



ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

THIS SUNDAY April 8 & BEYOND”

“I Can’t Believe I Missed It”, and the Reprieve



Coming up on Sunday is a wonderful story of the Risen Jesus making an appearance to the disciples, AND in the same story, another visit in the same place a week later. It's found in the Gospel according to John, chapter 20, verses 19-31.

It doesn't happen like that all that often in the Bible. You might read, “the next day

Moses went to see Pharaoh again”, or “three days later Jesus left that place.”

Without the Chapters and Verses dividing up the Bible (as a helpful bible study and memorization tool, completed to most everyone's satisfaction in the 1500's), there were simple, natural endings of one story and beginnings of another which often didn't mention how much exact time there was between one and the other.

But in this story of the Risen Jesus coming into the Upper Room, with the Gospeller John having the apostle Thomas as the focus, there is a lesson to learn. At the first visit, they were all there, but, John the eyewitness says, Thomas wasn't. The second visit, Jesus came again to them, and this time Thomas was there. But wait! There's more! In between these two visits by Jesus the disciples saw Thomas and shared that they had seen him. Thomas's reply is most famous: "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." Just as famous is Thomas' remark to Jesus when he did see him that next “Sunday” and Jesus had said, “Put your hand here in my wound..” Thomas, without the story saying that he actually went ahead and touched his wound, said, "My Lord and my God!" (Personally, I like to think he sank to his knees and said that with great humility.)

So here's what I'm reflecting on. After the sun goes down, on the same day that Jesus rises from the dead – the first day of the Jewish week, and what we now call Sunday – he appears bodily to the disciples in the Upper Room. And then, based on

what the story tells us in just a few verses, 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. This leads me to consider two implications. First, Jesus left them after a short visit that evening. And then Thomas gets to the Upper Room on that same evening but after Jesus had left. In other words, Thomas shows up, and his fellow disciples, with great excitement say to him, “You just missed him!!” That had to hurt. You just missed him.

You come running up to the bus stop, but its not there. Somebody says, “you just missed it.” And with it maybe your new job interview; getting to your best friend’s birthday party on time;. your favorite sports hero's signing autographs at Kmart. You drive like a maniac to your son's school for the annual school play. He's got a solo part in the school play. You find your family and your saved seat, and they lean over and say, “You just missed it.”

Perhaps you have been in that situation at some time in your life. Maybe you found a way to not get left behind; perhaps it was the cause of the end of a relationship. Maybe you found a way to make it up. In any one of these possibilities, it would seem the most common response, in some form or another is, “I can't believe I missed it.” I say in some form or another, because too often our hurt, pain, anger at ourselves is turned outward or unhealthily inward, rather than immediately accepting the situation and moving toward some new solution. What do those outward forms look like? Like verbally trying to express control, like Thomas did. He blurted out his attempt to be in control by publicly stating his superiority by withholding approval. Or we can do the same by blaming somebody else, “That dang traffic.” Or even more violent, like slamming your fist down on a table, or throwing your brief case. Or forms of verbal and emotional abuse towards others.

Here's the good news: Jesus came back. He came back to the same room, and the same disciples, and in the same Resurrection manner, and this time Thomas was there. And Jesus spoke directly to Thomas' hurt. Thomas' response was the correct one. He could have responded incorrectly (see all of the above discussion on responses).

This Risen Jesus Christ has not changed. That is, he will meet you, even if you've missed him in your responses to the world that have been energized by hurt and pain and anger (well, anger comes from hurt and pain, doesn't it). And even if you missed

believing in Jesus the first time around -- or the second, or third – it is the nature of the Son of God, Jesus, to keep coming to you with the hope you will believe. Wise counsel says that since you may have missed him once before, you might choose to miss him again. So, counsel says, “You. Put yourself in the right place to both find him, and be found by him.

And don't forget to love others as yourself. “And love one another,” Jesus said, “As I have loved you.” And forgive. And you will be forgiven.

That's a lot of what Jesus doesn't want you to miss out on.

Father Rob Eaton, Interim Rector

CALENDAR

SUNDAY: The Second Sunday of Easter

8:00a Low Mass (Church)

10:30a Solemn High Mass (Church)

—*The entrance to the church is on 6th Avenue*—

Note: Coffee Hour & Fellowship follow the Mass in the Parish Hall.

MONDAY: 7:00p (AA) Doctors' Group (Fireside Room)

TUESDAY: Noon Mass (St. Mary's Chapel)

FRIDAY: AA Meetings

8:00p Ladies' Group (Fireside Room)

8:15p Men's Group (Parish Hall)