

The Second Sunday of Easter
April 24, 2022
Proper 12

The Lessons: Acts 5:12-20
 Psalm 148
 Revelation 1:4-18
 John 20:19-31

The Hymns: # 467 (v. 1-4, 7) *Awake, My Heart, with Gladness*
 # 470 *O Sons and Daughters of the King*
 # 480 *He's Risen, He's Risen*

The Collect: Almighty God, grant that we who have celebrated the Lord's resurrection may by Your grace confess in our life and conversation that Jesus is Lord and God; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

The Sermon:
 "O Sons and Daughters of the King!"
 John 20:19-31

Dear sons and daughters of Christ, our risen King,

Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! As sons and daughters of the King, we continue to celebrate the amazing events which are the reason why we gather to worship on the first day of the week -- the Resurrection of Jesus -- the Son of God and the Son of Man. Think about the varieties of culture, nationalities, personalities, interests, economic status, and languages of the people who assemble to worship the Triune God throughout the world! What a diversity of peoples!

Yet, they are the children of God -- not based upon anything other than the solidarity of the great confession -- Christ is Risen!

On any given Sunday the sons and daughters of the King come to hear of the Good News of God in Jesus Christ -- the Gospel which transcends culture, economic status, geographic boundaries, personality, and educational level. And you, too, have come to hear that Christ is Risen and to sing praises to God that the grave has lost its sting.

The Hymn of the Day today is #470. Please open your hymnal to this hymn #470. This hymn is based on the Gospel lesson that we just heard and will serve as the outline for the sermon and we will be singing stanzas of it throughout the sermon. A short look at this page in your hymnal reinforces what has been said about the Gospel spanning not only culture and nation, but also time. Look to the very bottom of the page you see that the hymn is based on the very chapter from which our Gospel reading comes, John chapter 20 as well as Mark, chapter 16. The hymn was originally written in Latin with the beginning stanza being, O filii et filiae -- "O sons and daughters." The author of this medieval hymn is unknown. Some of the stanzas have been attributed to a Franciscan friar named Jean

Tisserand who died in Paris in 1494. It was translated by an Englishman named John Neale. The hymn's tune was written by a German, Melchior Vulpius in 1609.

The first stanza of the hymn is in the form of an announcement made to the One, Holy, Christian, Apostolic Church -- to you, the sons and daughters of Christ, the King. The content of this pronouncement is that "Christ is Risen." The LORD Jesus, Who was dead, is alive. Death has been defeated by Him and because He lives you sons and daughters of the King will live also. The grave could not hold Him and it will not hold those who are His. Let's sing that first stanza:

1 O Sons and daughters of the King, Whom heav'nly hosts in glory sing, Today the grave hath lost its sting: Alleluia!

One of the first things we notice about this hymn is that it is filled with Alleluias! Alleluia means "praise Yahweh, the LORD" -- a shout or song of praise to the LORD Who reigns above heaven and earth.

It is the tradition of the church, during the Lenten season, to omit the singing of the alleluias as we focus on the suffering and the death of Jesus. Easter morning breaks in on us with the pronouncement of "Christ is Risen." The Church responds with shouts of "alleluias" to our King.

The second and the third stanzas give us the context for our sermon text. Very early, while it was yet dark, several women had gone to the tomb. They were on the sad mission of finishing those things necessary for a proper burial of the body of Jesus. Their hearts were filled with sorrow. In the short time span of that walk from where they spent the night to the garden where the tomb was located, they survived an earthquake, were devastated at the thought that someone had stolen the body of Jesus, were visited by an angel with the best news that they could hear, Do not be amazed; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, Who was crucified. He has risen, He is not here; see the place where they laid Him. Let's sing stanzas 2 & 3:

2 That Easter morn, at break of day, The faithful women went their way To seek the tomb where Jesus lay: Alleluia!

3 An angel clad in white they see, Who sits and speaks unto the three, "Your Lord will go to Galilee:" Alleluia!

We now pick up with our text. It is the evening of that first Easter. Ten of the remaining eleven disciples were together with some other disciples. Thomas is not with them and we do not know where he was. Maybe he was gone on an errand, possibly buying supplies for the group. Or maybe he just needed some time alone to ponder the message that the women had brought earlier. The women who had met the angels and then had seen and heard Jesus early in the morning had brought this news. Peter and John had seen the tomb -- empty except for the burial cloths. Mary Magdalene said that she had seen the risen LORD and had brought a message from Him. While this occurred in the morning of this wonderful day this news did not produce faith among the disciples. Earlier, at a time and a place not recorded in the Bible, Jesus appeared to Peter. Two followers of Christ, who had gone to Emmaus, had returned to be with the disciples. The doors are locked and the disciples are

afraid to venture forth because of their fellow countrymen who were responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus.

