**First Reading Acts 3: 12-19**

*After healing a man unable to walk, Peter preaches to the people, describing how God’s promises to Israel have been fulfilled in Jesus. Through the proclamation of Christ’s death and resurrection, God is offering them forgiveness and restoration in Jesus’ name.*

12[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?13The 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. 14But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, 15and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. 16And 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. 17“And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. 18In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer. 19Repent therefore and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out.

**Psalm 4**

Answer me when I call, O God, defender of my cause; you set me free when I was in distress; have mercy on me and | hear my prayer. 2 “You mortals, how long will you dishonor my glory; how long will you love illusions and seek after lies?” 3Know that the Lord does wonders for the faithful; the Lord will hear me when I call. 4Tremble, then, and do not sin; speak to your heart in silence upon your bed. 5Offer the appointed sacrifices and put your trust in the Lord. 6Many are saying, “Who will show us any good?” Let the light of your face shine upon us, O Lord. 7You have put gladness in my heart, more than when grain and wine abound. 8 In peace, I will lie down and sleep; for you alone, O Lord, make me rest secure.

**Second Reading 1 John 3: 1-7**

*God has loved us in order to make us children of God. Though we do not yet know the full details of our future existence, we trust that God will reveal it just as God revealed Jesus to take away our sins.*

1 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. 2Beloved, 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. 3And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure. 4Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. 5You know that he was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. 6No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him. 7Little children, let no one deceive you. Everyone who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.

**Gospel Luke 24: 36b-48**

*In this account of an appearance after his resurrection, Jesus opens the minds of the disciples to understand him as Messiah. Jesus convinces them that he has been raised and sends them on a mission to proclaim the message of repentance and forgiveness.*

36bJesus himself stood among [the disciples] and said to them, “Peace be with you.” 37They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. 38He said to them, “Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39Look 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.” 40And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. 41While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” 42They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43and he took it and ate in their presence. 44Then 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.” 45Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, 46and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, 47and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48You are witnesses of these things.”

**SERMON**

How many of you ever had aspirations to be a writer? Anyone here ever write anything noteworthy? What was it? Those of us who never aspired to be writers may have been intimidated by the idea of trying to fill pages and pages with ideas or a story. Writers block

probably loomed large in our imaginations so that the task just seemed too daunting. While we may have had to write in school, some of us never wanted to write again after. Of course, in my case, the joke’s on me because I have to write a paper every week and an essay once a month!

What if I told you that all of us are writers? As long as we don’t have to pick up a pen or a keyboard, right? Today I’m going to invite you to think of yourselves as writers. A little later in the sermon, I’ll explain why I say that. In the meantime, I have to start with my inspiration for this direction, and that is Peter’s reference to Jesus in the Acts passage as “the Author of Life.” This is a title that does not appear anywhere else in the Scriptures. Yet it is a title that, for me, is full of meaning.

Since this title Author of Life refers to Jesus, we have to give some thought to what it means. Certainly, it can be a reference to Jesus’ relationship to God, Jesus as the Word who was in the beginning when all things were created and through whom all things were created. But that’s more in line with the witness of the gospel of John. The person who wrote Acts also wrote the gospel of Luke. So, the themes, emphasis, perspective, style will be similar between those two books.

Rather than the title “Author of Life” connecting Jesus to God the creator, we should understand it to describe Jesus as one who leads others into life, one who goes ahead of others to show the ways of life. We also need to notice that Peter is speaking of Jesus in contrast to the “murderer” that Peter mentions in v. 14. Peter reminds his listeners that, when Pilate gave the religious leaders and others the choice between Barabbas the murderer or Jesus, the One who leads humanity into life, Barabbas was chosen. They saved the one who caused death and killed the one who created life.

This was a powerful condemnation on this choice, on this perspective. To stand behind the man who had taken life and reject the one who gives, who writes life into this world? Peter’s sermon here follows his act of healing a crippled man in the name of Jesus. The Author of life passed along the work of writing stories of life to Peter and John, who changed lives by Jesus’ name, through Jesus’ ways. This crippled man was not only free to move on his own, he could actually enter the Temple, participate in the life of the faith community, participate in all aspects of life fully.

Those who chose the murderer were also those who cut this man off from relationship with God. But Jesus penned a new chapter of this man’s story so he would no longer be an excluded outsider. It was a story of healing, yes, but also of being restored in relationship to God and his faith community, where he belonged in the first place. And just as Peter, through the Author of Life, wrote new life for this man Peter was also writing repentance and forgiveness for those who had yet to believe through Peter’s healing act and through his sermon. The author of life writes storylines in which outsiders are included, in which people realize their sin and repent and are forgiven.

When this passage describes Jesus as the Author of Life, it is not necessarily speaking of his role with God in creation, although that is where this life-creating energy originated. But now, the Author of Life writes that which is life-giving into this world and into our lives. He did this through his death and his victory over death so that now where there is death, where there is anything that sucks the life out of a person or a situation or a community, where there is separation from God, Jesus writes the way of abundant life and restored relationship. Jesus, the Author of life, writes that which is life-giving, life-valuing, restoration and reconciliation, abundant life for any and all.

In the same way as Peter and John and the apostles, we to are called to the task of writing, through the power and guidance of the Author of Life. But it is important to realize how easy it can be as humans to choose that which takes life, whether biological life or the experience of true life, standing in the way of facilitating belonging, acceptance, love, safety. Sometimes we write that which takes life from ourselves when we participate in self-destructive activities, things that hurt us physically, mentally, or emotionally. Sometimes we choose that which takes life from others when we turn our eyes away from the suffering of those who are fleeing violence, living in poverty, experiencing injustice, being mistreated. So much violence, poverty, letting things continue the way they’ve always been is written on the pages of the world’s story today. Can’t we see, can’t we hear the cries for a new story to be written by the Author of life?

What we are called to write on the world are experiences in which those who cry out are heard…where those who live in fear are supported…where those who are mistreated are granted justice… where violence isn’t the answer to every problem…where poverty is a

problem we refuse to tolerate…where no one is not good enough to be helped…where our mistakes don’t cast us out into the outer darkness…where the goal is restoration and reconciliation that acknowledges and changes what was wrong or unjust…where the system is one thing but the work of the risen Christ writing life in our world has a life of its own, driven by the Author of Life utilizing his church as pencils and pens and keyboards and this broken world is his blank page dying for a better author, a new story.

So, guess what? We are all authors! So, let’s ponder this week, what story will the author of life write for our lives…for our community… for our country…for those suffering around the world…for all of creation. Look at the Author of Life’s life, look at his death, look at his resurrection, look at the work of the apostles. Jesus, the author of life, goes before us, leads us into his ways to writing on our world the ways of true life for all people. Amen.

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