

VERNON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

2nd Sunday of Easter – April 11, 2021

With Pastor Jerry Kramer

Notes on Easter Sunday: Book of Common Worship, p. 316

***Call to Worship**

Leader: Where is this Jesus, the one you call Messiah?

People: Christ is Risen! Christ is here among us!

Leader: I do not see him. I don't believe you.

People (louder): Christ is Risen! Christ is here among us!

Leader: Let me see his body, his hands, and his feet.

People: We are Christ's body; We are Christ's feet.

Leader: You see the suffering in the world? Where is Jesus now?

People: We will go into the world to be the body of Christ.

Leader: Let us go together, let us partner with others.

People: For we are the body of Christ: let us share the Good News!

Hymn: #255 – *O Sons and Daughters, Let Us Sing (Representative Text)*

**Alleluia, alleluia,
alleluia, alleluia!**

**1 O sons and daughters of the King,
whom heavenly hosts in glory sing,
today the grave has lost its sting.**

Alleluia!

**2 That Easter morn at break of day,
the faithful women went their way
to seek the tomb where Jesus lay.**

Alleluia!

**3 An angel clad in white they see,
who sat and spoke unto the three,
"Your Lord has gone to Galilee."**

Alleluia!

**4 When Thomas first the tidings heard
that some had seen the risen Lord,
he doubted the disciples' word.**

Lord, have mercy!

**5 At night the apostles met in fear;
among them came their Master dear
and said, "My peace be with you here."**

Alleluia!

**6 "My pierced side, O Thomas, see,
and look upon my hands, my feet;
not faithless but believing be."**

Alleluia!

**7 No longer Thomas then denied;
he saw the feet, the hands, the side.
"You are my Lord and God!" he cried.**

Alleluia!

**8 How blest are they who have not seen
and yet whose faith has constant been,
for they eternal life shall win.**

Alleluia!

Final Ending:

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Prayer of Confession

***Wondrous God, we confess that at times our doubts and fears
override our hope and faith. Forgive us when we lose sight of the joy
of Your love and instead fall into despair and gloom. Lift up our
spirits, Lord, and help us to remember the promise of new life here
and now, not just the hope of resurrection for the future. We give
thanks for Your Son, Jesus the Christ, who continues to offer us new
life, who continues to turn us around and upside down, who
continues to break down the walls of death in our own life. Forgive
us, restore us, and renew us. In the name of our risen Savior, Jesus
the Christ, we now pray silently, (*Time of Silent Prayer*) Amen**

Words of Assurance

Help then, O Lord, our unbelief and may our faith abound to call on you where you are near and seek where you are found, for there is forgiveness, acceptance, and the dawn of new beginnings for Jesus' sake. Amen (based on *Glory to God* 817:3)

Passing the Peace of Christ-based on John 13:34

Hear the teaching of Christ: A new command I give you, that you love one another as I have loved you.

The peace of Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

HEARING GOD'S WORD

Prayer for Illumination

Holy God, thank you for your Word to us. May it deepen our faith, comfort us, and challenge us so that we may grow in our love for you and each other. We pray in the name of the risen Christ. Amen

Epistle Lesson: : I John 1-2:2

1 We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— **2** this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us— **3** we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. **4** We are writing these things so that our^[a] joy may be complete. **5** This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. **6** If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; **7** but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. **8** If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. **9** If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. **10** If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. **2** My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; **2** and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

Gospel Lesson: John 20:19-31

9 When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” **20** After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. **21** Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” **22** When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. **23** If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

24 But Thomas (who was called the Twin^[a]), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. **25** So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.”

²⁶ A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." ²⁸ Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." ³⁰ Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. ³¹ But these are written so that you may come to believe^[b] that Jesus is the Messiah,^[c] the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

Sermon: *Faith After Doubt*

LEADER: The Word of the Lord
God!

People: Thanks be to

Prayer after Sermon

How strangely comforting, Lord,
That so many of your servants
Have doubted you.
So, if I cannot always see the sense
Of your Word;
If I do not always feel confident
About my faith;
If I wonder where your love is
In the face of pain and death;
I am not the first.
A great company of saints and martyrs
Has felt this way before me.
Now, in your presence,
They see face to face
And know as they are known.
Teach me, like them,
Not so much to fear doubt
As to see it
As a sign of the mystery of life
And a door to discovery. Amen

Hymn #256 These Things Did Thomas Count As Real
These things did Thomas count as real:
The warmth of blood, the chill of steel,
The grain of wood, the heft of stone,
The last frail twitch of flesh and bone.

**The vision of his skeptic mind
Was keen enough to make him blind
To any unexpected act
Too large for his small world of fact.**

**His reasoned certainties denied
That one could live when one had died,
Until his fingers read like Braille
The marking of the spear and nail.**

**May we, O God, by grace believe
And thus the risen Christ receive,
Whose raw, imprinted palms reached out
And beckoned Thomas from his doubt.”**

Prayers of the People & Lord’s Prayer

*You call us to be people of faith,
yet we are often people with doubts.
We doubt that love can grow again in relationships
where anger and bitterness reign supreme.
You know the strength of love and the power of prayer:
help us to be faithful lovers.
We doubt that peace can come in the Middle East, in Syria, in Palestine, in Afghanistan,
where hatred and racism reign supreme.
You know that peace is growing there:
help us to be faithful peacemakers.
We doubt that the hungry can be fed in Africa,
where despair and hopelessness reign supreme.
You know that there is enough food in the world;
help us to be generous and faithful.
You specialize in impossibilities;
you walked on water,
you heal the nations
you forgive sins
you set the captive free,
you set us free from our captivities.
This morning we pray for people here who are filled with doubts,
who wonder whether you exist and whether you are listening to our prayers,
who wonder what this faith community is about.
We pray for people who doubt the purpose of life,
who wonder whether to end it all,
who face feelings of meaningless and despair.
Even when we have that sinking feeling,
give us the wisdom to turn to you.

Lord we want to believe, help our unbelief!
Give us faith, small as a mustard seed,
so that we can be your faithful people,
believing in your power to save,
believing in your power to reign supreme,
believing that we can share this good news
with everyone we meet.

You taught us to pray, saying, **...Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.**

**And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,
for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.
Amen.**

**REMEMBER: Mail in your Tithes and Offerings to Ralph Schwarz,
1117 Rainbow Ct., Mukwonago, WI 53149 or to the church address.
THANK YOU!**

Closing Hymn #257 The Risen Christ

1 The risen Christ, who walks on wounded feet
from garden tomb through darkened city street,
unlocks the door of grief, despair, and fear,
and speaks a word of peace to all who hear.

2 The risen Christ, who stands with wounded side,
breathes out his Spirit on them to abide
whose faith still wavers, who dare not believe;
new grace, new strength, new purpose they receive.

4 May we, Christ's body, walk and serve and stand
with those oppressed in this and every land,
till all are blessed and can a blessing be,
restored in Christ to true humanity.

Benediction

Peace be with you, Jesus says to us in your room.
"As the Father sent me, so I send you."
No doubt or fear can lock God out of our lives.
Remember that as you leave this worship time
you are sent forward to live by faith.

And may these words echo through your mind, as well:

*"Blessed are those who have not seen
and yet have come to believe."*

And all God's people say, "**Amen!**"

***Resources from *Doubting Thomas*, Mennonite Brethren Productions**

OUR FELLOWSHIP TIME CONTINUES...