

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. Compare this with the Maundy Thursday story (*John 13:1-17, 31-34*). How do they connect to show an ideal picture of the New Testament pastorate/ priesthood? See *Luke 24:44-49, Romans 10:13-15*
2. How does 1 *John 1:1--2:2* connect with the Gospel? What does it teach us about the role of Confession & Forgiveness in our life together as congregation? See *Small Catechism: Office of the Keys* available bookofconcord.org

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

3. What do you think: how (or not) are St. Thomas' requests (vv20, 25) reasonable? How do vv30-31 answer your own questions about the historicity of Jesus' bodily resurrection?
4. Classically, "reason" was understood as a tool/function of one's mind (or will), not a primary & independent part/system of the mind (cf. "reasonable person" in law). How do vv30-31 invite you to logically reason/think through the true claims of Faith (the content of Christianity, & esp. the Bible's Gospels) to arrive at St. Thomas' conclusion in v28?

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

5. Congregations are often well-known for their meal fellowship. How does sharing a meal with pre-Christians & newcomers "set the table" for the revelation of Christian truth?
6. Consider the socio-econo-political union shared in the Jerusalem congregation (*Acts 4:32-35*). Despite the great differences in social, economic, & political understandings then & in today's consumerist culture, what would it mean to your neighborhood if you congregation's members shared something approaching this unity? How can you help lead this change, especially with your tithes & offerings as well as your use of Confession & Forgiveness (cf. 1 *John 1:8-9*)?

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Second Sunday of Easter

04.07.24

Series: Let's Eat

Rev. Jared Stillions, STS

Life together is more than food, but not less

Big Reveal

To eat with each other nourishes the whole person

-Notes-

KEY VERSE: When he had said this, he breathed on them & said to them,
“Receive the Holy Spirit.” (v22)

-NEXT STEPS MEMORY VERSE-

Blessed are those who have not seen & yet have come to believe.

(John 20:29)

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