

NEXT STEP: STUDY & SHARE

READINGS

Acts 4:32-35

Psalm 133

How good & pleasant it is to live together in unity. (v1)

1 John 1:1--2:2

John 20:19-31

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, with joy we celebrate the day of our Lord's resurrection. By the grace of Christ among us, enable us to show the power of the resurrection in all that we say & do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior & Lord, who lives & reigns with you & the Holy Spirit, one God, now & forever. Amen.

SERMON TEXT- John 20:19-31

¹⁹When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, & the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came & stood among them & said, "Peace be with you."²⁰After he said this, he showed them his hands & his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.²¹Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."²²When he had said this, he breathed on them & said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.²³If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."²⁴But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.²⁵So 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, & put my finger in the mark of the nails & my hand in his side, I will not believe."²⁶A week later his disciples were again in the house, & Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came & stood among them & said, "Peace be with you."²⁷Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here & see my hands. Reach out your hand & put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe."²⁸Thomas answered him, "My Lord & my God!"²⁹Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen & yet have come to believe."³⁰Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book.³¹But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, & that through believing you may have life in his name.

LISTENING TO . . .

GOD- *Christian life is rooted in the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit*

1. How does this episode connect to *John 13:1-17, 31b-34*? How is the purpose (v23) of the gift of the Holy Spirit to these first *pastors* loving service (*13:1b, 15*)? Think also about symbolic connections between the washing of feet & forgiveness of specific sins (see *13:10*). See *Genesis 2:7; John 13:13; 16:13; Romans 6:23; 8:9-17; 1 John 1:8-10*
2. What does St. John write about the purpose of his book (v31)? How is St. Thomas' exclamation (v28) the climax of the story? See *John 5:24, 37-47, 6:26, 35-51, 60-71, 8:12-47, 9:24-41; cf. 20:30, 21:25*

EACH OTHER- *Sharing & growing with our brothers & sisters in Christ*

3. St. John only picks out 7 miracles (*2:1-11, 4:43-54, 5:1-9, 6:1-5, 16-25, 9:1-41, 11:1-44*) & 7 "I am" statements (*6:35, 8:12, 10:7, 10:11, 11:25, 14:6, 15:5* cf. *Exodus 3:14; John 8:58, 18:4-5*) to make his point (v31). Tell of 7 specific times God has done something powerful in your life & 7 specific times you have learned- in a personal way- something about God's character.
4. Now make a list of 7 specific times you had to ask God for forgiveness of your sins & 7 specific things going on right now in your life that you need to ask God for forgiveness.
Review Small Catechism: 10 Commandments; Confession/Office of the Keys;

NEIGHBORS- *Bearing fruit for those not yet our brothers & sisters*

5. People are completely embarrassed by the idea of confessing their sins & receiving forgiveness- & doing so with a pastor (see #1). But this is precisely the reason God gives us pastors & congregations (*Augsburg Confession: Articles IV-VII; Luke 24:47*). He wants us to have this personal experience (v28). How can you help others cope with the embarrassment? *AC available <bookofconcord.org>*
6. How does this gospel episode comfort, challenge, & counter our cultural ideas that the Holy Spirit (or encountering him) is a matter of feeling, motivation, emotion, psychology, performance, or marketing? How can you watch out for these tricks & lures, etc.?

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Second Sunday of Easter
Series: Thrive on the Vine

04.11.21
Rev. Jared Stillions, STS

Fresh Air

The gift of the Holy Spirit delivers the Resurrection's benefits to us

-Notes-

KEY VERSE: If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them;
if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” (v24)

-NEXT STEPS MEMORY VERSE-

Blessed are those who have not seen & yet have come to believe.
(John 20:29)

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