

## Second Sunday of Easter



# The Sending: Our Time is Now

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April 7, 2013 Rev. Larry Moffet

*Fears and doubts too long have bound us,  
free our hearts to work and praise.*

*- Harry Emerson Fosdick*

I love “real” people. Jesus’ friends prove they are real by their actions after the crucifixion and resurrection. According to John, they basically did nothing.

That lets me know this is a “real story.” The people in the story act just the way real people act. First they hid in a room behind locked doors. Afraid. They waited for everything to blow over. Probably they were

hoping for a safe moment to sneak out of Jerusalem. “I am going fishing,” Peter says.

Jesus finds them. He comes to where they are. Literally. Behind locked doors.

His first words are <sup>21</sup>“Peace be with you.”

His next words are “As our Abba God has sent me, so I send you.”

Then the story gets even “more real.” Thomas isn’t present. His friends can’t wait to tell him they have seen Jesus. Thomas says, “I have to see him.”

The friends of Jesus couldn’t wait to tell Thomas, but they are still hiding.

One week later, guess where they are! Again, Jesus finds them, saying:

<sup>26</sup>“Peace be with you.”

<sup>27</sup>Then he said to Thomas,

“Put your finger here and see my hands.

Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.”

Interesting: Thomas doesn’t touch the wounds. Thomas sees them and believes, with the deepest, most profound creed uttered in the Gospels:

<sup>28</sup>Thomas answered Jesus, “My Lord and my God!”

Will seeing the wounds of Christ help you believe? Do you want to see the wounds of Jesus? Let me tell you about the wounds of Christ.

**Seeing is believing. More importantly, Believing is seeing.**

If the Scripture (Matthew 25) is true, Jesus says to us, “What happens to the least of these my brothers and sisters happens to me” then look around you and see the wounds of Jesus.

Hunger -- emotional, spiritual, and physical hungers -- are all wounds.

On Good Friday, we linked events that happened to Jesus with prayers for specific conditions in our world and our own lives. Locally and globally, there are wounds:

Each week we hear new stories about struggles of our young. Those growing up all around us in every part of our city need people who will care for them and keep them safe

Infirmities and physical challenges are the focus of many lives  
135 backpacks with food for the weekend go out every Friday in  
our nearby elementary school

The Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, this  
week reminded us we have merely 1000 days to meet  
“Millennial Goals,” adopted in 2000 when more nations than  
ever before agreed to cut global poverty and hunger by half,  
fight climate change and disease, tackle unsafe water and  
sanitation, expand education and open doors of opportunity for  
girls and women

The Body of Christ has scars.

This is a real story. The resurrection does not instantly heal the scars.

There is much, much more that is “real” in this story.

Jesus says to Thomas, and to us, “believe.”

A year from now the main speaker for our Peacemaking Workshop is a  
leader in discovering ways faith finds us and heals us, John Phillip  
Newell.

His statements in his new book *The New Harmony* are clear, and  
echo the words of Jesus. Yes, there is a healing, restoring power at  
work, but:

“First look suffering in the face.”

I am hesitant to say that phrase too often because I know some of our  
number have suffered more than I. Newell has a right to say “Look  
suffering in the face” because he himself has been in constant pain.

**His point, and Jesus’ too, is this: Don’t stay there.**

Is it hard for you to talk about your personal call to follow Jesus in  
this Way of New Life? That’s normal. Jesus’ friends struggled too.  
Today they are behind locked doors. Twice. On Easter morning, it  
took everything Mary Magdalene, the Beloved Disciple, and Peter had  
to keep moving past their own self-doubts and fears.

We doubt ourselves more than anyone human or divine, don’t we.  
If you have a call, that is wonderful.

If you don’t think you know your call, don’t worry.  
Jesus has you covered!

Today’s Easter Gospel shows us not only the wounds of Jesus,  
but the heart of our relationship with Jesus.

