

Quasimodogeniti  
St. John 20:19-31  
April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

## That Believing You May Have Life in His Name

*In Nomine Iesu!*

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

### **Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:**

Lord God, heavenly Father, we thank Thee, that of Thine ineffable grace, for the sake of Thy Son, Thou hast given us the holy Gospel, and hast instituted the holy Sacraments, that through the same we may have comfort and forgiveness of sin: We beseech Thee, grant us Thy Holy Spirit, that we may heartily believe Thy Word; and through the holy Sacraments day by day establish our faith, until we at last obtain salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one true God, world without end. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

We meet our Lord today the same place where we left Him on Easter Tuesday: in the Upper Room with His disciples. That first meeting took place on the night of His resurrection from the dead, after He had spent the day with the two men heading to Emmaus. He had expounded holy Scriptures to them beginning at Moses and taking them through the Psalms and Prophets to show that the Christ was supposed to suffer and die on behalf of the sins of all of mankind. When our Lord + Jesus appeared again that night to His disciples in the Upper Room, He did the same thing for them. He opened up their understanding of the holy Scriptures by teaching them what the Christ was supposed to do for them and all mankind. They were enlightened by the Word of God. They were gifted with faith through the preaching of the Word of God.

The only one who was not there of the eleven Apostles was St. Thomas. When he arrived the Lord + Jesus had already departed, so that only the eleven remained. They told St. Thomas that they had seen the Lord + Jesus; He was risen from the dead. St. Thomas does not believe it. On account of this St. Thomas has been gifted with the unfortunate moniker: Doubting Thomas. It is unfortunate because St. Thomas is really only doing what the Lord + Jesus had admonished them to do the previous week. In the days leading up to our Lord's crucifixion and death, He described for His Apostles the events leading up to the Last Day. We get these proclamations during the last days of the Church's year and during Advent, so it is easy for us to forget during this Easter season what it was that our Lord + Jesus had told His Apostles.

These words are recorded in the Apostle and Evangelist St. Matthew's Gospel, the twenty-fourth chapter, "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it." St. Thomas is simply following what the Lord + Jesus told him to do a few days ago according to his timeline: not to believe it when people tell him the Christ is "here" in the "inner rooms." But the real problem that St. Thomas has is he does not have the same benefit that the other Apostles had when the Lord + Jesus appeared. For the Lord +

Jesus continued His preaching. He expounded for them the things that explained the events of the last few days. He was supposed to suffer and die. The Christ was supposed to suffer and die for the sins of the whole world.

St. Thomas has the witness of the other ten Apostles, but He is lacking the witness and testimony of the Christ. The Apostle and Evangelist St. John talks about this in his first Epistle; the same Epistle that we heard today as our Epistle of the Day. In the fifth chapter of that Epistle St. John tells his hearers that it is one thing to have the witness and testimony of the Apostles, for they were eyewitnesses of these things, but it is a completely different and better thing to have the witness and testimony of the Lord + Jesus, for He is the Lord God in flesh. The testimony of the Lord God does not fail, for it is from the Triune Lord God, the God of Truth, Who does not lie. The witness of mankind is nothing if it is separated from the testimony of the Lord God, for all things that lead to our faith proceed out of the mouth of the Lord God; they proceed out of the mouth of the Lord + Jesus.

The ten Apostles had the benefit of hearing the Lord's testimony from holy Scripture. St. Thomas did not. However, St. Thomas also receives this benefit a week later, when the all the Apostles were gathered in the Upper Room, and St. Thomas was with them, and the Lord + Jesus once again appeared in their midst. The Lord + Jesus comes bearing peace. He gives peace to His Apostles, including St. Thomas. The Lord + Jesus removes the doubt from St. Thomas by doing exactly what St. Thomas requested the week prior: He shows him His hands and side. The wounds of the Lord + Jesus are a testimony that this was actually the Lord + Jesus; that He was not a ghost as some of them thought at first. The Lord + Jesus was present among them in flesh and blood.

The wounds of Christ are a testament to all who see them. They are a witness of His crucifixion and death. We see our Lord's head full of blood and wounds when we look at the crucifix. Here in the crucifix, we see our Lord's wounds and death that makes atonement for our sins. We see His hands, feet and side marked as a testament that He has atoned for the sins of the whole world. In His death, He has won forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and salvation for all those who see and believe. By His death He has won these gifts for us. By His death He was claimed forgiveness of sins for us. But the crucifix is not where we receive the forgiveness of sins. It is certainly a fine witness and testimony that the Lord + Jesus suffered and died on behalf of mankind; that the Christ suffered and died just as Moses, the Psalms and Prophets had prophesied, but we do not receive forgiven of our sins by looking at the crucifix.

