

## “My Lord and My God”

John 20:19-31

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the Rev. Todd R. Goddard, pastor

Zion West Walworth United Methodist Church

John 20:19-31

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So 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, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.”

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.” Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.” 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.

Prayer.

“Peace be with you”  
is the greeting of our Risen Savior.  
“Peace be with you”  
are the first words of reunion.  
“Peace be with you”  
is the longing desire of a God  
for His children  
to make the right choices  
to live in peace.  
Violence,  
the antithesis of peace,  
its evil twin.  
Violence  
is the option of the ignorant,  
those who have never been taught  
alternatives to brute force.

Violence,  
is the choice of those who've never  
been greeted by Jesus,  
who have never been made aware  
of our Risen Savior's continual presence.

Twice, Jesus appears  
to have walked through locked doors.  
The first night after the Resurrection  
Peter and John  
(who had seen, believed, and  
promptly done nothing about it)  
with the others  
had blown the bugle of retreat;  
locked themselves in the Upper Room  
for fear of the Jews,  
when he came and stood among them,  
when he greets them with “Peace.”  
He shows them his crucifixion wounds

because, apparently,  
words are insufficient  
from a resurrected God,  
a risen Savior.  
They had to see for themselves.  
And still,  
they do nothing about it.  
A week later  
although the doors were shut,  
Jesus came and stood among them  
to present himself  
to the previously absent  
and understandably doubtful  
Thomas.

“My Lord and My God!”

Wouldn't you be doubtful, too?  
“If those ten had truly witnessed  
a resurrected corpse,  
wouldn't they have changed?  
Wouldn't it have affected them  
such that they would have done something about it,  
instead of cowering out of view?”

Fact is  
it is hard to believe that  
through Jesus  
his corpse was resurrected,  
let alone  
attach some higher degree  
of theological doctrine,  
such as  
because Jesus won victory over the grave  
we have been given the gift of eternal life.  
It is harder than cement  
to get there  
without first believing  
in what experience tells us  
is the impossible  
bringing the dead back to life.

I know  
because I've tried it:  
I've performed CPR  
perhaps a hundred times in my life,  
every occasion by the book,  
in a frantic attempt  
to bring the dead back to life  
and in my experience  
it just hasn't been successful.

“Call it,” the doctor states  
void of emotion  
as gloves are removed  
leaving the dirty work up to others.

We've all been to the funeral parlor  
in our expression of grief.  
Who here among us  
hasn't willed with every fibre of their being  
to take the hand of the deceased  
and to make them rise  
and live to see another day?  
Death visits  
an innocent lacrosse player  
warming up for a game.  
Death calls  
upon a colleague this past week  
when as he rides  
his newly purchased motorcycle home  
a gust of wind pushes him into oncoming traffic.  
Death is dressed as a reaper  
knocking at the door  
spreading illness and disease  
with wanton abandon.  
Grief  
is the pain of helplessness.  
Of recognizing that no amount of will  
on our part  
can return the dead  
to the land of the living.  
It makes me wonder why we are so critical  
of those Upper Room disciples.  
It makes Thomas' reply  
in that instant of recognition  
“My Lord and My God!”  
so much more miraculous.

I'm being perfectly honest with you;  
when it comes to death,  
we don't have a lot to hang on to.  
All we have is the thin  
string of faith.  
It is so tenuous and fragile,  
being stretched  
over fifty generations  
over two thousand years  
over ten thousand miles  
and over light years of different cultures.  
But it is something.  
It is the only thing we've got.  
And it comes to us in the statement of Thomas

“My Lord and My God!”  
It is the only thing we've got;  
and the alternative is despair.

Because belief is so utterly fragile  
so completely close to collapse,  
Jesus goes the extra step of assurance,  
“Have you believed because you have seen me?  
Blessed are those who have not seen  
and yet have come to believe.”

For me and my experience  
these words completes the deal.  
These words of assurance  
is what keeps me coming back to the well of faith  
to drink of Christ's everlasting water.  
These words are so completely honest,  
it tells me that  
yes, it is true,  
“Jesus loves me this I know  
for the Bible tells me so.”  
These words confirm in me  
the miraculous:  
Jesus Christ, who once was alive,  
was tortured, killed, and buried,  
and on the third day,  
he rose from the dead;  
who, for us and for our salvation,  
judges us as righteous  
when our moment of death presents,  
that we, too  
might join him in everlasting life  
whose kingdom shall have no end.

My beloved,  
peace brings recognition.  
It is the evidence of resurrection  
in the absence of a corpse  
and an ascended Savior.  
Peace, be with you;  
become the words spoken,  
that together with His Spirit,  
that allow us to say  
with absolute certainty,  
“My Lord and My God!”

Peace, be with you. Amen.