**“These are Written”**

Acts 5:29-42

1 Peter 1:3-9

John 20:29-31

Easter 2

John wrote: “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**.”

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Text**

Two thirds of the Gospel account occurred on the evening of Easter day. Jesus (raised from the dead), stepped through locked doors to **stand before disciples and say to them**, “’Peace be with you.’ And when He said this, He **showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord**.” Exactly one week later (what would be Sunday evening of this weekend) He returned to **stand where the missing one, Thomas, would then also be**, and “although the doors were locked, Jesus **came and stood among them again and said**, ‘Peace be with you.’ Then 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**’” … and “Jesus” (John, the disciple, said) “did many **other signs in the presence of the disciples**”, not all of them written yet **many written and proclaimed and passed to further proclaimers, these** first ones (for sure) were “**witnesses to these things**” as was also (the Acts text reminds, and we should never dismiss **THIS also** **eye witness Who proclaims in us in our soul constantly**) “**the Holy Spirit, Whom God has given to those who obey Him**” …

**Bridge**

… yet **we who have not (ourselves) “seen” still “believe in Him (blessed) and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible, obtaining” (as the text says) “the outcome of our faith, the salvation of our souls.” Jesus, Himself, said (of us now), “BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HAVE NOT SEEN AND YET HAVE BELIEVED**.”

So many gathered last weekend and now again to **sing of that Easter event and rejoice in it, proclaiming it aloud by song and proclamation to this community (our cars in a church parking lot and bodies inside of it showing our joy by our travel and priorities) but also in Words of witness to neighbors and co-workers and classmates**. As disciples received “Peace” from Jesus as He presented Himself, so **we acknowledge and proclaim ourselves receiving it in how He presents Himself now (in these days) through the recited testimonies of Word and Spirit**. And that’s the **POINT** of John’s Gospel as he says in its **CONCLUSION** and **PURPOSE STATEMENT:** “**these ARE WRITTEN SO THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD, and THAT BY BELIEVEING YOU MAY HAVE LIFE IN HIS NAME**.” The living (having died, but then rising) Jesus left **TESTIMONY** of His death then revealed rising **SO THAT** (until the end of time through the written Word and the Holy Spirit embedding that Word **deep into HEARERS**) **ALL (you and I and ANY OTHERS WE’D TELL) could have “life in His name”**, moving, (**WE** and **THIS WORLD**) from the **events** to their **effects**.

**Application**

And the initial **effect on** **Thomas got documented so that we could learn from it, and gain another very-critical eye-witness touching and feeling the resurrected Christ**. Many might find it hard to blame Thomas for his doubt without seeing, even though he **heard all about it**. Yet Jesus did **blame him for that**, yet **made an exception with him … doing so graciously, but also because He had much He expected of him, for the world’s sake by his witness**.

I read a noted Christian’s own proclamation of **why he, himself, needed Thomas effect-change that Jesus did, and I give him the last Words today … appreciative of his comments**:

His comments are called “What Would Convince **Me** \*Not\* to Be a Christian?”, and he wrote:

“As we celebrate Christ’s bodily resurrection, let us remember that this doctrine is not founded upon a legend or “leap of faith” with no evidence. It is founded upon the **reality** of a personal, all-powerful God; **evidence** that this God not only promised to do so, but **actually** **raised Jesus from the dead** according to **eye-witness testimonies to this resurrection fact**.

“In other words, if someone were to ask me, “Is there anything that would convince you to leave Christianity?” the answer is Yes. **If** the bodily resurrection of Jesus were objectively and irrefutably **proven \*not\* to have happened**, then I would walk away from Christianity.

“**If** the bones of Jesus of Nazareth are in the ground, then Christianity is utterly and diabolically false. Everything depends upon the **facticity** of the bodily resurrection of Jesus. As Paul puts it: “For **if** the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And **if** Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins”.

“**For this reason**, the Evangelists and Paul **repeatedly affirm** that Jesus appeared, physically alive again, to hundreds of his followers. He **was** seen, he ate, he conversed, he invited Thomas to touch his wounds. As Paul says, “He **appeared** to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then **he appeared** to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then **he appeared** to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, **he appeared also** to me”.

“These **hundreds of historical eye-witnesses**, the **written testimonies** **of some of them**, **their willingness to face even martyrdom before denying it, Paul's revolutionary conversion from persecutor to apostle, and much more**, **combine to provide** **more than adequate evidence** of the truthfulness of Christianity.

“In other words, our faith is **not founded upon a historical legend, unprovable myth, or non-evidence-based tale**,but **on historical, objective, eye-witness accounts of a man who was crucified and bodily, gloriously resurrected**.

“**Bodily crucifixion. Bodily resurrection.
Hundreds of people who witnessed him alive again.
Written testimonies to this fact**.

“We worship **not an idea or legend or fairy tale, but a flesh-and-blood man, who is also fully divine, Who was crucified, buried, and bodily raised back to life, Who now reigns as King of kings at the right hand of the Father**.

“And **THAT**, my friends (quite literally), **makes all the difference in the world**.” **AMEN**.