

THEME FOR SUNDAY, MAY 1, 2011 THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

“EASTER – TRUTH OR MYTH? A CURE FOR FAITHLESSNESS”

JOHN 20: 19 – 31

Two young children are out on the playground. One says to the other, “With my new shoes I can jump high enough to slam dunk!” The response: “Oh yeah? Prove it!” Even out on the school playground, where imaginations have room to roam, human reason demands tangible evidence to back a claim. By the power of the Holy Spirit, however, God’s Word creates a faith that goes beyond what is seen – faith in the Risen and Living Lord!!

Introit

Selected Verses from Psalm 105 Antiphon 1 Peter 2:2

- L: Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation –
- C: If indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.**
- L: Oh give thanks to the LORD; call upon His name;
- C: Make known His deeds among the peoples!**
- L: Sing to Him, sing praises to Him;
- C: Tell of all His wondrous works!**
- L: Glory in His holy name;
- C: Let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice!**
- L: Seek the LORD and His strength;
- C: Seek His presence continually!**
- L: Remember the wondrous works that He has done,
- C: His miracles, and the judgments He uttered.**
- L: He remembers His covenant forever,
- C: The word that He commanded, for a thousand generations.**
- ALL: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

The First Lesson

Acts 5: 29 – 42

(The resurrection of the Christ and the outpouring of His Spirit changes people who were once filled with fear and disbelief into people who are filled with faith and are bold to witness!)

²⁹But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men. ³⁰The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. ³¹God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. ³²And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.”

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³³When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them. ³⁴But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in honor by all the people, stood up and gave orders to put the men outside for a little while. ³⁵And he said to them, “Men of Israel, take care what you are about to do with these men. ³⁶For before these days Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing. ³⁷After him Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and drew away some of the people after him. He too perished, and all who followed him were scattered.

³⁸“So in the present case I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail; ³⁹but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!” So they took his advice, ⁴⁰and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. ⁴¹Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. ⁴²And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

Epistle Lesson

1 Peter 1: 3 – 9

(Unlike Peter, we are not eyewitnesses of Jesus. But through faith, we believe in Him and love Him. We look forward to seeing Jesus in His full glory at the Resurrection, but even now, He reveals Himself to us through His Word as He gives us saving faith, forgiveness, and life!)

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷so that the tested genuineness of your faith – more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire – may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ⁸Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

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Gospel Lesson

John 20: 19 – 31

(This account tells about two of the appearances of Jesus to His disciples following Jesus' Resurrection. Though Thomas was not present the first night, Jesus appears to him a week later. Our Lord encourages Thomas – and all who read the account – to stop doubting and believe!)

¹⁹On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."

²⁰When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. ²¹Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." ²²And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³If you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven; if you withhold forgiveness from anyone, it is withheld."

²⁴Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."

²⁶Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." ²⁸Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

³⁰Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.