

Alleluia

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He has Risen

He has rise indeed

Last week, Pastor Bryce told us that if we were to say Alleluia to anyone on the street this week that they would look at us like we had two heads.

That's probably so, but it's not true here in this sanctuary. Today marks the first week after Easter. Our crowd today is smaller than usual but that is probably because people know that Pastor Bryce is on vacation and also there is a major bowling tournament that has taken some of our members. It has nothing to do with our continued joy that Christ has risen or our belief that he arose from the dead to save our souls.

Our scripture today starts with Jesus entering a locked room where the disciples were gathered.

He told them that if they forgave sins, the sins were gone for good but if they didn't forgive what were they going to do with them. Thomas was not with the others and when he was told that they had seen the Master he didn't believe them. He said he would only believe if he saw Jesus for himself and was shown the holes in his hands and side. Thus was born the phrase of being "a doubting Thomas". We learned in bible study this week that our younger generation was not aware of that saying. We didn't delve into that as to the reason but it may be something you want to ponder on your own.

8 days later, Jesus again entered the locked room and this time Thomas was with the group. Jesus showed him his hands and side and immediately Thomas believed and greeted Jesus.

How does today's scripture fit into our daily lives. I think this one is fairly clear. If we forgive the sins of others, those things are gone for good.

If we can't, then we must bear the burden of carrying that around with us. It's a hard time in our country right now. War, high prices, laws being passed that effect human rights in a negative way. This is hard for me. I'm not ready to forgive those who have caused this. I justify that in my mind that they have not asked for forgiveness in any way. They show no remorse and continue to come up with new things weekly if not daily. I don't believe that Jesus expects us to forgive a sin and go merrily on our way to allow that sin to happen over and over. We must also do what we can to correct the actions if we can't forgive the sin.

Most of you listening to this service today are not doubting Thomas's. Maybe a few of you are in the "I don't know for sure" realm but don't openly deny the existence of God. We wouldn't be here today if we didn't believe. There's nothing to prove to us that Christ existed. Yes, we have

pictures of Jesus and the crucifixion around the church and the last supper even but that only proves a certain artist's rendition. Our belief in God is much deeper than looking at a picture or reading a few words in the Bible. We show it in our righteous living. St. Paul's does a good job at this. We feed kids, we assist the needy, we help the poor. Is this enough? No, it is never enough and it never will be. We can't do it all but we can show by example and hope that others pick up the sword. May God bless you and may He inspire us to find new ways no matter how big or small to carry the burden of other's sins.

Let us pray in the word's our savior taught us: