

## Easter 3 April 18th 2021

### Welcome and Call to worship

Hymn: *sung by St Martin's Voices*

Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,  
wheat that in the dark earth many days has lain;  
love lives again, that with the dead has been:  
*Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.*

In the grave they laid him, Love whom men had slain,  
thinking that he never would awake again,  
laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen:  
*Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.*

Forth he came at Easter, like the risen grain,  
he that for the three days in the grave had lain,  
back from the dead my risen Lord is seen:  
*Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.*

When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,  
then your touch can call us back to life again,  
fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:  
*Love is come again, like wheat that springs up green.*

*John Macleod Campbell Crum (1872-1958)*

*© Oxford University Press*

Alleluia Christ is Risen  
**He is Risen indeed Alleluia**

We come from scattered lives to meet with God.  
**Let us recognise his presence with us.**

As God's people we have gathered.

**Let us worship him together.**

### **Penitential Rite**

Christ our passover lamb has been sacrificed for us.

Let us therefore rejoice by putting away all malice and evil and confessing our sins with a sincere and true heart.

1 Corinthians 5.7,8

Lord Jesus, you raise us to new life.

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you forgive us our sins.

Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you feed us with the living bread.

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

May the God of love and power  
forgive us and free us from our sins,  
heal and strengthen us by his Spirit,  
and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Gloria for today:**

**Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace to his people on earth.**

**Lord God, heavenly King,  
almighty God and Father,  
we worship you, we give you thanks,  
we praise you for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world:**

**have mercy on us;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:  
receive our prayer.  
For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

### **Collect**

Almighty Father,  
who in your great mercy gladdened the disciples  
with the sight of the risen Lord:  
give us such knowledge of his presence with us,  
that we may be strengthened and sustained by his risen life  
and serve you continually in righteousness and truth;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. Amen

### **1st Reading.** Acts 3:12-19

After Peter Heals a Lame Beggar...

Peter said to them: "Fellow Israelites, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? **13** The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. **14** You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. **15** You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are

witnesses of this. **16** By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see.

**17** "Now, fellow Israelites, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. **18** But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Messiah would suffer. **19** Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, **20** and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus. **21** Heaven must receive him until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets. **22** For Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. **23** Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from their people.' **24** "Indeed, beginning with Samuel, all the prophets who have spoken have foretold these days. **25** And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.' **26** When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways."

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

**To greet the Gospel:**

**To God be the glory!**

**Great things He has done;**

**So loved He the world that He gave us His Son**

**Who yielded His life an atonement for sin,**

**And opened the life-gate that all may go in.**

*Praise the Lord, praise the Lord!  
Let the earth hear His voice;  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord!  
Let the people rejoice:  
O come to the Father,  
Through Jesus the Son,  
And give Him the glory;  
Great things He has done.*

**O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood!  
To every believer the promise of God;  
The vilest offender who truly believes,  
That moment from Jesus a pardon receives.**

**Great things He has taught us, great things He has done,  
And great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;  
But purer, and higher, and greater will be  
Our wonder, our worship, when Jesus we see.**

Fanny Jane Crosby, William Howard Doane.  
CCLI SONG #. 23426 Public Domain

## **Gospel Acclamation**

**Alleluia, alleluia.**

**I am the first and the last, says the Lord, and the living one;  
I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore.**

*cf Revelation 1.17,18*

**Hear the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke  
Glory to you O Lord**

## **Gospel Luke 24:36-48 (NIV)**

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

**36** While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."

**37** They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. **38** He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? **39** Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."

**40** When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. **41** And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" **42** They gave him a piece of broiled fish, **43** and he took it and ate it in their presence.

**44** He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

**45** Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. **46** He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, **47** and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. **48** You are witnesses of these things.

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you O Christ**

**Sermon: Jenny Dann - reader at St Michael and All Angels Church Shefford**

"You are witnesses," said Jesus to his disciples.

When I was a young Christian, back in the 1970's, there was a lot of talk in Christian circles about the importance of being 'witnesses for Jesus'. Witnessing was the required activity for

all believers, and if you weren't doing it - or thought you weren't doing it - then you were failing the Lord. For a somewhat awkward, shy, self-conscious teenager (yes, that was really me!), the idea of witnessing out loud to my faith was, frankly, terrifying. Perhaps I could just put some 'One Way Jesus Christ' stickers on my clothes and bags, and that would do? But I still got nervous at the prospect of explaining such stickers to a stranger. What if the words came out wrong?

