

In our gospel reading this morning, we have another post-resurrection story of Jesus from the gospel of Luke. Luke's version of these times is quite different from John. Several women go to the tomb not just Mary Magdalene. The women see two men who tell them that Jesus is risen and tell them to tell the disciples who don't believe. In Luke, the first time Jesus appears is not to Mary Magdalene, but rather to two disciples on their way to Emmaus. When they realize that their walking companion is Jesus, they return to Jerusalem to tell the disciples and this is when Jesus appears in front of all of them saying Peace be with you.

However, it seems as if the disciples are not able to take in what they are seeing. They are terrified and think that they are seeing a ghost. Jesus takes time to show them his hands and his feet and even eats a piece of fish to show that he is real. It is very similar to what Jesus did for Thomas in last week's gospel.

Jesus needs to get the disciples' attention and snap them out of their terror. There is work to be done. Jesus needs them to get it, for their minds to be opened— to understand his words that he taught them, to know that he is fulfilling the scripture that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day. These folk are all Jesus has. Jesus needs the disciples to be witnesses of this and to proclaim repentance and forgiveness to all nations.

Jesus is laying much on the shoulders of the disciples. They need to be the witnesses of the repentance and forgiveness that Jesus came to proclaim. So Jesus gets their attention. He is saying I am back. I am really risen and I need you to witness all of this to the whole world.

These words are for us as well as disciples of the present time, and it seems like an impossible task. I know it does for me. However, after reading the interpretation of the first words of Jesus to his disciples – Peace be with you - from one commentator, I found another way to hear his words in this gospel. The words, "Peace be with you" is so much more than being quiet peaceful people which is often our interpretation. Peace, Shalom, means to convey that all is well with the world, all is just, all is fair, all is the way God means it to be. Shalom ultimately means something more like, "What are you doing to make the world look more like God's world, like the world God longs it to be?"

Christ is asking us to make Shalom known, to proclaim Shalom to all. Proclaiming Shalom means we are working for a world where the hungry are fed, there are no homeless, people are respected and cared for, all are welcomed, there is health care, there is justice for all. This will be a long time coming ad yet we must persist.

There is our challenge – how are we witnessing to Shalom in our world? How are we proclaiming Shalom? It is the same as proclaiming the Good News. Shalom is the Good News! The Good News is about repentance and forgiveness that God's offers us and that Good News leads us to Shalom – to peace, to knowing that each and every person is worthy of this forgiveness and turning around, aka repentance. Shalom leads us to making the world more as God wants it to be.

So I ask you how will you proclaim Shalom today and in the days that follow? How will you feed the hungry, fight injustice, speak for those who are struggling with finding housing and health care? How will you help those who are being abused? How will you be present to those who are at the end of their rope, for whom our systems have failed? These are the steps toward bring our world closer to the word that God desires.

Our world is very far away from being the way God desires. And yet we must persist in our proclaiming Shalom. Our proclamation of Shalom is Christ's voice calling our world to change to bring us closer to that world God longs for us to have. When you leave this place to go the diner, to the supermarket, to the soccer field, to a birthday party, to a friend's house, to home or to anywhere else, see how you can be part of bringing about God's shalom in this world.