For centuries Christians have called the Sunday after Easter  
“Divine Mercy Sunday.” For good reason:  
He comes to us despite barriers.  
He connects with us in spite of our fears. He brings Peace.  
He will even show us his wounds. Then he takes us further: The  
Sending.

The culmination of Mercy is **The Sending!**

Jesus came and stood among them and said,

“Peace be with you.”

<sup>20</sup>After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side...

<sup>21</sup>Jesus said to them again,

“Peace be with you. As our Abba God has sent me, **so I send you.**”

They say this really happened: one Sunday, when worship finally  
ended, the Benediction was a relief. Said the pastor:

“**The peace of Christ ... be with you all.**”

A child's voice somewhere in the room said, “**It already is.**”

A small voice captured The Sending. In the midst of noise, confusion,  
weariness, and even fear, the risen Christ gives peace. And sends us out.

Look at our last window. Christ invites us out of our locked rooms,  
**and is ready to go with us.**

**Look at the window: He has his sandals on.**

Prayers of the Faithful

For the way you come through our locked doors  
and turn our fear to courage, we give you thanks, O God.  
God in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

For the way you come to us in daily life and work, and turn our failure to new vision, we give you thanks, O God. God in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

For the way you come to us in the breaking of the bread, and the way you turn our despair to hope, we give you thanks, O God. God in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

We pray that you, Lord, will dry tears, soothe pain and quiet the hearts of all who agonize; be present with all the sick, and with those who care for them; God in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Lord, give us so deep a faith that in all times and in all places we may without fear commend ourselves and all those we love to your mercy, love, and eternal care, God in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Larry gathers prayers.

Jean Penton, David Schoenmaker's family, Margaret Fuller and family.

*God in your mercy,*

*Hear our prayer.*

*God of all creation, your love is boundless and your mercy is eternal. Hear the prayers of the people whom your Son has called his friends. Make our joy complete by fulfilling the promises you have made. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### **Our time is now.**

Every now and then I'll refer to the fact that there are two words for "time" in Greek, the language the first Christians used for worship.

**Chronos** is **chronological time**.

**Kairos** means an opportune moment.

**Kairos** is a moment of time when something special happens.

**Kairos** describes an ability to adapt to changing circumstances.

**Kairos** people meet challenges and embrace new dimensions of life. In the Bible, Kairos means "the appointed time in the purpose of God," the time when God acts (the kairos is fulfilled).

"What you do in the present—by painting, preaching, singing, sewing, praying, teaching, building hospitals, digging wells, working for justice, writing poems, caring for the needy, loving your neighbor as yourself—will last into God's future. These activities are not simply ways of making the present life a little less beastly, a little more bearable.... They are part of what we may call building for God's kingdom."

"Easter was when Hope in person surprised the whole world by coming forward from the future into the present."

— **N.T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope*:**

"I'm convinced that God intentionally gives us these longings to continually bring us back to God's own self."

"Either God is playing a cruel joke on us or God actually enjoys being with us, giving us God's own self, and fulfilling the deepest hungers of our hearts. The cross tells me it's the latter

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**ACTS 2:37-46** <sup>37</sup>Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?" <sup>38</sup>Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ. <sup>39</sup>For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him." <sup>41</sup>...and that day about three thousand persons were added.

<sup>42</sup>They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. <sup>43</sup>Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles.

<sup>44</sup>All who believed were together and had all things in common; <sup>45</sup>they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to

all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup>Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts.

**\*GOSPEL JOHN 20:19-28**

<sup>19</sup>When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear... Jesus came and stood among them and said,

**“Peace be with you.”**

<sup>20</sup>After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

<sup>21</sup>Jesus said to them again,

**“Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”**

<sup>22</sup>When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, **“Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup>If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”**

<sup>24</sup>But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.

<sup>25</sup>So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them,

“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.”

<sup>26</sup>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 and said,

**“Peace be with you.”**

<sup>27</sup>Then he said to Thomas,

**“Put your finger here and see my hands.**

**Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.”**

<sup>28</sup>Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!”