When the Church speaks of 'mission' and 'evangelism', those words can be equally terrifying to many believers today, conjuring up images of clever, articulate preachers: confident evangelists whose words seem to have the power to convert people on the spot! No, I couldn't possibly do that, we might say.

But let's take another look at our two readings.

Yes, you could say that Peter was an articulate speaker - although he was by no means immune from getting things wrong sometimes! But what is he actually talking about here? What is he witnessing to? It's the simple, incontrovertible fact that a crippled man, a beggar, has been healed by faith in the name of Jesus - "as you can all see." This is not clever words or theory - it's real. We saw it, we experienced it. It's not about us and what we do - it's about the power and goodness of God.

And then in Luke's Gospel Jesus says, "Why are you troubled?.... Look at my hands and feet.... Touch me.... Yes, it's really me - as you see. Jesus is not asking his disciples to witness to a theory, but to the reality of his risen presence

with them. They know it's true, because they experienced it for themselves. A witness can speak only of what he or she sees and knows to be true. It is for others to hear, respond, interpret - the witness simply tells the story of their own experience.

Last weekend, when we first heard the news of the death of His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, the media were initially full of carefully prepared words: articulate statements and reactions from world leaders and others in public life, those whose job it is to act, react and decide at such significant moments in history. But then - we started to hear the stories of many, many other people, ordinary people of all ages and circumstances: their own individual stories of meeting Prince Philip - funny, moving, quirky, inspiring; each bearing the hallmark of authenticity - "this is what I saw, and felt, and experienced." These are the real stories - the witness accounts - that can make a powerful difference both to those who tell and to those who hear.

Add to that the 7 million or so who have encountered Prince Philip indirectly through the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme - and you have, well, a huge 'cloud of witnesses'!

So maybe being a witness for Jesus isn't so daunting after all? If we have any experience at all in our lives of God helping us, of knowing Jesus is with us, of answered prayer, of gratitude for God's blessings - then we too have a story to tell. We don't need clever words, though some may indeed have that gift; we just need to be honest and truthful, and say what we know in our own experience, not what we think we ought to say! And yes, even what we think of as our failures can help others to know the truth of God's saving love. To

quote Peter from that Acts reading, it's not "our own power or godliness" that does anything - it's the name of Jesus and the faith that comes through him. We can trust God to give us the words we need, when we need them.

Keep it simple, keep it real. Just say - or show - what God has done for you. That's Mission and Evangelism, and it's all by God's grace. Jesus says to all of us: "You are my witnesses." Amen.

### **Response:**

**I am a new creation,  
No more in condemnation,  
Here in the grace of God I stand.  
My heart is overflowing,  
My love just keeps on growing,  
Here in the grace of God I stand.**

**And I will praise You, Lord,  
Yes I will praise You, Lord,  
And I will sing of all that You have done.  
A joy that knows no limit,  
A lightness in my spirit  
Here in the grace of God I stand.**

*Dave Bilbrough. CCLI SONG # 48425. © Thankyou Music*

### **Our Declaration of Faith**

Let us declare our faith  
in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Christ died for our sins  
in accordance with the Scriptures;**

**he was buried;  
he was raised to life on the third day  
in accordance with the Scriptures;  
afterwards he appeared to his followers,  
and to all the apostles:  
this we have received, and this we believe. Amen.**

*cf 1 Corinthians 15.3-7*

**Prayers of Intercession:** prepared by Mr Stephen Lines,  
Shefford.

Living God, long ago, faithful women proclaimed the good news of Jesus' resurrection, and the world was changed forever. Help us to keep faith with them, that our witness may be as bold, our love as deep, and joy and amazement as real as was theirs when he appeared to them.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Creator God, you gave us a beautiful world to live in and to care for. We know that in many areas our Stewardship has been a failure.

We pray for a change of heart and attitude, an awakening to a better way of living, and the wisdom and courage to recognise and reject wrong principles.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Loving God, we pray for those who do not share our Easter joy especially those living in the shadow of darkness and despair and for those whose illness narrows their view of the world. We especially pray for all those who have requested prayer and in the quietness of our hearts we raise before You those who we know who are also in need.

