

Sermon 27 April 2025 – 2nd Sunday of Easter: Family Sunday

By Revd. Karen Adendorff

Do your parents send you to do things? Where do they send you and what do they want you to do? The shop. To fetch something for you. To tell someone else something. Pass on a message?

Would you go if just anyone sent you to do something? No... You would only go if you knew the person. If you trusted them, right? If what they were telling you to do and say is something good. Isn't that so?

In the Gospel reading this morning we heard how the disciples were together in a locked room after Jesus was crucified and buried. They had heard that Jesus, was now risen but none of them had seen him and they did not believe those who had told them they had seen him. They were scared and confused, not knowing what to believe. Then suddenly, Jesus enters the locked room says, **"Peace be with you."** He shows them his hands and his sides and says, **"...As the Father has sent me, so I send you."** Then he breathes on them. Oh, my goodness. How do you think you will feel if someone came and breathed on you? I suppose it will depend on who it is, hey? If they smelt good or bad? Maybe you would feel a bit uncomfortable?

But the disciples were happy to see Jesus because they recognized him by his wounds. And they now knew it was true - that he had been raised – because they could see for themselves.

When Jesus breathes on the disciples, he says, "Receive the Holy Spirit." By doing this he empowers them - (That is a big word hey? Who knows what it means to empower? That's right to give authority / make possible / give the tools) – to carry on doing the work Jesus had been doing. And what was that work? Yes...healing, caring, forgiving sins, loving, as he did. God the Father sent him into the world – to die and rise again – so that all may know the love of God and live according to God's ways. Now, Jesus was telling the disciples to go out and share his love, just like he did. And he wants us to do the same. He wants us to forgive those who hurt us so that they may also believe in Jesus and his generous love.

Sometimes it is difficult to believe that Jesus is with us because we don't see him in the flesh, like the disciples did. Isn't that so? Sometimes we have a hard time trusting in things

that we don't see for ourselves - things that just seem so impossible or amazing. We want to see and feel before we believe. Like the disciple who was not with the others when Jesus appeared to them...what was his name again? Yes... Thomas.

Believing in the Resurrection is not easy. The disciples struggled to believe without seeing Jesus alive for themselves. Many people today still don't believe that Jesus rose from the dead. But Jesus says, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." (John 20: 29). And the gospel writer tells us that the things he wrote about was so that we "may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name." (John 20: 31) This is us! We believe even though we have not physically seen Jesus. We believe because there are stories in the Bible, like this one, that tell us about Jesus. These stories – told by people who did see Jesus alive - help us to trust and know that Jesus is near, even though we do not see him for ourselves.

Just as Jesus gives his peace to the disciples and breathes on them to receive the Holy Spirit, he also does the same for us. This peace calms us and gives us courage to share the story of Jesus with others, even when it is difficult, and they do not want to believe. And Jesus also gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit so that we may know that we are not alone in doing this work he sends us out to do.

Can you think of some ways that we can show the love of God and Jesus to others so that they too may come to believe in Jesus? Yes...

Being kind to someone who is lonely at school."

Sharing what you have with others."

Telling others - family and friends - about something you learned about God.

Praying for someone who is sick or sad.

Stand up for someone who is being treated unfairly, and the list goes on.

I think a very important one is forgiving someone who has hurt you. When we forgive, we show Jesus' work of love in our lives and his power to draw us back to God and away from those things that draw us away from God.

Remember, you can show God's love in everything you do. As the Father has sent Jesus, so Jesus sends us. Let us go out this week and share Jesus' love and forgiveness, that we have received, with others.

Let us pray

Dear God, thank you for your great love for us. Thank you for sending Jesus to show us how to love. Please help us to believe in Jesus, even when we don't see him. Give us your peace so that we can be brave and share your love with everyone around us, so that more and more people will come to believe in you. Amen.