

NEXT STEP: STUDY & SHARE

READINGS

Acts 2:14a, 22-32

Psalm 16

In your presence there is fullness of joy. (v11)

1 Peter 1:3-9

John 20:19-31

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty & eternal God, the strength of those who believe & the hope of those who doubt, may we, who have not seen, have faith in you & receive the fullness of Christ's blessing, 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 is St. Thomas' request any different from the others (vv20-21) or not? How is his exclamation (v28) the climax of the St. John's gospel? *See 1:1-14, 2:11, 5:19-47, 6:10-14, 25-51, 8:12-20,42-59, 20:30-31, 21:24-25*
2. How does the first lesson connect to the Gospel lesson? How does it direct your focus in the Gospel reading? Think in terms of themes, plot structure, models, promises, inversions etc. By the way, where did St. Peter all of a sudden get such insight into the Psalms (& Old Testament, generally)? *See Luke 24:44-49*

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

3. What are some of the things you doubt in your faith life. What about them makes them seem doubtful to you? Take your time & think through them. What memories, associations, & connections do these doubts share with other things in your life? Realize that doubting isn't the same thing as unbelief or refusal to believe or rejection of true faith. Pray about these things & ask God to help you accept & trust his truth about these matters, even though you struggle. Ask that the fog of doubt give way to the great cloud of witnesses (*Hebrews 11:1--12:12*) *See Mark 9:17-27, esp. v24; Hebrews 11:1, 12:1-2* Make an appointment to talk to your pastor if necessary.
4. Talk about #3 with someone else. How can you be supportive of each other in these doubts as you "work out your salvation with fear & trembling"? *See Philippians 2:1-13, esp. vv12-13*

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

5. How can you be open and honest with folks who doubt that the church has anything real to offer them?
6. Check-in for *Corona Virus Challenge* **Make it your goal to reach out to one other person in the congregation (not in your home/family) each day during these restrictions.** How has this gone for you? How have others received your care & concern for them? How has it gotten easier or harder? If you haven't tried or (tried very hard) what has prevented you? What do you have to lose? What do you have to gain?

Second Sunday of Easter

04.19.20

Series: Lost & Found

Rev. Jared Stillions, STS

Low Visibility

*Doubt can be a misty, dense fog without substance
Jesus offers himself clearly & concretely*

-Notes-

KEY VERSE: Then 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.” (v27)

-NEXT STEPS MEMORY VERSE-

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

Prayer of the Day from SundaysandSeasons.com. Copyright 2020 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies license SB140201. Scripture is reprinted from New Revised Standard Version Bible with Apocrypha, copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Devotion prepared by Rev. Jared Stillions. Copyright 2020; may be reproduced & shared for personal, non-sale use, provided this copyright notice is included.

NEXT STEP: STUDY & SHARE

READINGS

Acts 2:14a, 22-32

Psalm 16

In your presence there is fullness of joy. (v11)

1 Peter 1:3-9

John 20:19-31

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty & eternal God, the strength of those who believe & the hope of those who doubt, may we, who have not seen, have faith in you & receive the fullness of Christ's blessing, 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 is St. Thomas' request any different from the others (vv20-21) or not? How is his exclamation (v28) the climax of the St. John's gospel? See 1:1-14, 2:11, 5:19-47, 6:10-14, 25-51, 8:12-20,42-59, 20:30-31, 21:24-25
2. How does the first lesson connect to the Gospel lesson? How does it direct your focus in the Gospel reading? Think in terms of themes, plot structure, models, promises, inversions etc. By the way, where did St. Peter all of a sudden get such insight into the Psalms (& Old Testament, generally)? See Luke 24:44-49

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

3. What are some of the things you doubt in your faith life. What about them makes them seem doubtful to you? Take your time & think through them. What memories, associations, & connections do these doubts share with other things in your life? Realize that doubting isn't the same thing as unbelief or refusal to believe or rejection of true faith. Pray about these things & ask God to help you accept & trust his truth about these matters, even though you struggle. Ask that the fog of doubt give way to the great cloud of witnesses (*Hebrews 11:1--12:12*) See Mark 9:17-27, esp. v24; *Hebrews 11:1, 12:1-2* Make an appointment to talk to your pastor if necessary.
4. Talk about #3 with someone else. How can you be supportive of each other in these doubts as you "work out your salvation with fear & trembling"? See *Philippians 2:1-13, esp. vv12-13*

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

5. How can you be open and honest with folks who doubt that the church has anything real to offer them?
6. Check-in for *Corona Virus Challenge* Make it your goal to reach out to one other person in the congregation (not in your home/family) each day during these restrictions. How has this gone for you? How have others received your care & concern for them? How has it gotten easier or harder? If you haven't tried or (tried very hard) what has prevented you? What do you have to lose? What do you have to gain?

Second Sunday of Easter

04.19.20

Series: Lost & Found

Rev. Jared Stillions, STS

Low Visibility

*Doubt can be a misty, dense fog without substance
Jesus offers himself clearly & concretely*

-Notes-

KEY VERSE: Then 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.” (v27)

-NEXT STEPS MEMORY VERSE-

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

Prayer of the Day from SundaysandSeasons.com. Copyright 2020 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies license SB140201. Scripture is reprinted from New Revised Standard Version Bible with Apocrypha, copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Devotion prepared by Rev. Jared Stillions. Copyright 2020; may be reproduced & shared for personal, non-sale use, provided this copyright notice is included.