*(Short silence)*

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Merciful God, we pray for those whose hearts have been saddened by the death of someone close and dear to them, for members of our families who have died and whose anniversary we recall. Help them to experience the comfort of the Holy Spirit, and the fellowship of the church family around them until the glorious day when they are reunited in your heavenly kingdom.

*(Short Silence)*

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Faithful God, your wisdom is beyond our understanding. Surround the Queen and the Royal Family with your love, that they may not be overwhelmed by their loss, but have confidence in your generous love to strengthen them in the coming days.

Merciful Father: **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen**

Let's pray together the prayer that Jesus taught us.

**Our Father in Heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,**

**your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and forever. Amen.**

## **Notices and Birthdays**

Our closing acclamation:

Alleluia. Christ is risen.  
**He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**  
Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
**He has given us new life and hope.  
He has raised Jesus from the dead.**  
God has claimed us as his own.  
**He has brought us out of darkness.  
He has made us light to the world.**  
Alleluia. Christ is risen.  
**He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

## **Blessing and sending**

God the Father,  
by whose love Christ was raised from the dead,  
open to you who believe the gates of everlasting life.  
**Amen.**

God the Son,  
who in bursting from the grave has won a glorious victory,  
give you joy as you share the Easter faith.

**Amen.**

God the Holy Spirit,  
who filled the disciples with the life of the risen Lord,  
empower you and fill you with Christ's peace.

**Amen.**

And the blessing ...

**Concluding hymn:** *Songs from LU2: James Deacon, Hazel Line, Adam Deacon, St Francis Church, Luton - used with permission.*

**Bless the Lord O my soul  
O my soul  
Worship his holy name  
Sing like never before  
O my soul  
I'll worship your holy name**

**The sun comes up  
It's a new day dawning  
It's time to sing your song again  
Whatever may pass and whatever lies before me  
Let me be singing when the evening comes**

**Bless the Lord O my soul  
O my soul  
Worship his holy name  
Sing like never before**

**O my soul  
I'll worship your holy name**

**You're rich in love and you're slow to anger  
Your name is great and your heart is kind  
For all your goodness I will keep on singing  
10, 000 reasons for my heart to find**

**Bless the Lord O my soul  
O my soul, Worship his holy name  
Sing like never before  
O my soul  
I'll worship your holy name (*repeat*)**

**And on that day when my strength is failing  
The end draws near and my time has come  
Still my soul will sing your praise unending  
10, 000 years and then forever more**

**Bless the Lord O my soul  
O my soul  
Worship his holy name  
Sing like never before  
O my soul  
I'll worship your holy name**

**Bless the Lord O my soul  
O my soul  
Worship His holy name  
Sing like never before  
O my soul  
I'll worship your holy name**