Suddenly, in another miracle of His Resurrection, Jesus appears. Just as the tomb could not hold Him, neither are locked doors able to keep Him out. What does He say to those who had abandoned Him as He went to the cross and as He died the most horrible death ever died? What does He say to these fearful, weak, hiding ones who doubted the Word of Jesus given to them through the women?

What would He say? Let's sing the next stanza and find out -- stanza #4

4 That night the Apostles met in fear,
Amidst them came their Master dear
And said: "Peace be unto you here": Alleluia!

No wonder Christians sing "Alleluia". When the LORD Who was abandoned (except by a handful of people) on Good Friday and when those who were supposedly His followers could not be with Him for one hour and He had every right to demand a pound of flesh and to punish those who had deserted Him -- I mean how many times has He forgiven them and still they messed up their lives and gone their separate ways -- they treated Him and His Word as if they were nothing. But instead of anger and recrimination against them, Jesus said to them, "Peace be unto you!" Then He showed them His hands and His side -- He showed them the marks of His crucifixion.

That, dear people, is the purest Gospel -- the sweetest Good News. Peace be unto you -- look at these nail prints in My hands and feet -- look at My side where the spear pierced Me. The wounds of Christ shout out the Good News: "I Am Jesus and I Am Risen -- death has been defeated, your salvation is completed, forgiveness and peace with God is yours." Is it any wonder that the Apostle John writes, Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you."

We sing stanza #5

5 When Thomas first the tidings heard, That they had seen the risen Lord, He doubted the disciples' word: Alleluia!

Thomas had not been there when Jesus appeared to the disciples. And when they told him of Jesus' appearance to them, Thomas had doubted and said that "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe". It is now a week later. The disciples, Thomas included, were in the house and the doors were locked. Jesus appears to them once more and says to Thomas: Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side; do not be faithless, but believing. Or, in the words of the 6th stanza of the hymn we sing:

6 "My pierced side, O Thomas, see, And look upon My hands, My feet; Not faithless, but believing be.": Alleluia!

Again, pure Gospel. Thomas, these wounds were inflicted for you. Do you see these marks of the nails? You are not excluded because of them -- in fact, you are included because of them. Do you believe My Word of Promise? Do you believe Me? We sing Thomas's answer in Stanza # 7:

7 No longer Thomas then denied; He saw the feet, the hands, the side: "You are my LORD and God," he cried: Alleluia!

One of the Spirit-inspired actions of the Christian who has been restored or reassured of God's forgiveness and acceptance is to make confession. It is to say, "this I believe". Peter confessed: You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. The wise woman at the Samaritan well made her confession by asking, not a question of doubt but one of an emerging faith: "Can this be the Christ?" The centurion who crucified Jesus confessed: Truly this Man was the Son of God." Thomas' confession? My LORD and my God! There are many ways in which to make a confession of the faith. This morning, we will make our confession of faith in the words of the Apostles' Creed. Not only is Jesus Thomas' LORD and God, He is yours and mine.

When all those who confess "my LORD and my God" gather we celebrate the confession of OUR LORD – of Who He is, of what He has done, and of what He will do. The LORD is not merely THE Redeemer, not only MY Redeemer, not only YOUR Redeemer -- He is OUR Redeemer! For the Word of hope and promise is not restricted to those who saw Jesus with their own eyes, but also for those, like you and me, who have not yet seen Him. Let us sing of that truth in the 8th stanza:

8 How blessed are they who have not seen,
And yet whose faith has constant been,
For they eternal life shall win. Alleluia!

Whether your journey to worship has been near or far -- whether your journey in life has been one which has been marked by a God-pleasing life within His Church; or, been marked by God-disappointing steps which have caused you to stray -- Jesus not only lived that you may have eternal life -- He not only took your sins upon Himself as He died in your place; but He also rose for you on that most holy day of all days -- the day of His Resurrection. Through His Word you have been shown the Holy wounds of Christ. Sing stanza #9:

9 On this most holy day of days, be laud and jubilee and praise; To God your hearts and voices raise: Alleluia!

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His Name. A 10th stanza was originally added to this hymn. It is not included in our hymnal, but it is a fitting doxology:

10 And we with holy Church unite, As evermore is just and right, In glory to the King of light: Alleluia!
In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.