

Second Sunday Easter -C- 2022  
Acts 5.12-16///Revelation 1.9-11; 12-13; 17-19///John 20.19-31

→there is a little town in central Texas named Mt. Vernon...and in Mt. Vernon there is an establishment called the Lighthouse Bar...a while back the owners of the Lighthouse Bar decided to expand its facilities and make the present building larger

→however the local Baptist church...which disapproves of drinking alcohol... did not want that to happen...so they started a **prayer campaign** with the hope of preventing the bar from expanding

→construction began and progressed all the way up until to the week before the grand opening when lightning struck and burned the entire building to the ground...

→after the bar burned, the church folks started bragging about the “**power of prayer**” miracle that had just happened

→and so the bar owner decided to sue the church on the grounds that the church “was ultimately responsible for the demise of the building because of their prayers.”

→[well] in response to this accusation...the church became defensive and denied any and all responsibility to the burning of the building stating “they had nothing to do with it.”

→at the hearing...the judge read through the bar owner’s charges and the church’s response and commented:

“I don’t know how to rule on this complaint, but it appears as if we have a bar owner **who now** believes in the power of prayer....and an entire Baptist church congregation **that now does not.**”

→[and **that’s the kind** of world we live in today....]

→every year we hear this Gospel on the first Sunday after Easter and we usually center on the doubting of Thomas...much like the bar owner and the congregation in Texas who at one point both doubt the power of prayer

→....but this passage has many other parts to it that often go unnoticed.

PAUSE

→this gospel is also a story about prayer....about peace and about faith....

→[and] one of the aspects that is often overlooked is the attitude of the Lord towards his disciples...who seem to be struggling to grasp what has happened and what is really going on

→after having undergone the torture and desolation of the cross, Jesus meets up with his disciples---still hiding behind locked doors.....and greets them saying

*PEACE BE WITH YOU.....peace be with you???*

→I have often thought to myself...are you kidding me!...

→I mean...wouldn’t you have thought the first words out of Jesus’s mouth to the disciples might be something like:

“—Where were you guys...what happened to all of you...and you Peter, you and your “I will never deny you” promise”.....thanks a lot!

→why, if you or I were Jesus....wouldn’t we have certainly tried to set these disciples straight on that first night

→I know if it were me...I would be letting this motley crew have it for abandoning me...for still being afraid...for still being fearful

→and then [to make matters worse] there is Thomas...who not only doubts that Jesus is alive but **still** refuses to believe the prophetic words spoken early on and often during Christ's ministry.....

*“the Messiah must go to Jerusalem and suffer and die and be raised up.”*

PAUSE

→but Jesus is not like you and me...is he?            Instead....

→he brings his peace....

→he brings his forgiveness....

→he brings faith and strength to his disciples and to you and me as well

→he comes to his disciples and appears before them...not to even the score...but to continue the mission of the cross...to bring and give the mercy of God to all people....including you and me.

→it is an appropriate message to all of us on this first Sunday after Easter...

→and today Christ shows his disciples and you and me that the mercy offered to us by God is not concerned with setting people straight by ranting and raving,

→but rather, it seeks to show us the truth of goodness and compassion

→the mercy offered to us by God isn't concerned about evening the score for all the wrong we have done or inflicted upon others,

---but rather it's about remaining close to God who is the source of all love and life

→the mercy offered to us by God is not about rubbing our noses in the past, but rather it is about pointing us towards the future of hope and possibilities

→and that is why Jesus greets his disciples and you and me with words of peace as opposed to words of revenge

*PAUSE*

→the good news is that Christ **is not like us**...but with that good news comes also hard news: that God is **calling us to become** more like Christ...

--to be a people who reveal the truth of goodness and mercy rather than dwelling on our self-centeredness and selfishness...

--to be a people more concerned with a change of heart rather than always seeking revenge...

--to be a people who look for healing and hope for the future...rather than dwelling on the wounds of the past....

*PAUSE*

→we live in a world today where the peace of Christ is not always that obvious as we might think

→yet...we believe in the **power of prayer...the power of faith...the power of peace....**

→not as a way to burn or tear down buildings or people ....but rather as a way to build up and bring about the Kingdom of God here on earth.

**→all because of the resurrection of Jesus**

→[and so] in the end....we need to become just like Thomas....and believe in the mercy and goodness of God...brought forth to us in Jesus Christ.

→and the resurrection... the Easter we continue to celebrate has transformed us...and made us into the people of God...worthy of eternal life....

And very simply put...that is what we believe...that is why we pray...and that is what we live and hope for.