

Church of Our Saviour  
Fond du Lac, Wisconsin

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The Third Sunday of Easter  
April 18, 2021

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Text: Luke 24:36-48

Title: "Touch Me and See!"

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***In the Name of (+) Jesus our Lord. Amen***

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They were afraid!

No way to say it different! The Gospel Lesson for this day says that! I read the words, and you heard them! They were startled and terrified and were seeing ghosts! That's fear! We know! And so, we probably lock our doors! Leave lights on! And, make sure the doorbell camera, if we have one, is "on!" Fear does that!

The resurrection was done, over, and accomplished! But the disciples weren't sure yet! So, they spent their time behind locked doors! They were frightened and startled and they thought they were seeing ghosts! That's fear!

Then...

Jesus stood among them! “Touch me,” he said! He showed them his hands and his feet, then asked, “Do you have anything here to eat?” They did! They gave him a piece of broiled fish! He ate!

He opened their minds! But just how often does that opening of minds need doing? Among disciples then? Among disciples now? We can be stubborn! Can’t we?

Jesus said more! The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day! That’s me! I am Messiah, he said! And the Messiah’s message is, my message, there is forgiveness of sin in the name for all nations, beginning in Jerusalem! And you are witnesses of that!

There is another step! A major one! Minds need to be opened! Disciples then, disciples now, have a very hard time accepting what Jesus had on his mind for this world!

Jesus loves this world! You mean Jesus loves black people and brown people and native American people and Oriental people? Yes, that’s what Jesus means! You mean Jesus wants grace and mercy for all people who sin? Yes, that’s what Jesus means! You mean Jesus wants loving attention paid to orphans, and widows, the poor, and the crippling disease and those impediments so many must endure? Yes, that’s what Jesus means!

Disciples then, and disciples now, have some thinking to do! And, some don’t see the need for that! There was a member of a church I served as pastor who would attend quite regularly our Sunday morning Bible discussion group where we

discussed every Sunday the meaning, as we saw it, of the Bible Lessons used in our Sunday morning worship! Nothing was out of bounds! Whatever came up we talked about it! And that member would regularly say, as if it was our greatest danger, we're thinking too much!

Jesus opened minds! That's what Jesus did! Understand, Jesus says, that I have something to give to this world that the world does not understand or use very often! It's love! And he explains what he means in the simplest of terms!

He, compares himself to a brooding hen whose chief purpose in life is to protect her young! She doesn't have talons! She doesn't have much of a beak! All she can do is fluff herself up, sit on her chicks, and put herself between them and danger, like a fox! And, she gets ready to sacrifice herself if necessary! "How often I would have gathered you together as a mother hen gathers her chicks, he said!" (Matthew 23:37)

Such a simple explanation, but so real and so fitting

We, sin! Jesus pays the price! We're guilty, he is innocent! We want, we need, salvation, so he goes uncomplaining to a Cross! We want peace in our hearts and minds! And he gets nails driven through his hands and feet!

Brian McLaren, writes of Jesus; mission, in his book WE MAKE THE ROAD BY WALKING! He, dared us to honor women, children and unmarried adults in a world ruled by men! He dared us to elevate slaves to be equal with those who gave them orders! He challenged slave masters to free their slaves

and treat them as equals! We're still trying, but we are not close!

He defied religious taboos that divided people into us and them, good and evil, clean and unclean! He claimed that everyone, not just an elite few, had God-given gifts to use for the common good! He exposed a system based on domination and privilege! He put people above profit! He made the audacious claim that the earth belonged not to rich tycoons or powerful politicians, but to the Creator who loves every sparrow in the trees and every wildflower in the field! His was a peace movement, a love movement, a joy movement, a justice movement, an integrity movement, and aliveness movement! It had no bank accounts, no seminaries, no hierarchy, but is rich in relationships and joy! And, for that we praise him!

Today, two young girls of this congregation, Izzie Karls and Natalie Paul, will receive Holy Communion for the first time in the 10:30 A.M. worship service! You in this 8:00 A.M. worship service and everyone in the whole congregation should be aware! And, be glad for Izzie and Natalie!

I have been meeting with Izzie and Natalie for four Sundays now! We met at first after worship when there was just one Sunday morning service! Then between worship services when our worship schedule was adjusted to two worship services!

It has been my special privilege to meet with them! A father and a mother also joined us! And we welcome Izzie and Natalie to communing membership in this congregation with great love! AMEN