



APRIL 19, 2020

LOVE FIRST, FIRST LOVE

WEEK DEVOTIONAL BASED ON SUNDAY'S WORSHIP SERVICE

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP SUNDAYS 9:00AM AT
WWW.FIRSTLUTHERAN-BARRON.ORG OR ON THE RADIO 97.7FM

JOHN 20:19-31

19 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." 20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." 22 When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." 24 But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 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." 26 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." 27 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." 28 Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 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." 30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. 31 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.

Message from Bishop Lauri Skow-Anderson

As Bishop of the NWSWI I am grateful for your partnership in ministry as we continue to do God's work with our hands even though we can't be together in the same place. The hungry are still being fed, the Bible camps are still gearing up for summer camp, campus pastors are staying in touch with college students, Lutheran Disaster Response is still finding ways to help those who survived the recent tornado in Nashville, LWR is still distributing the quilts you made around the world, LSS, WELCA, Seminary students are studying for their finals, congregational call committees are still interviewing pastoral candidates, we continue to pray and support our global companions in Malawi, and together we are still sharing the good news so that the next generation will come to know and love Jesus. Thank you for your ongoing partnership in ministry even in these difficult times.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty and eternal God, the strength of those who believe and the hope of those who doubt, may we, who have not seen, have faith in you and receive the fullness of Christ's blessing, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

REFLECTION

BASED ON BISHOP LAURI'S SERMON

Its Sunday night and the disciples are sitting on the floor, waiting; leaning against a wall, waiting; talking, replaying the events of the last 72 hours, mulling over in their minds what had happened and waiting. They didn't believe Mary's tale

about seeing Jesus that Sunday morning in the garden. Peter and the other disciple told again how they found the grave empty and the grave clothes folded. But they couldn't wrap their heads around what it meant. Can you imagine what the room looked like behind that locked door...10 emotionally exhausted men and women crying, grieving. But they were all just waiting...WAITING.... Like we all are. Waiting for this COVID 19 nightmare to be over...waiting impatiently... waiting fearfully....waiting hopefully...just waiting.

Dr. Seuss, one of my favorite theologians writes a great poem about waiting... In one of his last books, "Oh, The Places You'll Go" is a poem called "The Waiting Place" where he describes to us that "The Waiting Place" is a useless place. But we already know that. Waiting can be horrible, like waiting to get the results back from a test for cancer. This is not the happy anticipatory waiting of Advent or the waiting for a baby to be born.

The disciples must surely have felt stuck, paralyzed by fear, behind locked doors, grief stricken, and completely and totally unprepared to continue Jesus' ministry.

Then Jesus appears to them. First He speaks peace into the room, in them. Then, he speaks a blessing of peace a second time with the commission "As the Father has sent

me, so I send you." Commissioned to stop waiting and go, Jesus breathed on them the Holy Spirit and gave them instructions of what to do: to continue the work that got Jesus killed – healing the sick and forgiving their sins.

Here's the deal. We are sent out to share the good news of Jesus but we are locked up in our own homes for fear of getting sick or making others sick. So, what does it mean to be SENT today? As Easter people we are called by God and sent out into the world to share the good news of the resurrection and the transforming power of God love that raises the dead and give us all new life in Christ. The amazing opportunity for us all in this season of COVID 19 is to figure out what it means to live a Christian life when we are at home. This is a health crisis but it is also an opportunity to learn new ways to be church together, new ways to share the good news about Jesus. Here is the opportunity to use Technology, social media, video conference, the old fashioned telephone or paper letter in the mailbox at the end of driveway...to share the good news that Jesus has risen from the dead. Be curious to what Jesus is saying to us today. Pay attention to where Jesus is showing up.

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