

May 17, 2020

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Services continue to be "listen live" through our website as well as meeting together at the city's ordinance of 50% capacity and according to the guidelines on the website(member's page)

Today: 9:30 a.m. Catechism Reading Service
6:30 p.m. Reading Service

This **Thursday**, Ascension Day, 7:00 p.m. service combined with our moderator, live stream through website only.

Next Week: 9:30 a.m. Reading Service
6:30 p.m. Catechism Reading Service
-All the Lord willing-

Offerings: Please send offerings to Mr. Norm deWit. The May offerings would be for the General Fund, School Fund, Living Bread, and Hudson Taylor. Pentecost collection will be for North American General Mission

Membership: We have received the membership papers for Mr. & Mrs. Richard and Karla Rozeboom and one baptized child, Levi John, from the Rock Valley congregation. Welcome! We wish you the Lord's blessing in our midst.

We Remember in Prayer:

- All those separated from loved ones due to the ongoing precautionary measures.
- Our widows and widowers and lonely ones, the unborn, prodigal sons and daughters.
- All those with hidden crosses

MEDITATION

The Last Beatitude

"Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."
John 20:29

Throughout John 20 we see that the first day of the week became the Sabbath in place of the seventh day, commencing when Christ arose. Early on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the sepulchre and was found by Jesus. On that same evening, Jesus came to the room where the disciples except for Thomas, were gathered. On the following first day of the week, Jesus came again

and revealed Himself to Thomas. In the New Testament the first day of the week is the only day mentioned by number. According to Acts 20, the young Christian church met especially on the first day of the week to hear God's Word proclaimed, partake of the sacraments, call upon the Name of the Lord and help the poor of the church. Until the last day, people will be converted, very often on the first day of the week which is the Lord's Day and will share in the true knowledge of God's beloved Son. Reader, never stay home from church, especially on the first day of the week. Go to the House of Prayer to call upon God: *"Grant life unto my soul, O LORD, I pray."*

When Jesus met with Thomas, He said to him: *"Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed."* This included not only Thomas, but all the others, because there was not one among them that believed before they saw Jesus. If seeing was the only way to believe, what would happen to the militant Church on earth? "Thomas: I called and sent you with all the others to proclaim the Gospel to all people. You and the other apostles have seen Me, but if your hearers say: 'We will not believe unless we see the Lord' what then? I go to the Father and I will be exalted with My glorified body. I will not return to the earth to be in the midst of the congregation so they can see Me. Thomas, will you be the last one to be freed from the bondage of unbelief? After I ascend to Heaven, will no one believe that I arose and live forever? Have I sent you and the other apostles into the world in vain?"

The last beatitude which Jesus spoke before His ascension is one of the tenets of the Gospel. Until the last day it will be *"not seen, and yet have believed."* Blessed is he who sees and therefore believes. No less blessed are those who do not see and yet believe. Christ's applying work by Word and Spirit is remarkable: both the gift of faith and grace for the exercise of faith.

Why then do we have the visible Gospel of Holy Baptism and Lord's Supper? Do we first have to see before we believe? Reader, are you a doubting Thomas? Jesus knows of the weakness of His children! People of God, when you are invited to the table of the Lord on the first day of the week, will you be trembling as you receive the broken bread and drink the wine? Behold, eat and drink (the visible signs) *"and be not faithless, but believing."* You will be shown the marks on Jesus' hands as Mediator for sinners worthy of death. By faith it will be Jesus in the midst as the only Foundation for salvation. He was in the midst of criminals - for criminals. For God's people at the table, the "disease" of unbelief can be taken away for a moment but may come back later more intensely than before.

By nature, all men are full of unbelief. We would rather fight with God than subject ourselves to Him. Only the power of Christ's resurrection conquers even the greatest enemy. If there was no living Savior, man would be lost forever. Christ grants life and maintains it as well. Christ teaches the wonder of not seeing but yet believing to

make His children first believe and then see. Faith, often contested and weak, will one day become an eternal beholding. God's poor and afflicted people will then forget all their difficulties. The former things will pass away, and they will see the Savior face to face. They will be forever indebted to Him for His love which paid all their debts and healed all their diseases. Jesus will be in their midst and it will be an eternal Lord's Day.

"To Whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

~Rev. C. Hogchem

Notes

Netherlands Reformed Congregation

Sioux Falls, SD



*And thou shalt love the LORD thy
God with all thine heart, and with all
thy soul, and with all thy might.
Deuteronomy 6:5*

Consistory

Mr. Craig Timmer, President Mr. Norm DeWit, Treasurer

Contacts

Bulletin announcements: Mr. Craig Timmer craigtimmer@ymail.com or (231) 942-1389

Sermon recordings: Mr. Ryan Rozeboom

Church Times: 9:30 a.m. and 2:30 or 6:30 p.m.