

Notes for Next Sunday

Second Sunday of Easter

The Point of this Week's Readings

First Reading (Acts 4:32-35). As the early Christians loved their Lord, they loved His Bride, the Church, giving of themselves freely. As you gather goods that perish, consider that “it is more blessed to give than to receive” (20:35). Lavish love on your brothers and sisters in Christ, just as Jesus lavished His love on us all and gave Himself unto death for the worst of sinners.

Epistle (1 John 1:1-2:2). This reading is a series of three things that John wants to have his audience to know. First, John reminds them that he had shared with them what he had heard and seen concerning Jesus (1:1-4). Second, what John had passed on would lead them to walk in a “newness of life” (1:5-10). Third, John lovingly points them once more to Christ as the one who forgives all sins (2:1-2).

Gospel (John 20:19-31). In 20:19–23 the once-crucified Jesus appears to His disciples, commissioning them for their work and equipping them with the Holy Spirit. Christians have received the most precious treasure on earth—the Gospel of forgiveness—but often keep it hidden from others. In 20:24–29 Jesus appears before a skeptical Thomas, who upon seeing Jesus is moved to confess Him as Lord and God. In 20:30–31 John, the author of this Gospel, clearly states its purpose and summarizes its central message. People commonly and mistakenly think that biblical books were written mainly to provide rules for godly living. Speaking through John, God announces the Good News that Jesus is His Son and that by faith in His name, we have life and salvation—the core message of the entire Scripture.

For more in-depth commentary on each reading, read the notes found after each text below.

FIRST READING – Acts 4:32-35

³² All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. ³³ With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. ³⁴ There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales ³⁵ and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.

4:32 one in heart and mind. In complete accord, extending to their attitude toward personal possessions. (CSB)

4:33 with great power the apostles. Such preaching was the opposite of dull, distant reading from a manuscript. (TLSB)

4:33 testify to the resurrection. As significant as the death of Christ was, the most compelling event was the resurrection—an event about which the disciples could not keep silent. (CSB)

EPISTLE – 1 John 1:1-2:2

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. ² The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. ³ We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. ⁴ We write this to make our joy complete. ⁵ This is the message we have heard from

him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. ⁸ If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. ² He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

1:1 heard ... seen ... looked at ... touched. The apostle had made a careful examination of the Word of life. He testifies that the one who has existed from eternity “became flesh” (Jn 1:14)—i.e., a flesh-and-blood man. He was true God and true man. At the outset, John contradicts the heresy of the Gnostics. (CSB)

1:2 The life ... the eternal life. Eternal life is found in God the Son, who was conceived in human flesh in the womb of His mother, Mary, and born in Bethlehem. (TLSB)

1:4 our joy complete. John’s joy in the Lord could not be complete unless his readers shared the true knowledge of the Christ. (CSB)

1:6 walk. A metaphor for living. (CSB)

1:7 fellowship with one another. Believers have a common share in Christ (His life, death, resurrection, and ascension), which brings forgiveness and grace equally and blessedly to each. (TLSB)

2:1 dear children. A reference given by the one who proclaimed the Word of life to them, by which they were brought to the faith and given new birth. John later refers to them as “children of God” because all Christians are “born of God” (3:9). (TLSB)

2:2 for the sins of the whole world. † Forgiveness through Christ’s atoning sacrifice is not limited to one particular group only; it has worldwide application. It must, however, be received by faith. Thus this verse does not teach universalism (that all people ultimately will be saved), but that Christ died for the sins of all mankind. (CSB)

GOSPEL – John 20:19-31

¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.” ²⁴ Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it.” ²⁶ A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.” ²⁸ Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!” ²⁹ Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” ³⁰ Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not

recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

20:19 first day of the week. This is a conscious effort to inform the reader that we are still on Easter Day. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 2)

20:19 the Jews. The disciples were afraid that they would be arrested for supporting Jesus' alleged conspiracy against the authority of imperial Rome. (TLSB)

20:19 Peace be with you! The normal Hebrew greeting. Because of their behavior the previous Friday, they may have expected rebuke and censure; but Jesus calmed their fears. (CSB)

20:21 I am sending you. Christ sends forth His disciples in equality, without any distinction... He says, 'As the Father has sent Me, even so I am sending you.' He says that He sends them individually in the same way He Himself was sent (John 12:44-50). Hus, "Jesus sends them to bear testimony to the truth, to preach the word of salvation, and, by life and teaching, to show the way of blessedness to the people. (TLSB)

20:22 Receive the Holy Spirit. By giving the Holy Spirit, Jesus was equipping the disciples for the ongoing work assigned to them, including especially the exercise of the Office of the Keys. (TLSB)

20:27 put...see...reach. Jesus graciously accommodated Thomas's request, to his astonishment and perhaps even his shame. (TLSB)

20:29 those who have not seen and yet have believed. Would have been very few at this time. All whom John mentions had seen in some sense. The words, of course, apply to future believers as well. (CSB)

20:31 that you may believe. This crucial verse summarizes John's purpose in writing his gospel, and the reason we (and everyone) should read it. John's gospel contains 98 occurrences of "to believe."
"Believing and Christ are so much part of one another that the former inevitably implies the latter. . . .
(Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 2, Part 2)