

Luke 24:36–49 Due to the length of the text, it is not included in this copy of the sermon.
Please the text in your Bible.

Dear Christian Friends:

Running shoes. Sneakers. Tennis shoes. Tennies. Whatever you call them, they go by famous brand names. Nike. Adidas. Puma. New Balance. ASICS. Now, ASICS is an acronym. Each letter is the beginning of a word. ASICS stands for **ANIMA SANA IN CORPORE SANO.**

Yes, Latin. It means “Healthy soul in a healthy body.” That is a good name for sports shoes. There is a connection between body and soul. When your body is healthy, your spirit is often healthy, too.

Our Gospel Lesson shows us that. When it comes to every Christian and the whole Christian Church, Jesus wants us to have a healthy soul in a healthy body. Jesus wants us to have **ANIMA_(m) SANA_(m) IN CORPORE SANO.**

Now, sadly, the disciples did not have a healthy spirit. Our text says, **Jesus stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” But they were terrified and frightened and thought they were looking at a ghost. He said to them, “Why are you troubled? Why do doubts arise in your hearts?** The disciples should have rejoiced to see Jesus alive and standing before them. But the disciples suffered the diseases of terror, fright, doubt, and confusion.

These diseases also infect us. No, we do not see the risen Christ with our human eyes. But we do encounter the Living Christ in his Word. In his Word Jesus says, **“You must deny yourself, pick up your cross, and follow me.”** Jesus says, **“Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.”** Those words terrify us. They frighten us. We must confess, “I am nowhere near perfect. I can’t even see a

glimpse of perfection on the distant horizon of my spiritual journey. So, does God really love me? He knows I am not doing my best or even trying my hardest. He sees how I would rather pick up some takeout, or pick up my friends, or pick up a nice raise rather than pick up the cross of self-denial. And when God sees my weak faith and my puny efforts, he will be angry. He will unleash his fury on me.” That’s how an unhealthy soul speaks. An unhealthy soul speaks out of terror, fright, doubt, and confusion.

But Jesus does not want you or his disciples to have those spiritual ailments. **[Jesus] said to [his disciples], “Why are you troubled? Why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I. Touch me and see, because a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.”** When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. **[He] said to them, “Do you have anything to eat?” They gave him a piece of broiled fish and honeycomb. He ate in front of them.**

Jesus had truly risen from the dead—soul, and body. A bodyless ghost cannot consume food. So, Jesus had a body—but not just any old body. He had his own body brought back from death in glory. After his resurrection Christ’s body no longer groaned under the curse of sin, disease, age, or ugliness. After he came back to life, Jesus had *ANIMAM SANISSIMAM IN CORPORE SANISSIMO*. Oops. Sorry. Latin again. I’ll translate. After his resurrection Jesus had **the healthiest soul in the healthiest body**—a perfect soul in a perfect body.

Jesus also wanted his disciples to have a perfect soul in their own perfect body. So, **[Jesus] said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to 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.”** Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.

To give health and understanding to their minds and souls, Jesus points his disciples to God’s Word. Jesus basically tells them, “Men, my resurrection should not be a shock. I kept telling it to you. I was going to die and rise again. I kept

teaching it to you. God's Word is really all about me. I am the fulfillment of God's promises. I am the new Israel, restored and unconquerable. I am the new Adam, recreated and untemptable. I am the new Moses, proclaiming God's love and forgiveness instead of thundering God's law and punishment."

That's the same message Jesus has for you and me. "My people, my brothers and sisters; I love to teach my Word to you. I love to speak my Word to you in Church and in Bible Class and in personal devotions. So, listen to God's Word. Meditate on God's Word. Believe God's Word. Everything in God's Word tells you about me.

"It tells you how I am **Immanuel**, *God with [you.]* I am true God in a real human body. I took all human suffering, sorrow, and sin upon myself. And I took all human guilt to the grave. And I left your guilt and God's anger in the grave. And now, I stand before you with my glorified body.

"And I did all this for you. ***By the power than enables me to bring death and sin and Satan under my control, I will transform your lowly bodies to be like my glorified body.*** Then when I return to judge the earth, I will bring your glorified bodies to eternal joy to be by my side in the presence of our heavenly Father."

That's what Jesus is all about. He gives you a healthy soul by filling you with faith in the good news of his life, death, resurrection. And when he returns to earth again, he will give you a perfectly healthy, glorified body, just like his body is perfectly glorified. That's purpose and goal of Christ's ministry: to give you **ANIMA(m) SANA(m) IN CORPORE SANO**; a healthy soul in a healthy body. To put it another way: a perfect, sin-free soul in a perfect, eternally glorified body.

But what Jesus wants for the individual Christian is also what he wants for the Holy Christian Church on earth. Our text concludes with these words, **[Jesus] said to [His disciples], "This is what is written and so it must be: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. Look, I am sending you**

what my Father promised. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

Jesus gives his disciples a preview of the Day of Pentecost. He says, “My suffering, death, and resurrection will be proclaimed. People will repent, believe, and receive forgiveness. This will start in Jerusalem and spread throughout the world. You, my disciples, will be the ones to do this. But you will only do it by the power of the Holy Spirit who comes from my heavenly Father.” Jesus describes a church that has **ANIMA_(m) SANA_(m) IN CORPORE SANO.** Yes, the Church is the Body of Christ. The Church also needs a healthy spirit in a healthy body.

So, how is the health of our church? Do we faithfully, consistently, and joyfully proclaim Christ and Christ alone? Or do we invite people to come to our nice church to have a nice time with our nice people? Do we call sinners to repent? Or do we kinda-sorta make people feel a little bummed out because they aren't as fulfilled as they want to be? Do we call people to faith in Christ? Or do we just hope people have good vibrations and a peaceful, easy feeling? Do we trust the power of the Holy Spirit to bless this church and make our church grow? Or do we rely on the latest statistics, corporate buzz words, and political climate for the health and growth of our congregation?

Well, we know what makes a healthy soul in a healthy church. Jesus has already told us. Preach his life, death, and resurrection. Call sinners to repent of their sins. Call repentant sinners to believe in Jesus for forgiveness. Trust the power of the Holy Spirit to strengthen and grow our church; spiritually, and perhaps, in numbers, too.

So, you can be an individual Christian. It can be all of us as the Church, the Body of Christ. We all need what Jesus came to give us. We all need a healthy soul in a healthy body. Here's the good news. Jesus Christ conquered sin, death, and the grave. This same Jesus also gives us spiritual health, eternal perfection, and amazing glory in body and soul. God is faithful. And he will do it. AMEN.