

Living into a More Beloved Community

Through Remembering Who We Are And Whose We Are!

April 11, 2021

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Background to Scripture

One of my all time favorite scriptures is from John 8:32: “And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.”

When we open our hearts and minds to truly see, hear and experience the scripture at a deeper level, something quite mystical can happen in your soul! Over the years, I have had to learn to not be afraid of what might be revealed if I truly prayed as the hymn suggests: *“Open my eyes, that I may see, glimpses of truth thou hast for me, place in my hand the wonderful key that shall unclasp and set me free. Silently now, I wait for thee, ready my God thy will to see. Open my eyes illumine me, Spirit Divine.”*

Is this your prayer? This is my prayer!

As we hear the scripture today, listen and pray that not only your eyes are opened, but that your ears as well are opened to experience the Truth of the Gospel in ways you have not experienced before.

This gospel which is considered the most mystical of all the gospels was written around the end of the 1st century.

The fourth gospel explains the mystery of the person of Jesus. The author describes the uniqueness of Jesus because Jesus was in the beginning with God and then the Word became flesh.

Read the Gospel of John:

Scripture Lesson: John 20:19-31

Message Do Not Doubt Only Believe Pastor Matthias Krier

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We hear these words from scripture, "*Do Not Doubt, Only Believe!*" This is easier said than done. How many of you know folks who have the gift of faith and they have no trouble whatsoever in believing in their faith?

How many of you know or can relate to our doubting Thomas more so than someone with the gift of faith? I confess that I have always related more so to Thomas than to someone who possesses the gift of faith.

It would appear that the bottom line to this passage could be summarized in this verse from John 20:29: "*Blessed are those who believe without seeing.*"

Again, easier said than done, is it not? But, let us hear this again, "Blessed are those who believe without seeing." I would like to come in through the back door of this believing or not believing by remembering who we are and whose we are.

Why is it we forget who we are and whose we are?

First of all, as I have shared before we can become One with God. We can develop a relationship to God through Christ where we can experience a mystical Oneness. Some of you know what I am talking about, some of you may not. Jesus tried to teach the disciples about this Oneness in John 17:20-23:

20 'I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us,* so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

²²The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, ²³I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one ..."

First time I heard about this kind of union was with Fr. Thomas Keating who described it akin to developing a friendship with God. This is what I remember from Father Keating back in the late 1980's. I remember him describing this as one developing an intimate relationship between two people courting each other, however, I have seen it with dear friends as well. The Four Stages of Friendship he described were these at that time:

<u>Acquaintanceship</u>	(awkwardness)
<u>Friendship</u>	(developing trust)
<u>Intimate friendship</u>	(deep trust)
<u>Union</u>	(Oneness)

I do not want to oversimplify this understanding of Keating's illustration, but here is a brief summary of these four stages of friendship with God.

Where exactly are you in these four stages of friendship with God? Is it awkward as it is when you are just getting acquainted with someone? Or is the trust developing into a comforting friendship? Or is it past that as it would be in an intimate friendship with deep trust and confidence? Finally, with union one feels no separation. God and you are One. Another way of looking at this, are stages of prayer from Anthony De Mello:

I talk, you listen
You talk, I listen.
We both talk, we both listen.
Neither talks, neither listens.
Silence. (*Oneness*)

You know when you are in the presence of a dear, dear friend when you can simply sit in silence together and be still.

Maybe the psalmist was trying to tell us something in Psalm 46:10: "Be still and know that I am God." Or another verse from Psalm 62:

⁵ For God alone my soul waits in silence,
for my hope is from Yahweh."

This quote from Rumi speaks to this as well.
"Silence is the language of God. All else is poor translation."

I have discovered with the spiritual practice of centering prayer that silence is music for my soul.

Do not doubt, only believe. In our mid-week reflections group this week, we pretty much decided by consensus that Jesus was not upset with Thomas for his need to experience the resurrection for himself. This is what Jesus said to help Thomas in his disbelief. Here is a portion of what Jesus said: "Put your finger here, see my hands ... stop doubting and believe.

When you truly believe in something, whether it is in a person, or a civic organization or your church, you put your faith in whatever it is you believe in. Another word for faith would be trust.

Someone asked in our Mid-Week Reflections group what would one say if someone didn't believe in the resurrection? After all, everyone is entitled to believe what he or she or they would like to believe, right? I shared that when I find someone who is having a difficult time with the resurrection or other very important matters in our lives, I respond with this: "*Some things are true whether you believe in them or not.*" Nicolas Cage

There are actually folks who do not believe we sent a man to the moon. There are actually folks who deny the holocaust ever happened. There are actually folks who do not believe we had a fair and impartial election back in November in spite of all of the court's ruling that there was no widespread voter fraud that would have overturned the election.

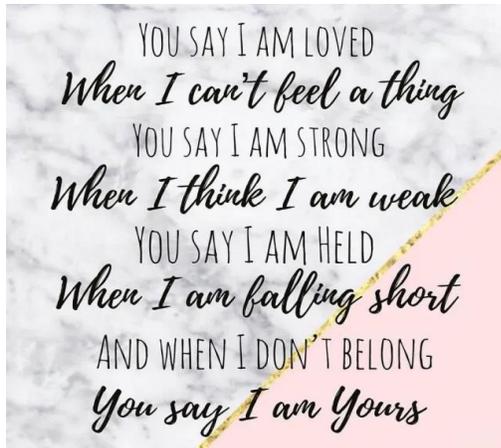
Some things are true whether you believe them or not.

When we seek the truth in the affairs here on earth and also seek the truth in a relationship to God with an open mind and an open heart, the truth will set us free.

And the truth of the matter is that we belong to God and we can become One with God as Jesus became One with God! This is who we are and whose we are!

For those who have the gift of faith and simply believe, that is great! For the rest of us who are more like Thomas, the song you are about to hear speaks to this. I listened to this song several times on youtube and I confess I am hooked. Years ago when I was just a youth, I wished I could have heard this song when I felt so depressed and alone.

Hear just some of the lyrics from this song:



Now I hope that countless lives can hear this good news of who we are and whose we are! *Do not doubt, only believe* that you are indeed a child of God! Remember who you are and whose you are!

Let us prepare for the sacrament of Holy Communion with this song entitled: "You Say".

Special Music

You Say*

Aubreigh Stone

You may hear this special music by Aubreigh by going to

www.aldersgatebutte.org and clicking on the service/sermon for April 11th

Or you may hear the original by Lauren Daigle at the link below.

Written by Jason Ingram / Lauren Daigle / Paul Brendon Mabury

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=slaT8Jl2zpl>



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you believe in them or not.

Nicolas Cage

quote fancy