

also seen, for example, in 1 Corinthians 15, where the Apostle Paul reports that Jesus was seen by Cephas (Peter), and “then of the twelve,” here an obviously technical term since Peter is one of “the twelve.” The technical terminology for the apostolic band would have quickly changed from “the eleven” to “the twelve” with the addition of Matthias.

But I believe that the strongest reason for supposing Cleopas’ traveling companion to be Peter is the testimony of 1 Corinthians 15. Paul tells us that Jesus was seen *first* by Peter. If the Emmaus Road account is not an account of Jesus’ appearance to Peter, then we are left with no biblical record at all of that most important first appearance of Jesus. Since the Evangelists are careful in the reporting of all the most salient and significant details pertaining to the ministry of Jesus, it seems highly unlikely that the first appearance of the resurrected Jesus would have been omitted from these reports. But if the second Emmaus disciple is not Peter, then we are left to infer that the two returned to find the others agreeing with what they said, which is left unreported, and responding to them that “the Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared to Simon,” but that this event is also left unreported. In this case we would have to conclude that while they were away this important first meeting with Peter happened in Jerusalem, but no details of it at all are given. That is utterly implausible.

Rather, if the other Emmaus disciple is Peter himself, then what we have are great details concerning how this appearance transpired, as one would expect concerning such an important appearance.

We are still left wondering, however, why the Evangelist’s account is rather enigmatic about this. That is, why is Peter’s name not mentioned at all in the account itself, but only on the return to Jerusalem? The answer, I suggest, lies in Luke’s purpose in his writing. If the other disciple is Peter, in which case Peter’s identity is not known until the end of the account, what the narrative has then provided is an *intentional* cloak on his identity until the return to Jerusalem, which would also happen to be the moment the reports of the women are confirmed. In this case there are two participants in the Emmaus report whose identities are not fully known. First there is Jesus, whose identity is known to us and not to the Emmaus disciples, and second there is Peter, whose identity is not known to us until the end. This coincides nicely, as it happens, with the structure of the Book of Acts, whose underlying narrative is arguably a repetition of the events of the Gospels in the lives of the Apostles. They endure the same things as Jesus endured; they are his ambassadors not only in what they say but in their lives: their healings, their debates with antagonists, their sufferings and humiliation. An extensive study of the entire Book of Acts can yield some remarkable points of comparison between the events of the Gospels and

the events of the apostolic acts. So perhaps, assuming that these points of comparison are intentional, the first point of comparison appears here, subtly, between the revelation of the risen Christ and the revelation, to the reader, of Peter. In fact Peter is by this very narrative reestablished as the premiere apostle, the one whose return and appearance to his compatriots in Jerusalem mirrors the appearance of Jesus Himself to them all. ✠

Notes

¹ See a good overview online at “Two Disciples at Emmaus,” Bible Study Tools (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/classics/andrews-the-life-of-our-lord-upon-the-earth/part-vii/two-disciples-at-emmaus.html>).

Commentary on the War: Toward Gaining Ground in the Ministry

Ministry in the Midst of Doubt

David H. Petersen



Anyone who serves in the Office of the Ministry for more than a few months will have to serve through various difficulties. Much of it is external and comes from the two thirds of the unholy trinity that seeks to deceive and mislead us: the devil and the world. Pastors endure difficulties that arise from congregational strife and members caught in various sins. They also endure difficulties that come from strife in the church body, from hostility in the culture, and from tragedies in the community. The pastor also knows sadness and disappointment from his own family and body. Such things are simply the reality of living in a broken world. The pastor might feel some of these difficulties more acutely than the laity because he is more directly engaged against what is broken in this world and is required to speak against it.

But there is a third member of the unholy trinity: the sinful flesh. At some point, and likely in repeated ways, the pastor will face his own crises of faith. These crises can be and are often accompanied by mental illnesses such as clinical depression, various anxiety disorders, and panic attacks. In such cases, it is most ideal if the pastor deal with those aspects of his issues with professional help, but even then, even when mental illness is involved, the spiritual aspect of these things, or the fact that the sinful flesh is involved, should not be ignored. There is no such thing as merely mental or merely physical. There is always a spiritual component. So also it is possible for

a crisis of faith to manifest itself apart from other ailments, that is, for the pastor to suffer doubt.

