

- One of the (many) things that Jesus does in this Gospel is to affirm the truth of scripture, when He says to His traveling companions on the road to Emmaus: “*How slow of heart [you are] to believe all that the prophets spoke!*’ ...*Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the Scriptures*”
 - ...probably beginning with the Proto-Gospel of Genesis 3, when God tells Satan the serpent, “*I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel*” (Genesis 3:15)...and perhaps continuing to John the Baptist.
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 - We believe in Jesus as God because of history, witnesses’ testimony, and the movement & works of the Holy Spirit in the world for two millennia—the 2-billion-strong Christian faith being the most evident of these.
 - And if Jesus is true, then He is truly God, and thus His testifying to the veracity of the scriptures is therefore true.
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- And thus, so is the truth of that phrase to which our first two readings refer, from psalm 16: “*...[you will not] suffer your holy one to see corruption.*”
 - You have to wonder what the Jews had earlier thought of that. After all...they thought the Messiah was going to be a great king, yes, but still only a man; certainly not God. And even the great King David, who was God’s beloved, was dead and buried.
 - Nevertheless, when we read the psalms and the prophets, we can connect a myriad of dots—hints that Jesus’ life, passion, death, resurrection and ascension would fulfill *in toto*.
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- The author of this recounting of the events on the road to Emmaus was St. Luke...the physician, the scientist... who prided himself on the accuracy of his testimonies, as we read in the beginning of his Gospel: *“Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things which have been accomplished...delivered to us by those who...were eyewitnesses ...it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely... to write an orderly account for you...that you may know the truth concerning the things of which you have been informed.”* (Luke 1:1-4 RSV)
- And Luke had nothing to gain by doing this; in fact, as Paul’s companion, he suffered with Paul many hardships—imprisonment, shipwreck, etc.—and his willingness to suffer for his testimony—like with all the apostles—also testifies to his truthfulness as well.

- And today we hear one of the myriad verses in scripture noting the necessity of good works for salvation, and not just a faith devoid of such works...from 1 Peter: *“If you invoke as Father him who judges impartially according to each one’s works, conduct yourselves with reverence...”*
- The primary good “work” is, of course, obedience to the will of God, expressed through scripture and the teaching of the Church, and is the overriding theme from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation...
- ...as we hear the prophet Samuel tell the first king of Israel, Saul, who disobeyed God: *“Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD...to obey is better than sacrifice...For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has also rejected you...”* (1Samuel 15:22-23 RSV)

- And Jesus says: “*You are my friends IF you do what I command you.*” (John 15:13-14 RSV)...and what greater honor and joy can we have than to be called the friend of God?
- He wins forgiveness and salvation for those who seek to obey His word, and thereby accept Him as divine Savior.
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- Even in his letter to the Romans, which is sometimes use to buttress the idea of faith alone is sufficient for salvation even without works, Paul brackets the letter in the beginning and the end with the very same phrase: “*...to bring about the obedience of faith.*” (1:5, 16:26)
- And all the God gives to us is for our good and for our benefit... just as a parent does for his child.
- And thus the requirement remains unchanged: obedience—or at least a determined effort at it—is a condition for salvation.
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- This is why God gives to us...confession: not to presume on God’s mercy, but to repent and begin again with sincerity, at least desiring to follow Him...even though we DO fall repeatedly.
- Like climbing a steep gravelly slope, we may slide backwards, but we always look for the firm path lest we slide off the cliff. Confession is the tether which keeps us from sliding to the bottom.
- And nowhere is Jesus clearer about the necessity of good works than in Matthew 25, declaring of those who do good works for their fellow man: “*...will go away into eternal life*”...while those who do not...don’t.

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- We wrap these requirements in softer terms in our day because, to be frank, so many persons' faith is weak and sensitive about being offended—even knowing that God's Word is truth.
- But preachers remember the scripture: “...*a bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not quench...*” (Isaiah 42:3), Paul's advice: “...*we exhort you, brethren, admonish the idlers, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.*” (1Th 5:14 RSV)...and, of course, Jesus' own gentle preaching—although He emphasized strongly the necessity of obedience to God's Word for salvation.
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- But God only invites; He never forces. WE must open the door of our hearts and minds.
- As Jesus says: “*Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.*” (Revelation 3:20 RSV)
- For just as the bride must accept a proposal before the marriage can take place, so we, too, must accept the grace He offers...and it is His proposal which leads to eternal life.

