

Sunday April 11, 2021 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church

Bible Study – John 20:19-31
“Unless I See”

Open with a word of prayer

Gathering Time (5-10 minutes) In pairs or groups of three, have participants name groups they are skeptical of (large corporations, government agencies, churches, certain people, and so on).

Context 20:19-31: After Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene and she reports this to the other disciples, Jesus appears to the others. The focus of today’s reading is on Thomas, who was not with the disciples when Jesus first appeared to them and who was slow to believe their testimony. Eventually, the risen Christ appears to Thomas, and Thomas responds to Christ with the strongest profession of faith of any of the disciples: “My Lord and my God!” Even so, it’s this story that has given rise to the epithet, “Doubting Thomas.” This story is the climax of John’s Gospel.

Read John 20:19-31

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn’t make sense to you in the story?

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

Read John 20:19-31 again.

Some reflection questions – Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

- This passage is dense with concepts and ideas (forgiveness; how does the risen Christ walk through doors or walls?; the relationship between believing and seeing, and so on). Work as a group to write out the questions that surface for participants in this passage. Work together to find answers to them. Seek out the help of the pastor (and staff) to give additional insight.
- Can you identify with Thomas’s skepticism about the disciples’ claim (v. 25)? Why or why not?
- Some have referred to the modern American culture as an age of skepticism. Do you think that is accurate? How might that influence some people’s reluctance to share the good news?
- What one sign (v. 30) would you wish to see that might strengthen your belief?
- How does our faith grow in times when we don’t “see” God’s presence around us? How can this group encourage you and help strengthen your beliefs?

Closing Reflection Question

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

Prayer (10 minutes). Each person prays sharing their answer the following statements:

I ask God for....

I thank God for.....

Sending Forth (2 minutes). After all, have shared, pray the closing prayer. Ask for a volunteer to lead the group or read the following prayer in unison:

Merciful God, we are amazed that almighty God would come and live among us. Dying and rising from the grave seems almost impossible to comprehend. We give you thanks that you are beyond our imaginations, for if we could understand you, you would be only as large as our imaginations. Help us to trust you and to continue believing that we might see even more how you are at work in the world. **Amen.**

And now we pray The Lord's Prayer....

Our Father who art in Heaven

hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,

on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power

and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.