

4/19/09 – Confirmation Day

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY Lord Jesus Christ, as You showed Yourself to all the disciples, including the one who doubted, so show Yourself to us today in Word and Sacrament, that we would be blessed with peace and empowered with the Spirit's presence; On this Confirmation Day, we especially pray that you would bless our Confirmation students with these blessings. We pray through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and rules with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

THE FIRST TESTAMENT LESSON Acts 4:32-35 (*The apostles testified with power to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.*)

32 All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. 33 With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. 34 There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales 35 and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.

THE EPISTLE LESSON 1 John 1:1---2:2 (*We have seen and testify to you the eternal life which is ours in Christ Jesus.*)

1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched-- this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. 2 The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. 3 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 4 We write this to make our joy complete.

5 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. 8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

2:1 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense-- Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

THE GOSPEL LESSON John 20:19-31 (*Jesus touches Thomas so that Thomas may touch Him and disperse his doubts and fears.*)

19 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors 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 side. The

disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. **21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."**

24 Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it." 26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." 28 Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

30 Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 **But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.**

INTRO - In late January or early February 1993 my wife and I did something for the first time. She had to go to work, and I was visiting the homes of members. At home we had Josh who was now 12, Andy who was 10, Mary who was 5, and Tim who was 3 or 4 months old. Do you know what we did, we left the other children in the care of our oldest who had now turned 12. Previously we had hired babysitters, but now we left the younger children with the older one. Looking back now I wonder the wisdom of leaving the others with the oldest, even though we had heard that a child legally had to be 12 to babysit. Was my 12 year old really up to the job? It all turned out alright.

I. In our lesson for today Jesus is giving his disciples, and he is giving us a job that might seem a little bit much, or a lot bit much.

A. In verse 21 Jesus says, **21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."**

1. The heavenly Father sent Jesus into the world to live a righteous life, to do the promised work of the Messiah, to die for the sins of the whole world, and to rise again winning victory over the sin that causes death, and winning victory over evil and all enemies of God's people.

2. Remember, Jesus said, **21 . . . As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."** 3. Does that seem like God is calling you to a little bit much?

B. God is not calling us to be THE Messiah, but Jesus was specific of what He had in mind for the disciples.

1. He told them in the sermon on the mount, ***let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.***

2. He told them in Matthew **20, *whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—***

3. In John 13:34, Jesus says, ***Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.***

4. And here, Jesus sends the disciples out, **21 . . . *As the Father has sent me, I am sending you. . . .If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.***"

C. Today, our Confirmation Class is not only sharing with us their faith in God, but He is again calling them and sending them out, just like he does us. ***As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.*** Do you think this is a bit much that Jesus is expecting? For us? For our Confirmation Class?

II. Now, before we left our younger children with our oldest, I gave him some instructions, some notes. "Here is the phone number where you can reach mom. Here is where you can reach me. If you can't get them, then call these friends." We gave Josh some tools, and some help so that he was not alone in doing the job.

A. Listen to the help Jesus gives. First, before He sends the disciples, He gives them a greeting that comes with a gift. **"PEACE be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."**

1. Jesus gives His disciples God's peace or Shalom before He sends them on their mission.
2. In Hebrew, the word Shalom means more than just peace, or peacefulness. It means all the blessings and grace that a person receives from God.
3. In all of John, there are only 3 times that Jesus greets His disciples like this. All three are in today's reading.
4. God gives peace, and blessings to go, because He has risen, and the peace and victory over our sin is accomplished.

B. In addition, we are also told Jesus gave more help. **22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."**

1. About 40 days after this event, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to strengthen His disciples as He strengthens us also. In addition to peace, Jesus gives His Spirit for this job.
2. In today's lesson we are told about God's Word, **"But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.** God also gives his word to guide, strengthen, and create faith.
3. Days before Jesus had given forgiveness in the Lord's Supper. And a few days later Jesus sends the disciples Baptizing.
4. Jesus did not send the disciples without help. He gave them His presence, his gifts and his help as He sent them.

C. And today God gives us this peace, this shalom, these victory blessings in many ways. Jesus does not send us, nor does He send today's confirmation class without His help and blessings.

III. As I was about to leave Josh with the younger children, as I gave my son instructions and a list of phone numbers, do you know what I remember him saying? "I know Dad." To a certain extent he didn't know what could happen. (Maybe that's why I got my first speeding ticket in Alaska that night as I raced home.)

- A. Confirmation Class, there are events coming in your life which you don't know, and which when they come you may not think you can handle.
- B. The truth is you probably can't handle them, but God can.
 1. If Jesus can handle the sin of the world, and overcome death, he can handle what seem to be big problems and big jobs for us, even though they aren't that big in comparison to what he did.
 2. Jesus is with you day and night, through blessings and trial, with his guidance and love.
 3. Lean on Him. Jesus is all we need to go as He sends us.

CONCLUSION - Do you see what I have here, something else new. These are all copies of websites for Adventure travel companies. Adventures are big business these days.

However, if you really want an adventure . . . the greatest adventure you can experience is the Christian life God has in front of you, the Christian life to which He is sending you. As you go, know that Jesus has outfitted you for the journey with His peace and blessings, His

forgiveness and word, with His sacraments. Go, sent by our Lord Himself! Amen.