

*“Jesus said to Thomas, “Have you have believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.” – John 20:29*

Beloved Neighbors in Christ,

Christ is risen! Alleluia...Still! I say ‘still’ because the Resurrection of our Lord continues for a 50-day season and is not just one day celebrated only a few Sundays ago. Easter remains to be a time of self-reflection in how and where God wants us to be in our lives; just as Easter is also a time and place where we look for how and where we find God. Resurrection and new life certainly occurs in the spring flowers and plants shooting out of the ground, or the new planting season beginning again, but also in our hearts and in our faith.

I chose this verse from John’s gospel because I believe it should be seen everyday of our lives – in a place where we can look at it and not mistake it for a one-time event. Though Christ was resurrected by God only once, our faith in the resurrection ought to be something that we recognize again and again each day we live. Jesus’ raising from the dead is the absolute miracle and promise that defines who we are as Christians and grants the promises we have been given, including eternal life. And yet, we did not see it...but we still believe? Or do we?

St. Paul reminds us from his Letter to the Romans that: “For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we will certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His.” You see, my friends, we share in the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord...I am certain of this! These words parallel Jesus’ statement to Thomas because not all of the disciples were present on that first Easter morning. Not all were able to physically touch the wounded hands and side of Jesus. But the story is told in order that those who hear it may come to believe; and in believing, might know Christ’s name.

Maybe the familiar saying is reversed. Perhaps it is not, “Seeing is believing,” but rather, “Believing is seeing.” Through the eyes of our faith, we see the presence of the risen Christ in our midst, giving us the gift of life, forgiveness, everlasting peace, and sending us forth to tell the Good News that Christ has risen...and that He has risen, indeed! We are called as Christians to proclaim these assurances.

I encourage you over these next weeks of the Easter season to explore your own lives what it means for the resurrected Christ to come and see you. What does forgiveness mean? How do God’s promises affect and effect your personal lives? What kind of proof – if any – do you need to know that Jesus has risen from the dead? And where does any doubt seep into your faith life, if you question some scenes in the Passion story? But most importantly...where is God in your life and what is God pushing you to do?

I look forward to seeing you in worship and wish you a blessed Easter season!

In His sake,

Rev. Erik Karlson

Pastor, Neighbors in Christ Parish

References

McCullough-Bade, J. a. (2007). *Daily Discipleship - John 20:19-31*. Retrieved from Daily Discipleship: <https://www.elca.org/Resources/Bible-Studies>