**Sermon- 2nd Easter 2021**

**Title: “Walk in the Light"**

**Texts: 1 John 1:1-2:2 & John 20:19-31**

**Prayer**

**Salutation**

**Bridge**

**“The doors are locked. The disciples are behind them cowering in fear. Then, out of nowhere comes this, “Peace be with you!” Jesus just pops into the room like He’s been there with them the whole time. It must have been like someone today saying, “Surprise! Here I am!” It most certainly startled them. But almost immediately, it gave them joy to see Him. He had popped in for a purpose. He knew it was time for their graduation of sorts.”**

**I'm going to stop here for a moment. It's second Sunday after Easter. What I just read was the beginning of my message from *last year*. Recognize it? I wondered if you'd recognize it. For you know what? I and many associate pastors in the LCMS, preach this Sunday every year and it's the same exact text. It is something that just never changes. Because senior pastors always go on vacation this Sunday. But it made me think about "change" again. Some things change, others, not. Some all the time, and others, not. It's the topic of our adult Bible study until I leave for the summer. Another change. Life is always changing, or it's not. And how do we cope with that? Or do we cope with it? How easy is it to plan when someone just pops into the room on you like that? How easy it to plan when something just pops into our lives? Answer-only one way- We go to the Light.**

**Law**

**The disciples were most definitely going through the biggest change in their lives. The Light of the world had been extinguished and now, they had heard rumors and reports from their brethren that, somehow, the Light had been rekindled and come back to life. They were not coping with it very well. God brought them to a point where they were forced to deal with- change. But, like I said, they were in hiding. They were in fear for their lives for if the Son of God could be killed, so could they. They had begun to live in darkness, because that is what fear brings without the Light in your life. Therefore, they are no different than many people today. They rely on other ways in their lives when change comes about, and instead of walking a clear path illuminated by the Light, they hide inside in fear. They hear rumors, just like the disciples did, relying on others than the Light. Like them, we wonder, or like them, we just think too much! Because we know we can’t do anything about some circumstances no matter what! We think only God could handle something like this! Therefore, we sin, not relying on Him, giving up because things look too dark, too evil, and we let faith slip away from us like the light at the end of the day. We go off on other paths in the darkness of the world, tripping, stumbling, and falling down, because we just can't see where we are going. John said in the epistle, "If we say we have fellowship with another while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth."**

**When change like this separation from the Light occurs, (like it did for the Disciples) it can throw us into sheer panic. When we see change like we have in the past year you know what I mean. When faced with these challenges, we will even deny that we sin, worrying and making bad decisions, because we are so far separated from the Light that we can't see the sin in front of our face, as if a hand waving in front of it in the dark! And when the Light pops into the room and we do see, our sins can be terrifying! John said, "If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and His word is not in us." Doors locked, huddling in fear and darkness, the disciples had not realized, even after walking with the Light for three years, that Jesus had all the answers and they should do as Peter had once said, "Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life!" He was shining right in front of their faces. When you've locked yourself into the darkness because of change you can't deal with, don't just sit there trying to grope your way out and do like the world does. Don't listen to those that would try to lead you in the ways of the world, who twist words for profit, ply you with falsities and lead you to destruction. Understand the mistakes that the disciples made and let the Light shine in your life! The human eye is naturally drawn to the light. That was implanted in us at creation. So, go to Him, for He and only He has the Words that lead to life!**

**Gospel**

**What I’m saying reminds me of what John said to us. John wrote, "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous!" We cling to Jesus, walking in His Light. John also said how it is done, "But if we walk in the Light as He is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus is Son cleanses us from all sin." Jesus had come not to condemn the world, but to save it- from sin! Therefore, the choice may or may not be a change for you, but for me the answer is obvious, I will not live in fear, but in the Light of Christ that leads me in the Way of righteousness. He does this in the Word, He does this in baptism and in the Sacrament of the altar, and in His words from this human vessel, all the means He uses to lead to eternal life; that only He can give.**

**When Jesus, the Light of the world pops into our darkness in these ways, He says to us, "Peace be with you!" It's the best kind of change we can welcome into our sight! Without Him, there is no light at all. I could leave it at that, but you’d be asking, “What’s the rest of the story for them and more importantly, how does all of what you’re saying this apply to *me*?” Well, today, (and to be honest I chuckled when I read the Gospel text), but today you may be fearful if someone came up to you and breathed on you purposely. Especially without a mask. I mean, when Jesus had greeted them, He went a little farther than normal and upon breathing on them said, “Receive the Holy Spirit”. Even though He had just put them in panic mode by saying He was sending them out to tell the Good News, He now gave them something that filled them with the Peace that surpasses all understanding. He took away all fear and doubt about who He was and how they were to go about ministry. How? With the power of the Holy Spirit! Who shines His light in our lives and sanctifies us so we may grow in grace and the knowledge of God. And this encounter is the day after Easter! Just wait until Pentecost when they get a megadose of His power! The Spirit points us to Christ, who is with us and guides us in all things. If we walk there, in a light so bright all things come out of the darkness and are exposed, with Him, we will fear no evil be it princes, powers, demons, death, or viruses. That’s how it applies to you and to me. We fear not for we can see the Light. His promises of life are true.**

**Conclusion**

**However, proof for many people these days is, like it was for Thomas, only real if they can see, feel, and touch it. We are cynical because justice and truth in this world are very rare things. I think John may have been remembering that time when they hid, and Thomas didn't believe them. So, he wrote this to us, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the Word of life- the life was made manifest...". Jesus, the Word of the 1st verse of Genesis, came to be, and he and Thomas had seen the Light. So, he said this last thing to us in the Gospel, "but these things 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." That's how we walk, brothers and sisters. We believe Him and His words in the Bible. We let them shine as He does in our lives and we see a clear path without fear.**

**The apostle wrote this at the beginning of his letter to us, "And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.” “My *last* words for you, at least for a time, are these: "We are blessed for we walk in His light." For He said, "Blessed are those who have not yet seen, but believe." That is us. What joy there is in this! I believe Him. We see, because of Him and His Light. Godspeed us on our walk with Him as we are one with Him. We will never stumble if we remain in His Light. Even when I am not physically here with you, I’ll be with you on His path until next winter with Jesus as our guide. In whose name we pray. Amen.**