*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

April 22 - 27

*Jesus in John’s Gospel*

**Monday, April 22 John 20:19-23**

*“Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them!”*

As Jesus has revealed himself to Mary he now comes to the disciples. These men are gathered in fear behind bolted doors. They are certain that sooner or later the vengeful enemies of Jesus will seek them out, for Jesus had repeatedly made it clear that they would know the hatred of the world as he had experienced it. But then Jesus came to them, an assurance that he would be with them forever. And his first word, “Peace be with you,” was far more than a familiar greeting. It was a truth that would last them a lifetime.

Now Jesus commissions them. As he had earlier sent Mary forth with the message of life, so he now sends these disciples. They are given the mission which the Son was given by the Father. But they cannot begin this mission of the gospel without the power and energy of Jesus’ risen life. So Jesus breathes on them. As God had breathed his life into that first man and he became a living soul, so now his Son shares the intimacy of his own life with his disciples that they may be a new humanity, recreated and empowered for their mission.

*You send us into the world, Jesus, empowered by your resurrected life. Amen.*

**Tuesday, April 23 John 20:24-29**

*“This time Thomas was with them”*

There is one who was not with them on that first Sunday evening. Thomas, the twin, had missed the first encounter with Jesus. Ever the practical realist, he had been so certain they were coming to Judea to “die with him” (John 11:16). So, the crucifixion was the end for Jesus as far as Thomas was concerned. Thomas may have hidden in fear, gone off to brood over the failure of Jesus’ whole mission, or turned back to his old ways. Whatever it was that cut Thomas off from the other disciples gave him occasion to voice his deepest doubt.

So when the other disciples seek Thomas out and declare, “We have seen the Lord,” he demands proof. We can all thank God that the “others” somehow got Thomas to come to their next “meeting” eight days later. In every generation there are those who have patiently and lovingly built relationships of trust so that they have been able to bring some honest seeker to the “meeting.” When Jesus again comes to the meeting of the disciples he comes to Thomas, not with words or arguments, but offering himself.

*I trust the witness of those who have seen you and believed in you, Jesus. Amen.*

**Wednesday, April 24 John 20:30-31**

*“This is written so you may believe”*

There is no way John can put into words all the works of Jesus, those signs by which the glory and character of God have been revealed, particularly in his resurrection appearances. But he has given his readers sufficient evidence to believe that Jesus is the “Chosen One,” the very Son of God, and in believing they receive life in his name.

This is an evangelistic document in which the name of Jesus has been lifted up. The central issue for both Jews and Greeks throughout the writing has been the identity of Jesus. And as all men and women of every age read and ponder and dare believe that Jesus is the “I AM,” the Christ of God, they are given life. But those who turn against Jesus in unbelief have already forfeited that life. So there is the wondrous possibility of life in reading these words but also the great danger of rejection and death. We must read carefully and critically, for our lives depend upon how we respond to what we read.

*Thank you, Jesus, for giving me your Word that I may believe. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

April 22 - 27

*Jesus in John’s Gospel*

**Thursday, April 25 John 21:1-14**

*“It is the Lord!”*

Seven of the disciples have gone back to the well-known haunts of the Sea of Galilee to fish. These men need time to work things through. The events of the last days have been overwhelming. Their whole world has been shaken, and they are baffled and confused. What are they to do now? So when Peter says, “I am going fishing,” the other disciples join him. Here is something they know and understand and feel comfortable doing. Even the way John refers to “the boat” rather than *a* boat indicates they have used it before.

After fishing all night they are returning empty-handed when they see a figure on the shore. Although it is still too dark to see him clearly, they hear him calling out to them and asking whether they have caught any fish. Telling them to cast the net again, they do so and their net is full. John takes a long look at this man on the shore, and in the dawning of a new day recognizes him and joyfully cries out to Peter, “It is the Lord!” Jesus has come to show himself again to the disciples and to call them from their fishing trip to their mission, which is to fish for people.

*You call us into your mission, Jesus, and we gladly obey. Amen.*

**Friday, April 26 John 21:15-17**

*“Feed my sheep”*

Jesus draws Peter aside to deal with him personally. This is a time of healing and restoration. The question that Jesus addresses to Simon Peter – and the seriousness of the encounter is underlined by Jesus’ use of Peter’s full name – is concerned with Peter’s heart: “Do you love me more than these?” This is the most important question. Does Peter love Jesus unselfishly and unconditionally more than he cares for fishing with all its trappings, or anything else? Peter’s immediate response is affirmation, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.”

Twice more Jesus asks Peter the question, “Do you love me?” without making reference to any other matters. Each time there is a positive answer. Finally Peter responds, “Lord, you know all things.” Jesus knows Peter’s heart, whether his act of repentance has truly brought him back in undying love. Jesus is asking whether Peter loves him so deeply and personally that he will faithfully obey him in the mission which he is being given. Peter is to care for all the sheep – feed the young ones, discipline the stubborn ones, and tenderly watch over the old ones.

*In you, Jesus, there is forgiveness and restoration from sin. Amen.*

**Saturday, April 27 John 21:18-25**

*“What about him?”*

Jesus predicts that Peter will die a martyr’s death to the glory of God. That eager offer Peter had made earlier, “I will lay down my life for your sake” (John 13:37), will be fulfilled. In following Jesus all the way, Peter will finally be tied down and carried to his death by others. Then Peter drops back into his old impulsive ways. Seeing John nearby, he wants to know about his destiny. What will his future be? How much like Peter so many of us are. We are so prone to want to know about other people’s lives.

Peter’s concern is to be about following Jesus, not John’s future. That is all in the hands of the Lord, who could let him live until he returns if he so wills. A rumor got around that John would live until Jesus returned because people misunderstood what Jesus said. So John had to clarify what Jesus had really said. What an honest and instructive detail. People then, too, even in the believing community, did not hear correctly and therefore would pass on confusing information which had to be corrected. Times have not changed.

*You know the plans you have for me, Jesus, plans for good. Amen.*