Reading 1

Acts 2:14, 22-33

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven,

raised his voice, and proclaimed:

“You who are Jews, indeed all of you staying in Jerusalem.

Let this be known to you, and listen to my words.

You who are Israelites, hear these words.

Jesus the Nazarene was a man commended to you by God

with mighty deeds, wonders, and signs,

which God worked through him in your midst, as you yourselves know.

This man, delivered up by the set plan and foreknowledge of God,

you killed, using lawless men to crucify him.

But God raised him up, releasing him from the throes of death,

because it was impossible for him to be held by it.

For David says of him:

I saw the Lord ever before me,

with him at my right hand I shall not be disturbed.

Therefore my heart has been glad and my tongue has exulted;

my flesh, too, will dwell in hope,

because you will not abandon my soul to the netherworld,

nor will you suffer your holy one to see corruption.

You have made known to me the paths of life;

you will fill me with joy in your presence.

“My brothers, one can confidently say to you

about the patriarch David that he died and was buried,

and his tomb is in our midst to this day.

But since he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn an oath to him

that he would set one of his descendants upon his throne,

he foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ,

that neither was he abandoned to the netherworld

nor did his flesh see corruption.

God raised this Jesus;

of this we are all witnesses.

Exalted at the right hand of God,

he received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father

and poured him forth, as you see and hear.”

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 16:1-2, 5, 7-8, 9-10, 11

R. (11a) **Lord, you will show us the path of life.**

or:

R. Alleluia.

Keep me, O God, for in you I take refuge;
I say to the LORD, “My Lord are you.”
O LORD, my allotted portion and my cup,
you it is who hold fast my lot.

R. Lord, you will show us the path of life.

or:

R. Alleluia.

I bless the LORD who counsels me;
even in the night my heart exhorts me.
I set the LORD ever before me;
with him at my right hand I shall not be disturbed.

R. Lord, you will show us the path of life.

or:

R. Alleluia.

Therefore my heart is glad and my soul rejoices,
my body, too, abides in confidence;
because you will not abandon my soul to the netherworld,
nor will you suffer your faithful one to undergo corruption.

R. Lord, you will show us the path of life.

or:

R. Alleluia.

You will show me the path to life,
abounding joy in your presence,
the delights at your right hand forever.

R. Lord, you will show us the path of life.

or:

R. Alleluia.

Reading II

1 Pt 1:17-21

Beloved:

If you invoke as Father him who judges impartially
according to each one's works,
conduct yourselves with reverence during the time of your sojourning,
realizing that you were ransomed from your futile conduct,
handed on by your ancestors,
not with perishable things like silver or gold
but with the precious blood of Christ
as of a spotless unblemished lamb.

He was known before the foundation of the world
but revealed in the final time for you,
who through him believe in God

who raised him from the dead and gave him glory,
so that your faith and hope are in God.

Gospel

Lk 24:13-35

That very day, the first day of the week,
two of Jesus' disciples were going
to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus,
and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred.
And it happened that while they were conversing and debating,
Jesus himself drew near and walked with them,
but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him.
He asked them,
“What are you discussing as you walk along?”
They stopped, **looking downcast.**
One of them, named Cleopas, said to him in reply,
“Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem
who does not know of the things
that have taken place there in these days?”
And he replied to them, “What sort of things?”
They said to him,
“The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene,
who was a **prophet mighty in deed and word**
before God and all the people,
how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over
to a sentence of death and crucified him.
But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel;
and besides all this,
it is now the third day since this took place.
Some women from our group, however, have astounded us:
they were at the tomb early in the morning
and did not find his body;
they came back and reported
that they had indeed seen a vision of angels
who announced that he was alive.
Then some of those with us went to the tomb
and found things just as the women had described,
but him they did not see.”
And he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are!
How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke!
Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things
and enter into his glory?”
Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets,
he interpreted to them what referred to him
in all the Scriptures.

Year A—Easter, 3rd Sunday

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As they approached the village to which they were going,
he gave the impression that he was going on farther.
But they urged him, “Stay with us,
for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over.”
So he went in to stay with them.
And it happened that, while he was with them at table,
he took bread, said the blessing,
broke it, and gave it to them.
With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him,
but he vanished from their sight.
Then they said to each other,
“Were not our hearts burning within us
while he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?”
So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem
where they found gathered together
the eleven and those with them who were saying,
“The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!”
Then the two recounted
what had taken place on the way
and how he was made known to them in the breaking of bread.