

The Second Sunday of Easter 2020  
John 20

Holy Spirit, Light Divine/Shine upon this heart of mine  
Chase the shades of night away/Turn the darkness into day.  
Let me see my Savior's face/Let me all His beauties trace.  
Show those glorious truths to me/Which are only known to Thee

**John 20:19–31** *On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” 20When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. 21Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” 22And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. 23If you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven; if you withhold forgiveness from anyone, it is withheld.”*

24Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. 25So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.”

26Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” 27Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.” 28Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” 29Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

30Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31but these are written so that you

may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen!

The first Word from Jesus—in the beginning was the Word—‘Peace!’ Everyone else, everywhere else, gives faux-peace in dribs and drabs; an ‘accommodation’ that always fades and leaves flat. Not so the Crucified! One Sunday night it is ‘Peace’: with the Office of the Keys and Confession, Holy Absolution, the Pledge of the Spirit Unique—as the Father had pledged Him, even the Church’s Holy Ministry!

Next Sunday night, there’s MORE! That’s His way: ‘Peace’—a LIFE and grows into extravagance! Even to the point of: ‘You want nail marks and gashes and bodies and stuff: Idolater! I AIN’T yer IDOL! But THRUST your hand into My side.’

From the side of the One Who frightens E...V...E...R...Y man into showboating—call Him God, Heaven, Death, Destiny—Jesus CLAIMS authority over ALL that spurs on US talking about US—‘Unless THIS and unless THAT, HERE is what I WILL DO and what I WILL NOT DO!’

Jesus is so utterly confident that He got it right a week/ten days before—‘It is FINISHED!’—that the Spirit breathing from His lips is BOLD to....CHIDE! ‘Stop being faithless! No! No! Believing! That’s for you! And for each blessed one!’

As Doctor Martin Luther taught the Church in the Large Catechism, this is WAY of the Risen Christ's Spirit, His Holy Ministry of His Church: more and more, each morn, all day, no end in sight. 'Your mercies, every morning, O Lord, are about YOU, passing over ME—now THAT...is NEW!' Our WHOLE LIFE cannot exhaust; heaven and earth cannot CONTAIN the Grace and Truth of OUR BAPTISM AT THE BEHEST OF CHRIST!

The Holy Spirit has answered y'all's prayers, my beloved: 'Chase the shades of night away; let me see my Savior's face; show that Glorious Gospel to ME, which is ONLY...KNOWN...TO...THEE!'

Someone along the way led your lousy servant here into the treasure house of boundless gifts of the Spirit; AND cried out, 'Freely you have received! Freely give!'

Louis Kuttruff, my old friend, checked up on me one day and asked, 'Pastor, is there ANYTHING Luther said that you don't Like?!'

Well, Louie, not this: (Hear the Doctor of the Church)

<sup>38</sup> Thus we have considered the three things that must be known about this sacrament [Holy Baptism], especially that it is God's ordinance and is to be held in all honor. This alone would be enough, even though Baptism is an entirely external thing. Similarly the commandment, "You shall honor your father and mother," refers only to human flesh and blood, yet we look not at the flesh and blood but at God's commandment

in which it is comprehended and on account of which this flesh is called father and mother. Just so, if we had nothing more than these words, “Go and baptize,” we would still have to accept and observe Baptism as an ordinance of God.

<sup>39</sup> But here we have not only God’s commandment and injunction, but also his promise. Therefore, it is far more glorious than anything else God has commanded and ordained; in short, it is so full of comfort and grace that heaven and earth cannot comprehend it.

<sup>40</sup> It takes special understanding to believe this, for it is not the treasure that is lacking; rather, what is lacking is that it should be grasped and held firmly.

<sup>41</sup> In Baptism, therefore, every Christian has enough to study and to practice all his life. He always has enough to do to believe firmly what Baptism promises and brings—victory over death and the devil, forgiveness of sin, God’s grace, the entire Christ, and the Holy Spirit with his gifts.

<sup>42</sup> In short, the blessings of Baptism are so boundless that if timid nature considers them, it may well doubt whether they could all be true.

<sup>43</sup> Suppose there were a physician who had such skill that people would not die, or even though they died<sup>6</sup> would afterward live forever. Just think how the world would snow and rain money upon him! Because of the pressing crowd of rich men no one else could get near him. Now, here in Baptism there is brought free to every man’s door just such a priceless medicine which swallows up death<sup>7</sup> and saves the lives of all men.

