

Not finished with Easter

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We postmodern people are always trying to move on to the next project goal or big idea. We check items off of our to-do lists—or even our "[bucket lists](#)"—and then we're on to the next experience. This habit of mind does little to help us engage the depths of the Christian tradition, and nowhere is this more true than in the lections for this Sunday.

Easter was and is about the resurrection, and many North American worshipers seem to assume that now that this has been accomplished, it's time to move on to the next thing—the next denominational priority or the next controversy gaining traction in the 24-hour news cycle. It's counterintuitive to go back to the resurrection—yet there are unfinished implications.

In Acts 3, Peter gives a speech (his second). Having healed a crippled beggar, he senses a teachable moment and speaks to the Israelite leaders. He names their culpability in Jesus' death, but his purpose is their repentance and restoration to God ([verse 19](#)). The passage requires sensitivity; it has a history of being used for antisemitic purposes. But our default response should not be to ignore this text. Rowan Williams's [reflection](#) on it is helpful: the risen Lord is proclaimed first to his enemies.

Biblical scholars distinguish between static and dynamic readings of scripture. A static reading would see Christians as the gentiles who "get it" and Israel as the community that does not get it but is openly resistant. (Note [Stephen's fate](#).) In contrast, a dynamic reading is more confessional: we are the ones who resist the gospel, who neglect the voices of the prophets, who have forgotten that the Messiah's vocation is suffering. We are the ones who need to repent.

The epistle lesson again requires us to move past the obvious inference that the "children of God" are good and everyone else is bad. God's children do not always live as children of the light. We are resurrection people, but in many ways we

continue to live in the darkness of the tomb. What was John saying to his community in this epistle? Why the emphatic line of purity and morality between the people of God and the outsider? Where is this true today, and where is this contested? Perhaps a modest way forward is to say that we are living into our identities as resurrection people, as children who walk in the light.

This week's Gospel, like [last week's](#), is an appearance story. The risen Lord shows his hands and feet to the disciples, and asks for something to eat. The text is marvelous in its specificity (they remember that the meal included broiled fish!) and materiality ("a ghost does not have flesh and bones"). Along with serving as a witness to the resurrection, the text grounds its community of readers in this world: they will eat meals together, they will suffer as the Messiah suffered, they will forgive one another. All that has happened is continuous with the law, the prophets and the psalms.

The Sundays after Easter connect the resurrection with all that came before it, especially the Hebrew scriptures. We reflect on our own resistance to the gospel and consider how we, as children of the light, bear witness to God's love—or fail to. We consider the material implications of the gospel: the body of Christ, even now, is not a ghost but the real presence of God. We are not finished with Easter yet.