# **I'll worship your holy name**

## **Yes, I'll worship your holy name**

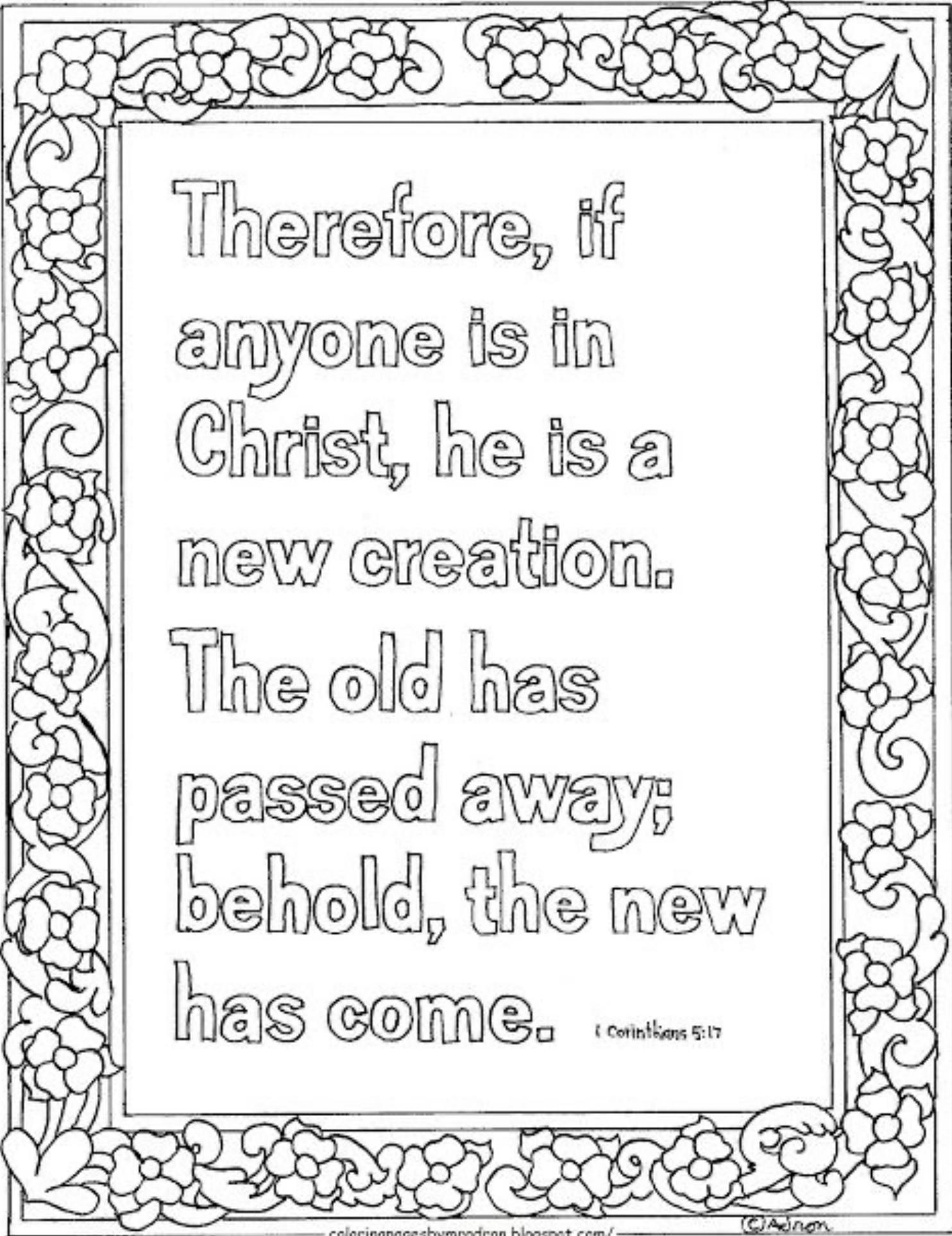
*Songwriters: Matt Redman / Jonas Myrin Ccli # 6016351  
10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord) lyrics © Worshiptogether.com Songs, Sixsteps  
Music, Thank You Music Ltd., Atlas Mountain Songs*

### **Sending**

With the power that raised Jesus from the dead at work within you, go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Alleluia, alleluia.  
**In the name of Christ. Amen. Alleluia, alleluia.**

*Our thanks to St Martin's Voices and James and Miriam Read for leading our singing, Songs from LU2: James Deacon, Hazel Line, Adam Deacon, St Francis Church, Luton - used with permission.*

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Therefore, if  
anyone is in  
Christ, he is a  
new creation.  
The old has  
passed away;  
behold, the new  
has come.

1 Corinthians 5:17

Key phrases from today's Gospel Luke 24:36-48  
Add the consonants!

\_ e \_ u \_    \_ \_ o o \_    a \_ o \_ \_    \_ \_ e \_

He said " \_ e a \_ e    \_ e    \_ i \_ \_    \_ o u "

They were    \_ \_ i \_ \_ \_ e \_ e \_ , thinking they saw  
a    \_ \_ o \_ \_

Jesus said to them,

\_ o o \_ at my \_ a \_ \_ \_ and my \_ e e \_ . It is I  
myself!

\_ o u \_ \_ me and see; a ghost does not have  
\_ \_ e \_ \_ and \_ o \_ e \_ , as you see I have."

He asked them, " \_ o you have a \_ \_ \_ \_ i \_ \_ here to  
e a \_ ?"

**A**nd he ate some broiled fish in their presence.

He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah  
will suffer and \_ i \_ e from the \_ e a \_ on the third  
day.

You are    \_ i \_ \_ e \_ \_ e \_ of these things.