<sup>44</sup> To appreciate and use Baptism aright, we must draw strength and comfort from it when our sins or conscience oppress us, and we must retort, “But I am baptized! And if I am baptized, I have the promise that I shall be saved and have eternal life, both in soul and body.”

.....No greater jewel, therefore, can adorn our body and soul than Baptism, for through it we obtain perfect holiness and salvation, which no other kind of life and no work on earth can acquire.<sup>[1]</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Later version adds: would be restored to life and.

<sup>7</sup> Isa. 25:8.

<sup>[1]</sup> Tappert, T. G. (Ed.). (1959). [\*The Book of Concord the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church\*](#). (pp. 441–442). Philadelphia: Mühlenberg Press.

NEW, every morning: His mercies—Y’ALL’S Baptism!

Make the sign of the cross and cry out the Name of the Blessed Holy Trinity!

Or, Cry out to your own faithless self—with your poor pastor!—  
‘Quit being faithless! Believing is for YOU!’

Thomas, Thomas, Thomas, Thomas. (He IS mentioned four times in this passage. Obsessive? Compulsive? Nope. Just reading.)

Thomas is mentioned a fifth time in the Gospel According to Saint John. Jesus had been threatened with stoning, so off He ran. His ‘hour’ had not yet come. Then came this:

“Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him.”  
<sup>12</sup> The disciples said to him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover.” <sup>13</sup> Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. <sup>14</sup> Then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus has died, <sup>15</sup> and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.” <sup>16</sup> So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.” <sup>[2]</sup>

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<sup>[2]</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version\*](#). (2016). (Jn 11:11–16). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

I, even I—the Grinch himself!—was tempted to chat with y’all this week—not about the Spirit of Jesus, Holy Baptism, the Pledge and assurance of sins forgiven, the whole Christ!—but, instead, my old friend Tom!

AS...IF!

As if thurz ennithin’ all that special about Tom; or his eyes, his hand, HIS decision for-or-against Jesus; and his tiny, clenched fists and ‘No! No!’

My grandson, Samuel Paul, is perfect! Oops! Sorry!

Thomas if PERFECT! He is Jew, after all: so watch what you say/think/judge about a child of Abraham, son of Israel, Jesus’ people.

What did ‘His own people’ cry out when Pilate asked, ‘Shall I crucify your King?’ ‘We have no King but Caesar!’

Y’all see?!

Thomas too. You too. And, I confess, I do not deny: I also.

Thomas IS fluent in the grim language of Caesar and this world. This world's golden rule: He who has the gold makes the rules!

Oooh! And how UPSET Thomas can become, when it all gets cast aside!

And! How...ugh!...UGLY-CHILDISH do we become, with our grim, 'Well, to death, then!'

What further need have we of any witnesses? WHO could be MORE glad that, as Doctor Martin Luther teaches: 'There is NOTHING...LACKING...ON Christ's side, the Pledge of the Gospel! All that is lacking, is ANYONE to, at least, PRETEND that HE has risen indeed!'

My dear ones: the Lutherans have taught the rest of the Church that the chief sin—wickedness unmatched!—is faithlessness. And that is NOT some psychological mode out of whack; not some muddy thinking that can get cleared up by some Bible verses and religiosity.

OUR faithlessness, my friends, is the worst hatred there is toward God, Life-and-Death, Destiny, Heaven. The Cross shows what pain we cause Him, daily and much.

As we break the commandments, His Creation, His Rule. Have you, recently, blasphemed, spoken trash, sniffed and threw an attitude at Sharon, the mayor of the city/parish? John Bel, the governor of this State? Donald, the President of these United States? How many names must I list before YOU, my dear brother, sister—before YOU get all huffy.

This is sin; it is evil; it is UTTERLY faithless—NOW! Now that IT...IS...FINISHED;

And He's Alive!

And YOU'RE forgiven!

And you have been baptized!

And God has never done a greater work, or given a greater command, than: be washed; be fruitful; multiply; be reconciled to God!

In other words, take the chiding! Even that!

When will you and I, my dear disciples—when will we allow Jesus to be out of the tomb, King in the world of a Kingdom that is not? When will you and I ever 'Stop it! Stop being faithless!'

Ah!! Don't fall for that!



Christ being Christ is up to HIM!

YOU being at Peace with Him: that's up to Him too!

And so this life, in the midst of death, makes each moment yield new blessings on our way.

And He will raise us—HAS raised us ALREADY, as far as Heaven is concerned: “I am baptized! Happy Day!”

This IS our Life. This IS our Peace: Stop being faithless, but confident, growing: your Jesus is King and Christ, for the whole world. He is Peace; even for you, even for me, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.