

WEEKLY DEVOTION – Tuesday, November 12, 2024
Pastor Bruce Kischnick, Grace Lutheran Church, New Albany, IN

“That Left a Mark”

READING: John 20:19-20 – On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

As I have already mentioned in a previous devotion, I recently underwent a heart catheterization. I am happy to report that there were no major blockages found that caused concern. What did cause some concern was the large purple hematoma that appeared a couple of days after the procedure. When I showed it to Becky, she immediately became concerned and said, “You need to go to the hospital and have that looked at. Something’s wrong!” I assured her it was just a hematoma, the natural result of the heart cath mixed with the blood thinner I’m on. She’s been gratified to see that it is gradually disappearing as my body reabsorbs and breaks down the old blood. It left a mark, but not a permanent one.

However, I do have some scars to remind me of old injuries and accidents that did leave a permanent mark. I have a big Frankenstein scar on my right elbow, thanks to a bicycle accident in second grade that required surgery and two pins. Then there is a scar on my left wrist where surgery was done to repair a broken wrist. And of course I have two short fingers and some burn scars on my right hand from an industrial accident 51 years ago. All of those injuries occurred a long time ago, but they left a mark – mute evidence of ineptitude or foolishness on my part. They speak volumes about my misuse and abuse of my arms and hands.

In our text for today John records the first resurrection appearance of Jesus to his disciples as a group. Some of the women had already seen him, as well as the two on the walk to Emmaus. Evidently Peter had also had a visit from Jesus, as was reported to the Emmaus disciples when they came to share their experience with the rest. But now Jesus has come to comfort and confirm for them that he lives. And so they can have no doubts about who they are seeing, he shows them his hands, feet, and his side. Those wounds, still fresh and visible, confirm for them that they are seeing the real McCoy, the real Jesus, him crucified and him living. He is not a ghost. He is not a shared vision. He is not a collective hallucination. He is the corporal, crucified, buried, and now resurrected Lord – alive and in the flesh. Those marks stand as stark testimony to the reality of this appearance. HE LIVES!

What’s more, someday you and I will meet the living Lord Jesus, and he will show us the marks on his hands and feet, the one on his side. Those are his trophies, evidence into eternity of the wounds he bore on our behalf as he secured by his suffering and death our salvation. We will KNOW immediately whom we are seeing, who is meeting us and greeting us and loving us as we find ourselves where He is. Those marks, won at such terrible cost, are also the sweetest and most blessed evidence of his great love for us. They will speak to us without words of the victory he won for us and the misery he bore for us so that death could not hold us and hell could not claim us. Those marks will mean everything to us.

I suppose I will collect a few more scars before the Lord calls me home to see his. I know I have at least one surgery coming up in January. It wouldn’t surprise me to have one or two more as the parts wear out on my old “Model 1954” body. Those scars are actually the means of identifying me should something dramatic happen to me. If I should go missing in the deer woods, and they find my body and no identification papers on me, the scars on my elbow, wrist, and right hand would be used to identify me. Should I commit a terrible crime and go on the lamb, they’ll put up postings of my face along with a description of my

identifying scars as a means of finding me and bringing me to justice. Those marks identify me as surely as my fingerprints and dental X-rays.

So our Lord shows himself alive to his disciples and shows them his hands and side as unmistakable proof that it's really him and he's really alive. His crucifixion left its marks on him, but those are the very signs of his love for us. They will forever speak without words to tell us it's him and how much he loves us. That left a mark, a mark of amazing love. Amen.

PRAYER:

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1) **VOTERS ASSEMBLY** – Sunday, November 24, after late service, we will have a Congregational Assembly with the principle work of looking at, amending, and approving the Work Plan for 2025. Changes are coming in that year, so careful and thoughtful planning for various contingencies are called for. Please make an effort to attend. Lunch will be provided.

2) **SEMINARIAN JOSH BIERI** will be here the weekend of November 23-24. He will be the preacher at all three weekend services. Josh and his family have been the recipients of our financial assistance these past two years as he prepares for vicarage next year and ordination beyond. We can look forward to his message and to seeing his wife and at least their little son who will be a year older than when we last saw him.

3) **THANKSGIVING SERVICE** – 7:00 PM on Wednesday, November 27. My last Thanksgiving sermon at Grace (probably).