

Bible Study
Second Sunday of Easter, Year C
April 3, 2016

[RCL] Acts 5:27-32; Revelation 1:4-8; John 20:19-31; Psalm 118:19-24 or Psalm 150

Psalm 118:14-18

The psalm is infectious with the clear truth telling that it conveys: “The Lord is my strength and my song!” It is an affirmation of the life that God imbues us with, and the realization that we never need be scared of death, for God secures our spiritual freedom. Lest we simply clap our hands with joy, the psalmist reminds us that we have a countervailing obligation. We will declare the works of the Lord. Our lives are called to declare the fact that, from the edge of the precipice, God has taken us by the hand and lead us to new life.

- How does your life declare God’s works?
- How do you see God’s saving grace in the world around you?

Acts 5:27-32

In its closer context, Acts 5:27-32 is part of the larger narrative of the initial missionary adventures of Peter and John in Jerusalem. After having been shown some leniency by the high priest, Peter and John are brought before them again for teaching the Good News to the people of Jerusalem. We see the punch/counter-punch of claimed authority that, in the true spirit of the risen Christ, upends the earthly authority (the high priests), in favor of Christ’s redeeming love. This redeeming love compels Peter and John to continue to spread the Good News in the face of strict orders to desist.

- How often are we asked to choose between our wants and desires, and a life in Christ?
- How do we proclaim the Good News in a society that may have a difficult time hearing it?

Revelation 1:4-8

“So it is to be.” We cannot stop Jesus’ ever-growing love once it is in our hearts. We have experienced the joy of resurrection and the Good News continues to ground us in the life of and for Christ. However, there is more to come, for God is that “who is and who was and *who is to come*.” This title for God appears nowhere else in the Bible. It speaks to the truth that God is eternal and has always been. Equally important is that God will come again to bring order to the world in ways that will make all its peoples wail.

- What will this world look like?
- Who will we be in such a world?

John 20:19-31

Alleluia. Christ is risen! Jesus appearing to the disciples in spite of the locked doors indicates to us that Jesus has transcended the earthly, physical reality, while at the same time confirming his bodily risen-ness. However, this is not simply a dead Jesus walking amongst the living. Jesus came and stood among them and *said* “Peace be with you.” The English translations of this phrase use the past tense “said”, whereas the Greek uses the present active “says”, cementing Jesus’ living presence through physicality and voice. Jesus, and the Good News he embodies, has gloriously conquered death! Moreover, present before us is a Jesus wounded, suffering for

those who seek the fulfillment of his redeeming love. Thomas, often derided for his skepticism, is one such who needs confirmation of that love.

- How is it that Thomas was not able to comprehend the news of the risen Christ from his fellow disciples who witnessed Jesus' presence just a week before?
- When we fail to see Christ in our lives and in others how is our ability to witness to his love is similarly obscured?
- How can we open our hearts to Jesus so that we, along with Thomas, can fully proclaim him as "My Lord and my God!" to those who might doubt?

Written by Michael J. Horvath

Michael Horvath is a postulant in the Diocese of New York and currently a Middler (second year) Master of Divinity student at The General Theological Seminary in New York City.

Published by the Office of Formation of the The Episcopal Church, 815 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.

© 2016 The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. All rights reserved.