This column wants to acknowledge the reality that pastors sometimes go through dark nights of the soul, or dark winters, or even dark decades. This column wants to name those dark periods for what they are: sin. It also wants to give some encouragement and counsel about how to cope with them while carrying on and fulfilling one's duties despite one's own uncertainty and fears.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. Doubt is sin. It sets its own reason or experience above the Word of God. This was the trap set for Eve. Every sin, at its core, is doubt. Our old man refuses to believe that God knows what is best for us, or believes that God is impotent to give us what is best, or that He doesn't actually want us to have what is best, so we must take it for ourselves. Thus every sin blasphemes and doubts God as God or doubts that God's Word is true and trustworthy. What I mean by a crisis of faith, though, is taking doubt to the next level and entertaining it as a reality in itself.

There are two incidents of doubt in the Bible that I think illustrate all others: Eve in the Garden and Thomas absent from the Upper Room. Eve listens to the devil and comes to the false conclusion that the food being denied her was good for food, was pleasant to the eyes, and would make her wise. Her conclusion was contrary to God's Word. He had said that if they ate of it, they would die. She therefore determined that either God was stupid or He was holding out on her. She doubted for the sake of greed.

Thomas doubts for fear. Jesus had told Him what would happen, how He would be killed and then rise on the third day, but when the third day came, Thomas didn't want Him. All the apostles suffered from doubt that day and all mostly dismissed the witness of the women, but Thomas wouldn't even associate with them. He was pointedly absent on Easter evening. I think it is fair to say that Thomas' doubt grew from fear. He was likely afraid of getting his hopes up. He didn't want to be disappointed or look like a fool again. He may also have been afraid of bearing his own cross.

I suspect that these internal crises of faith are always wrapped up with other sins. Doubt doesn't seem to exist all by itself. For the sake of greed I might become discontent with my call and how I am being used, or not used, in God's kingdom, what I am being paid or how unappreciated I feel. I then covet the positions that others enjoy. As I feed that discontent and obsess over it, I begin to question whether or not God is all-wise and benevolent. Like Eve, I think God must be holding out on me and therefore is not truly honest or truly benevolent. I start to think that if this is how He behaves then maybe He is not worthy of the title "God" at all, and perhaps there is no god. So also I see the brokenness

of the Church and think I've been a fool to see anything supernatural in it. I come to the vanity that it is not worthy of my service or time. My life is being wasted. The same sort of thing can happen with any point of discontent or dissatisfaction with our health or families, income or circumstances, even discontent with an abundance and great variety of delicious food in a garden.

This can also happen from seemingly spiritual good. We can become too focused on feeling the presence of God or on being happy and content and thinking those are the true marks of faith, so that when we do not feel God's presence or the excitement of coming close to Him in the Scriptures, we begin to doubt and again think that God is not real.

Fear can drive us as well. We don't want to be embarrassed. We want to be thought well of by those who seem sophisticated. We also fear telling others about the goodness of God's Law because it seems harsh to us or we fear they will judge us poorly, perhaps even think us bigoted, because of it. We can so desire the good opinion of others or of earthly success that we start to see God's Law or His Word as a hindrance. We then begin to despise God's Word and end up despising God—again, toying with the idea that maybe God isn't real or worthy of our worship.

The answer to doubt is both predictable and obvious. Thomas is converted by the Word of Jesus and able to confess that Jesus is both God and Lord. Eve is rebuked but also promised a Son who will deliver her. When she doubted in the garden, she doubted the threat of God's wrath. The antidote is a promise of His mercy. She learns to cling by faith to that Word as she should have held to it the first time.

So it is that we should devote ourselves to the words and promises of God. We need to put our trust in what is objective rather than in our feelings. To this end, we should confess to a father confessor whether it feels liberating and encouraging or not. Even if it seems mundane or boring, we should do it. We should do it because that is what God instituted and promised to use for us. So also we should engage the brotherhood for consolation. We should come frequently to the Sacrament. We should read the Bible and pray throughout the day, every day, and so forth.

In all this, we suppress that part of us that whispers blasphemy. We do not let him speak out loud. We have control and are not slaves. We can say to him, "I've heard all your arguments before. You have nothing new. So shut up and go away. I believe the Bible. I confess Jesus. I wait on the Father. I do not trust you because I've been down this path before and you have proven, again and again, to be a liar." In this way we learn to doubt our doubts and trust God's Word. It is what rules us, what guides and teaches us.

