

4/11/2010

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY Almighty God, grant that we who have celebrated the Lord's resurrection may by Your grace confess that Jesus is Lord and God through our words and through our actions. We pray through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

THE FIRST TESTAMENT LESSON Acts 5:12-20

(Peter and John proclaim the risen Christ in spite of opposition.)

12 The apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon's Colonnade. 13 No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people. 14 Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number. 15 As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. 16 Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by evil spirits, and all of them were healed.

17 Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. 18 They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. 19 But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out. 20 "Go, stand in the temple courts," he said, "and tell the people the full message of this new life."

THE EPISTLE LESSON Revelation 1:4-18

(John's vision of the glorified Jesus in heaven is revealed.)

4 John, To the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, 6 and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father-- to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

7 Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen. 8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."

9 I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. 10 On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, 11 which said: "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea." 12 I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and among the lampstands was someone "like a son of man," dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. 14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. 15 His feet were like bronze glowing in a

furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. 16 In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. 17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.

Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. 18 I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

THE GOSPEL LESSON John 21:19-31

(Thomas no longer doubts the resurrection.)

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.

19 Ou;shj ou=n ovyi,aj th/| h`me,ra| evkei,nh| th/| mia/| sabba,twn kai. tw/n qurw/n kekleisme,nwn o[pou h=san oi` maqhtai. dia. to.n fo,bon tw/n Vloudai,wn(h=lqen o` Vhsou/j kai. e;sth eivj to. me,son kai. le,gei auvtoi/j\ eivrh,nh u`mi/nÅ

Therefore being evening of that day, the first day of the wee and the doors having been locks where the disciples were because of the fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst and said to them, "Peace be to you." (Shalom)

20 kai. tou/to eivpw.n e;deixen ta.j cei/raj kai. th.n pleura.n auvtoi/jÅ evca,rhsan ou=n oi` maqhtai. ivdo,ntej to.n ku,rionÅ

And, having said this he showed them the/his hands and side. The disciples therefore rejoiced having seen the Lord.

21 ei=pen ou=n auvtoi/j ũo` VĦsou/jĐ pa,lin\ eivrh,nh u`mi/n\ kaqw.j avpe,stalke,n me o` path,r(kavgw. pe,mpw u`ma/jÅ

Jesus therefore said to them again, “Peace be to you. Just as the Father has sent me, I also send you.”

22 kai. tou/to eivpw.n evnefu,shsen kai. le,gei auvtoi/j\ la,bete pneu/ma a[gion\

And having said this he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”

23 a;n tinwn avfh/te ta.j a`marti,aj avfe,wntai auvtoi/j(a;n tinwn krath/te kekra,thntaiÅ

Whoever you forgive (their) sins, they shall be forgiven to them. And, whose so ever you grasp / retain, they shall be retained.

24 Qwma/j de. ei-j evk tw/n dw,deka(o` lego,menoj Di,dumoj(ouv h=n metV auvtw/n o[te h=lqen VĦsou/jÅ

And Thomas, one of the twelve, who was called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

25 e;legon ou=n auvtw/| oi` a;lloi maqhtai,\ e`wra,kamen to.n ku,rionÅ o` de. ei=pen auvtoi/j\ eva.n mh. i;dw evn tai/j cersi.n auvtou/ to.n tu,pon tw/n h[lwn kai. ba,lw to.n da,ktulo,n mou eivj to.n tu,pon tw/n h[lwn kai. ba,lw mou th.n cei/ra eivj th.n pleura.n auvtou/(ouv mh. pisteu,swÅ

The other disciples therefore said to him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Except i see in his hands the place of the nails and I cast / place my finger into the place of the nails and put my hand into his side, I shall not believe.

26 Kai. meqV h`me,raj ovktw. pa,lin h=san e;sw oi` maqhtai. auvtou/ kai. Qwma/j metV auvtw/nÅ e;rcetai o` VĦsou/j tw/n qurw/n kekleisme,nwn kai. e;sth eivj to. me,son kai. ei=pen\ eivrh,nh u`mi/nÅ

And after eight days when the disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them, Jesus came, the doors having been locked, Jesus stood in their midst and said to them, “Peace be to you.”

27 ei=ta le,gei tw/| Qwma/| fe,re to.n da,ktulo,n sou w-de kai. i;de ta.j cei/ra,j mou kai. fe,re th.n cei/ra, sou kai. ba,le eivj th.n pleura,n mou(kai. mh. gi,nou a;pistoj avlla. pisto,jÅ

Then he said to Thomas, “Bring your finger here and see my side and bring your hand and cast it

into my side. And bring your hand and cast it into my side. And do now become unbelieving but believing.

28 avpekri,qh Qwma/j kai. ei=pen auvtw/\ o` ku,rio,j mou kai. o` qeo,j mou

And Thomas answered and said to hiim, “My Lord and my God.”

29 le,gei auvtw/| o` Vlhsou/j\ o[ti e`w,raka,j me pepi,steukajE maka,rioi oi` mh. ivdo,ntej kai. pisteu,santej

Jesus said to him, beause you have seen you have believed. Blessed are the ones not having seen and are believing.

30 Polla. me.n ou=n kai. a;lla shmei/a evpoi,hsen o` Vlhsou/j evnw,pion tw/n maqhtw/n lauvtou/Ð(a] ouv k e;stin gegramme,na evn tw/| bibli,w| tou,tw/\

Therefore, mny other things and other signs Jesus did in the presence of his disciples, who have not been written in this book.

31 tau/ta de. ge,graptai i[na pisteu,ÎsÐhte o[ti Vlhsou/j evstin o` cristo.j o` ui`o.j tou/ qeou/(kai. i[na pisteu,ontej zwh.n e;chte evn tw/| ovno,mati auvtou/

But these things have been written in order than you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and in order that having believed you may have life in His name.

