

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Sundays after Christmas and Easter are called “Low Sundays” by many pastors and members alike. Especially today, the first Sunday after Easter. Easter Sunday is a time of high energy, high emotion all the way around. Today, not so much. Seems kind of low energy today, lower attendance, probably lower offerings, even the gospel seems kind of down. Last Sunday we heard of the empty tomb of Jesus, now we have the disciples huddled together behind locked doors.

Plus we have Thomas. Often maligned, sometimes called doubting, but consider, he hasn’t experienced what the other disciples have already seen that first Easter. Now Jesus appears a second time, and he knows what Thomas has said, and he invites Thomas to put his fingers and his hand into the wounds, and he invites Thomas to stop doubting and believe. The crucified Lord, is risen from the dead. Witnessed by Thomas and the other disciples.

In our second reading last Sunday, the Apostle Paul gave us an eyewitness account of Jesus’ appearance to him. Paul, like the disciples, was also a witness to the Lord Jesus. Jesus says to Thomas today “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.” Then our gospel writer, John, writes “Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.”

Grace through faith, believing, and we have life in Jesus’ name. We rise with Jesus in our baptisms and through our baptisms, every single day. We like Thomas confess “My Lord and my God.” But here’s the thing, although sin, self, the world, have been conquered by our Risen Lord, you and I still face temptations, other things get in the way of our faith. Including ourselves, our wants and our desires.

So we need to face it that we are not our own lord and god, and yes, we do sin, to say otherwise is to attempt to deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. We are surrounded by sin, death, suffering, poverty, religious wars are taking place on a huge scale around the world, we see racism, forms of abuse and crime. All we have to do is read or watch the news and we see hypocrisy, pride, people who clearly suffer from superiority complexes. And this is the reality of the world we live in. Life is complicated, and it becomes very easy to simply accept this reality. Oh we know and appreciate the resurrection, but we can’t see any immediate benefits, there doesn’t seem to be anything tangible, no quick payback. Oh sure, you hear the pastor talk about faith, but it’s an intellectual thing, you believe, maybe not quite sure just what you believe, and sometimes you might feel like Thomas, looking for proof, something you can put your hands on.

I have always identified a little bit with Thomas, there have been times when I wanted a sign, something to tell me I was on the right path, but the truth of the matter is, when I finally realized it, the signs have been there all along. I realized I am confronted with our living God, the resurrected Christ every day, and all I can say is "My Lord and my God!"

Jesus speaks to me from scripture, from my brothers and sisters, he speaks to me through his Word, through baptisms and communion, I like you, have not seen, but I like you believe. Now contrary to what the general public thinks, seeing isn't believing. Believing is believing, believing is life in Jesus' name, believing is witnessing to a hostile unbelieving world, believing is stepping out in faith, believing is taking risks, believing is making oneself vulnerable, believing is the power and peace of God, the Holy Spirit, believing is the gift of the grace of God, believing is the life we live in Christ's name!

This might be a "low Sunday" but our Lord Jesus is risen from the dead and gives us new life. It's a "high Sunday for us!" Christ is risen! AMEN