

Lessons for the Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 14, 2017

Psalm 146 ~ *Blessed is he whose hope is in the LORD his God.*

Acts 6:1-9; 7:2a, 51-60 ~ *Stephen gave his faithful witness and his life for the name of Jesus.*

1 Peter 2:2-10 ~ *In Christ we are God's people, to declare his praises to those in darkness.*

John 14:1-14 ~ *Jesus is the Way to the Father; He is the Truth, and the Life.*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: You Know the Way.

Thomas' problem was, simply stated: "If we don't know the destination, how can we get there?" Jesus' answer was simpler still: "Thomas, you know me; trust me! I am the only one who will get you to the Father's house where I am going." Through the witness of God's faithful people in Holy Scripture, we also know Jesus and trust him. Our faith makes us bold, like Stephen, to give a faithful witness before those who mock Jesus' name. Our lives are built on his fulfillment of love that has claimed us as his holy people. Those who resist his promise and will not trust his word stumble over the Foundation Stone on which our faith is built.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: Lord Jesus, let me be constant in trusting you and faithful in my witness to your Lordship in my life. As my life is built on the foundation of your forgiveness, do not let me be a stumbling block to anyone who needs to know you as the Way to the Father. Amen.

OFFERING PRAYER: Heavenly Father, bless our offerings mightily,
these gifts of love we bring for You.
May they show our love so faithfully
that all may know Your grace is true. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: Rather than looking at new church members as potential donors, we should see them from the biblical understanding, as gifts from God to His church.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: Even more than Thomas, we are a society of people who want to know the reasons and explanations for everything. If we cannot understand something, how can we trust the outcome? Jesus calls us to trust Him and put our lives in His hands, as Stephen did, believing and giving clear witness that Jesus held his future as securely as He did His present. When we know Jesus, we are His people, eager to declare His wonderful deeds that have called us out of our dark past and into His bright future.