We receive it in the means by which our Lord + Jesus establishes for us Christians to receive these gifts that He won on the cross. This is why the Apostle and Evangelist St. John in the Gospel pericope for today relays for us the means by which we receive the forgiveness of sins. The Lord + Jesus breathed on His disciples and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." It is the work of the Holy Ghost to create and sustain faith and life in the Christian. It is through the means of grace that we receive the forgiveness of all of our sins. It is through the preaching of the Gospel; the witness and testimony of the preacher telling us the acts of the Lord + Jesus for us poor, miserable sinners. The preacher expounds the holy Scriptures to show that the Christ must suffer and die for us poor sinners, and shows us that forgiveness of sins is found only in the Lord + Jesus' death on the cross alone.

We find forgiveness of sins in the waters of Holy Baptism, too. In those waters all that is evil within us—all our sins—are drowned and killed so that they can harm us no more. We put on the Christ. We are clothed with His righteousness and His works and merits. We are also crucified to sin, for in Holy Baptism we have put on the Christ through faith. The Holy Ghost works through the Word connected with the water to create and sustain faith in us; faith that clings to the promises found in the death of the Christ. This faith clings to the preaching and testimony of the Lord + Jesus who shows us His hands and side as a testimony that He has paid for all of our sins. Because we are baptized, we can make the sign of the cross and know that our sins are forgiven for the sake of the works of the

Christ.

When we hear the Absolution, and have that same sign of the cross made upon us, we can also make the sign of the cross upon our foreheads, as a reminder that forgiveness of sins has been granted to us through our Holy Baptism. This is why we make the sign of the cross daily and often—when we get up in the morning, and before we go to sleep at night, or whenever some sin or evil threatens us—for it reminds us that no sin or evil can harm us, for we have been claimed by the Lord God to be His dear children. And as dear children are wont to do, we can crave pure spiritual milk; the pure spiritual milk of the Word of God, which preaches into our ears that we are free from sin; we have been absolved; the Old Adam is drowned and killed, so that whenever we confess our sins to the pastor, and he pronounces to us that our sins are forgiven, we know that that forgiveness is coming from the Lord God Himself.

Then we can come before this altar and receive even more assurance of our forgiveness when we participate in our Lord's death, by remembering and proclaiming that He has died for us as we eat His Body and drink His Blood in bread and wine so that we are granted forgiveness, life and salvation. When we eat His Body and drink His Blood, the Lord + Jesus is present among us. He appears in our "Upper Room"—our sanctuary—and shows us His hands and side as a testimony that He has indeed suffered and died on our behalf. The Holy Ghost is there to open our understanding of the holy Scriptures so that we may believe that the Christ has suffered and died on our behalf. He removes all doubts that the Christ has atoned for our sins.

Our Triune Lord God does all of this for us to give us a testimony and witness of what He has done for us. The witness of the Lord God does not fail. We receive His witness through the means of grace; through the Blessed Sacraments. Whenever we gather together and share our faith with one another, even if we are only two or three persons, the Lord + Jesus is present among us. The Lord + Jesus is here among us today, for we are gathered together in His Name. He is here among us to show us His hands and side. He is here to show us that He has suffered and died for all of our sins, just as Moses and the Prophets had prophesied. He does all this for us so that we might believe on Him, and in believing we might have everlasting life.

Receive the Holy Ghost. He is given to us today through the means of grace. He is here to create and sustain and strengthen our faith in the One Who suffered and died for our sins, so that we might believe on Him and have eternal life. As a newborn babe craves this spiritual milk; the spiritual milk that opens up our understanding of what our Lord + Jesus has done for us poor, miserable sinners. He has claimed us as His own, and given us forgiveness, life and salvation. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

O Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, we Thank Thee that Thou hast bestowed upon all true believers the power to absolve one another from their sins in Thy Name, and to this end hast in particular established the ministry of reconciliation; and we beseech Thee, give us grace that we may not from pride and self-righteousness despise Thy comforting ordinance, but, recognizing therein Thy love to us, may use it for the comfort and salvation of our souls, and by sincere amendment of our lives continually thank Thee, Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

**The Votum:**

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

*Soli Deo Gloria!*