The pastor has a huge advantage over the layman in this struggle. For what is needed are the very things that constitute the pastor's daily work. For my part, I suspect that if I were not a pastor, I would fall away from the faith. I suspect it is the same for many of my brothers. God doesn't call the strong in faith to the Ministry. He calls the weak. He calls those who do not have the fortitude and discipline to carry on with daily Bible reading and prayer unless they are required to do it for a paycheck. In this they serve others, to be sure, but are also, and firstly, served themselves.

The difficulty for the pastor in this is that he can often feel that he is a hypocrite. He might, for example, have to preach at a funeral in the midst of a personal crisis of faith. He has to say things that in the back of his mind the old man is mocking and suggesting that he himself doesn't even believe. The solution is simple. The pastor should say them all the more. He should drive the old man to despair and death by the Word. He should insist on what is knowable and beyond doubt: God created the world in love to be His own. He redeemed fallen Man in love to be His own. He will not leave us here but will bring us to Himself and free us from these nagging doubts and besetting sins. He lives and we too shall live. We can lie, and we do, but He cannot and does not. We cannot trust ourselves, but we can, we should, and we must trust Him.

I hope this provides some encouragement. For my part, when I am in the worst of my doubts I invoke my own version of Paschal's wager. I say to my old man, "Let's suppose that you are right and everything I believe about Jesus is a fairy tale, no more substantial than Middle Earth or Narnia. What harm have I done? None, and better. For even if the Bible were a fairy tale, it has enriched the lives of men since the beginning of time. It has made them better people and raised their spirits. It has comforted and ennobled them. All of the Law is obviously good and offers the most satisfying and productive way to live. Would you have me tell people to steal and cheat and lie? So at the very worst, my work has improved the lives of good men and women until it ends and they go to oblivion. That is better than doing nothing but serving myself. And, of course, old man, you know better. You have your own doubts, for your unbelief will not make the faithfulness of God without effect. Deep down, you know my God is real. You know He died and lives. You know He forgives. You know your days are numbered but mine are not. Your work to stop me is in vain for the Spirit is on my side and has given Me His Word. Now go back to sleep and leave me alone."

Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. (John 14:1, NKJV) ✠

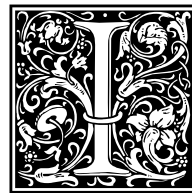
Taking Pains

Reverence is not primarily a matter of feeling pious, but rather of taking pains. – The Anglican Breviary

Service of Holy Communion

Mark P. Braden

In the Easter 2019 issue of Gottesdienst, this column began a series on the rubrics for the reverent conduct of the Mass. We continue the series this issue beginning with the Preparation of the Altar for the Liturgy of the Sacrament of the Altar.



In his 1523 *Formula Missae*, Luther does not describe the preparation of the altar. He directs that after the Creed or sermon, "let bread and wine be made ready for blessing." After discussing the mixing of the water and the wine, he writes simply, "The bread and wine having been prepared, one may proceed as follows . . ." (AE 53.26–27) Similarly, Martin Chemnitz in his *Church Order for Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel* omits any direction on the preparation of the altar, rather instructing that "when the prayer after the sermon has ended, those who desire to go to Communion shall immediately approach the chancel and kneel" (87). Chemnitz's rubric for the "Exhortation" to the communicants is the next offered; three are provided to choose from. This follows Luther, who provides an Exhortation in his German Mass in the same place (AE 53.78–80).

At the same place in the Mass, Wilhelm Löhe, in his *Liturgy for Christian Congregations of the Lutheran Faith*, writes, "If there is to be an Exhortation at all, this is the proper place to introduce it; to have it after the Sanctus certainly is not fitting" (25). Löhe provides an Exhortation that is much shorter than that of Chemnitz or Luther, encouraging that "an Amen-verse" be sung following the Prayer before the Exhortation. It should be noted that in the 1921 *Liturgy and Agenda* of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States, the Exhortation follows the *Sanctus*, quite contrary to Löhe's direction (12). In his rubrics for the Offertory, Löhe directs: "During the Offertory also, the minister places the bread and wine upon the altar; or, if these have been there from the beginning of the service, he now reverently uncovers them, and prepares himself through prayer and meditation for the administration of the Sacrament" (21).

Historically, nothing was on the altar at the beginning of the Mass. Even the Missal Stand was brought to the altar during the Mass. This practice is evidenced in