

John 20:19-31 Thomas
April 28, 2019

Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Grace and peace be with you from God our Father and our risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Wounds heal.

I don't mean that wounds will heal. I mean wounds bring healing. Other people's wounds bringing healing to those who are distraught.

Did you notice that the resurrected Jesus is still bearing all of his wounds?

He is not all healed over when he appears to his disciples. He is not in pristine condition. No. He is wounded, and alive!

In the resurrection, Jesus is exposing all of his wounds for the whole world to see. The holes in his wrists and ankles, and the gash in his side are all still there for everyone to see.

The nail marks from the crucifixion and the stab wound from where the soldier pierced him in the side to see if he was still alive are still there. They did not vanish.

And those wounds bring healing to his disciples, because it is only through those wounds that the resurrection can truly be understood.

God is stronger than the wounds we inflict on one another. God's love is stronger than the wounds we inflict on God. But that doesn't mean that the wounds go away.

Jesus forgives those who betrayed him, deserted him, and killed him, but he still bears the wounds. And it is with those wounds fully visible that Jesus brings the message of - Peace be with you.

With his wounds still fresh, Jesus brings a message from God the creator of all – Peace be with you.

In the resurrection, Jesus continues God's story of solidarity with us lowly human beings. First he was born as one of us and then he died as one of us, and now he is resurrected as one of us – all to proclaim God's unfathomable love for us.

In his wounds, God proclaims that nothing can separate us from God, not even crucifixion and death.

And, he also proclaims to us that he knows all about everything that we will ever go through. Everything that we will experience, he has already experienced. He has been there and he will be there with us as we go through it all.

Have any of you ever heard the song by Lady Gaga, “Until it happens to you?”

In the song, Lady Gaga talks about her experience being raped and how people told her to just get over it. In her song, she laments that, “until it happens to you, you won’t know what it’s like – the pain, the guilt, the shame, and the anger.

Until it happens to us, we won’t know what it’s really like.

God takes on that same philosophy and is incarnated so that he can know what it’s like, so he can experience what we experience.

In his wounds, Jesus proclaims to us that God does know what it’s like to be one of us. He knows what it’s like to be loved and have friends, and he also knows what it’s like to be betrayed, beaten, and killed. God knows.

And God comes out on the other side alive giving us hope and sharing his peace. He’s been there and he will see us through it all.

Jesus is our ultimate support group sponsor.

How many of you have been a part of a support group? I’ve been a part of many grief support groups and I can tell you firsthand how healing those groups are.

When people are vulnerable and show their wounds to others in the group, they bring healing to the other people.

Those who are further along in their grief bring hope to those who are just starting their journey. They bring the good news that you too can survive what’s ahead of you. You will get through it, and you are not alone.

I often think of the movie Jaws and how the chief of police, the young scientist, and the old salt are all sharing the war stories behind their scars.

They start off simple with small shark bites and go all the way to how the old man survived the sinking of the USS Indianapolis where sailors were getting attacked by sharks as they floated in the ocean desperate for help.

As Chief Brody and Hooper listen to Quint, they are given hope. People can survive the worst of things. Perhaps that is how they end up surviving their own giant shark attack.

When a person survives, there is hope. It means that I can survive things too.

In showing his disciples his wounds, Jesus is proclaiming that they will make it, they will survive death, because he is the first born of the dead. With that, he brings them hope and peace.

Peace be with you. Don't worry. It's all going to be ok. And with that, we are strengthened to go out into the world and show our own wounds so that we too can bring healing to others.

What trials have you been through? Physical, mental, financial, spiritual, educational, moral, or other?

What got you through to the other side? More than likely it was Christ crucified whether you realized it or not.

So, how might you share your story now that you are on the other side knowing that the resurrected Christ is with you also? How might your wounds bring healing to someone else?

One of the things that I love about Church is that we have people of every age with us – from Bradly to Nina we go from 4 to the 94, and every age group can learn from those who have gone before them.

I personally love hanging out with 90 year olds, because they've survived it all. They give me hope. If Nina survived the Great Depression and World War II, with Christ, I too can take on whatever comes my way.

And with Christ's wounds, I know that I will survive death as well, because he will bring me into resurrection.

During this season of Easter, we celebrate the hope we have in Christ's wounds.

There is nothing to fear! Christ is with us – through it all. From birth to death and beyond.

Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Thanks be to God. Amen.