue at Caesarea, Cornelius would have heard it too. Peter was hurrying to tell about the resurrection of Jesus, the

focal point of apostolic proclamation. They called themselves witnesses of the resurrection. Jesus confronts us through their eyewitness reports and leads us to faith.

113. In a world influenced by Greek dualism, the idea of resurrection of the body was strange and difficult. That the apostles ate and drank with Jesus verified His bodily resurrection and gave added impact to their witness.

114. Peter did not overlook Jesus as Savior, but his preaching of Jesus as “judge of the living and the dead” emphasized Jesus’ deity and stressed His either/or nature and the need of all people, Jews and Gentiles, to be decisive about Him. Read Peter’s words aloud as they are structured in the Greek and place the emphasis on “forgiveness of sins” and on “everyone who believes” so you get a feel for the Greek’s way of emphasizing them.

115. The resurrection of Jesus proclaimed His victory over death—a victory that is ours through faith in Him. It is the heart of our faith and of our proclamation.

### **The Epistle for the Day: Colossians 3:1–4**

116. Paul’s words emphasize that Jesus was representative man. He lived for all mankind; He died for all mankind; He rose again in victory for all mankind. By faith we identify with Him and are united with Him. His life is our life of righteousness; His death is our death to sin and hell; His rising is our rising to new life.

117. In Romans, Paul clearly associated our dying and rising with Christ to our being baptized in His name. That’s when God identified us with all that His Son came to do on our behalf. Our Baptism ties us to Jesus’ accomplished salvation.

118. The result of our having been raised with Christ is that we set our minds on things above. “Set your mind” is a good translation of *zeteite*, “seek,” because it involves more than just “looking for”; it implies “wanting for your very own.” Pursuing the things above is to be our highest priority. The Study Guide does not go into it, but it will be helpful for you to explore “where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.” Jesus’ exaltation as the God-man to the throne of majesty as God’s right-hand man verified both His person and the success of His saving work (see Matthew 28:18; 1 Corinthians 15:20–28). “Hidden with Christ in God” speaks of the spiritual nature of our new life (2 Corinthians 5:17), says it is found only in relation to Jesus (John 14:6), and assures us that it is ours fully and freely in Christ (Romans 6:23). The Good News that we will appear with Christ in glory stimulates and enables us to keep hearts and minds on that goal—and to live accordingly.

119. We already have new life as God’s gift through the accomplished spiritual reality of our having died and been raised with Christ. That means that the practice of our faith in worship is always a response to His gift and never a means by which we try to earn or pay for the gift. Worship is always a joyous thank You as we hear again the Good News of redemption full and free.

120. In our daily living, our having died and been raised with Christ enables us to break with the sinful nature and its immoral and ungodly expression and to aim at holiness of living that will glorify our Savior and display that we are united with Him.

121. We obviously have to give attention to everyday matters, but we need to keep them in perspective and not let them take over the priority place that belongs to Jesus. If you have time, explore Colossians 3:5–4:1 with your group, asking them to identify practical ways in which we are to express our new life with Christ in daily living.