My wife and I and our son Tim are going outside for our daughter Mary's graduation soon. After 4 years of college she'll be graduating from Valparaiso University. I recently saw on her Facebook page that she was looking forward to graduation, and the work of her student and teaching and her school being all over. I replied, sort of like a stick in the mud dad, graduation isn't the end of the work. It's just the beginning, because then its time for a job.

I have a feeling that some of some times our church can give a wrong impression. Being a Christian includes learning and growth. But, after all confirmation is over, the classes are over, it can seem like everything is done. Actually, it has only just begun.

The disciples had been through a learning and training time. For 3 years Jesus was teaching them that He was the Son of God. He was teaching them about the kingdom of God. But His teaching was done. He had died and risen and now he would be going to His Father in heaven. It could seem like this discipleship time was over. But, not according to what Jesus said to the disciples. **As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."**

On the night after Easter, these were Jesus' words to the disciples, to us, to today's Confirmation Class. **As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."** Now, Confirmation may be over. But the work has just begun. I'm hope the Confirmation students understood this call. I'm not sure the rest of us Christians understand this call. But, it is actually the call and commission of Jesus. Jesus not only calls us to receive His forgiveness and love, He calls us to share what we have received. He calls us to share His love, His law and standards for life, His forgiveness and His salvation. In fact, all the effort Jesus made of being willing to leave home and being willing to be rejected and suffer, He is calling us to that same effort. The lives of others are worth that much. It may seem like an overwhelming job. But, in many ways it is the biggest adventure of all. Yes, today is confirmation day, but it's not all over. If you hear all that Jesus says, it is just beginning. **As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."**

Last year we had a lot of people to our home for lunch or dinner and to get to know one another and talk about God's work at St. John. The night we had the biggest group was a Friday night and I planned to cook halibut, salmon, burgers and brats on the grill. Unfortunately, my grill burner was rusted and crumbling. I had 60 people to cook for, but in the middle of cooking the burner fell apart. I had made a mistake in the tool I used to do the work.

I have been sharing with church leaders that Jesus has an immense and exciting work for us to do, spreading His kingdom. But it can seem like he made a mistake. He chose the wrong tool. He chose people, sinful and imperfect people to do a holy and awesome work.

Look at Thomas. Jesus had told His disciples ahead of time he would die and rise. But, Thomas hurt so much, once he understood that Jesus died, he just couldn't believe that He had risen. Jesus appeared to the others and they told Thomas but he was honest about His doubts. **"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."**

Sometimes we feel like Jesus has this great kingdom work in front of us, **As the Father has**

sent me, I am sending you." But, we can think he made a bad choice in who he chose for the work. Thomas may have seemed weak. We are doubting. We give in to temptation. We don't always do a good job in bringing God's forgiveness and love even when we try. Jesus, you may think you have this great work for us, but, didn't you make a mistake in who you chose?

That day at our house I made a mistake in looking at the broken grill. There were others in the back cooking. And I had another grill, a charcoal grill. These friends were able to use the charcoal grills and get the meat cooked. I could have looked at the friends, rather than the broken grill, and understood the cooking would still get done.

We can look at today's story and focus on Thomas, and his weakness. We can look at ourselves, and focus on our faults and think, Jesus, did you choose the wrong person? But, then we are forgetting the one who called. You see Jesus not only died, He rose. Jesus knew Thomas' weakness and failure, but He knew the forgiveness the Father sent. Jesus could have scolded Thomas. He could have sent him away saying he wasn't worthy to do this work of being sent. But, Jesus appears specifically to Thomas. Jesus gently addresses Thomas's doubts and his issues. He shows Thomas His hands and feet. He calls him to faith. He uses the forgiveness Thomas is called to share, and he restores this man who has failed. Instead of looking at our weakness, we should look at Jesus and His love and forgiveness and power for Thomas and for us.

Yes, the work to which God calls us is bigger than we are. And we have failed in many ways. The Confirmation Class will face challenges that are bigger than they are. But Jesus knew who we were when He called. His dying and rising is stronger than our failure and sin. His forgiveness can and does restore and equip people who may not be up to the big adventure. The idea is not to look at our weakness, but the power, the love, and the forgiveness of the one who calls, the one who restores, and the one who sends.

Mary said she can't wait for the work to be done. I said, like a stick in the mud, graduation is when the work really begins. Actually, doing the work she has been preparing for is actually a great adventure. When you get to do a job for which you prepared, when you get to face challenges and make a difference for good, that is a great adventure. The Confirmation class will share their plan to serve God with their lives. God can and does use our feeble efforts to spread His almighty kingdom of love and forgiveness. Spreading His kingdom is not just a lot of work, it's a great adventure. It is a privilege to serve the Lord who saved us. And, God is there to help imperfect people to face this holy adventure.

Thanks

Confirmation Students

Logan, Hans, Darbie, Charlotte, David, Quillan, Sandy, and Kaycee

Grieving

III

- Pastor Allen - Hospital Visit on Thursday
- Cherie Ruesch - Friend of Maryann Probasco, brain tumor, in Seattle
- Jacki Rose's nephew Ben, kidney transplant April 28 from his mother, Jacki's sister, Vicki (Jacki is the second option for a kidney)
- LeRoy Jenson
- Beth Lawton - Bed rest
- Anna Mae Shackelford
- John Paul's daughter Jodi Holcomb
- Ellen Jones
- Emily Stevens - recovering from ankle surgery
- Monty Hart
- Dave Miranda
- Others . . . on our hearts and minds

Country

Serving in Harm's Way

Augie Manelick

Bill Abbott

Garon Bishop