

Sermon 2012 Easter 2  
April 15, 2012  
Text: John 20:19-31  
Theme: "It's Still Easter!"

**There is a reason why there is no confession of sins during the seven weeks of Easter. Over the years of my ministry I have had some more conservative people challenge me on this. They want to know. Is it because the confession of sins "brings us down" and we want to feel good? Is it to make room for special music and other sundry activities? Do I minimize the importance of our confessing our sins? No, none of the above is true. I have a theological reason for eliminating the confession of sins during the seven Sundays of Easter.**

**Easter is 49 days long. During these 49 days we celebrate the resurrection of Christ, the debt of the world being paid, and the cross being empty. That also is why, by the way, the processional cross is empty during Easter. As in the fall we celebrate the end times and we, as the Church, buckle down for a long difficult ride, so during the spring do we celebrate victory over sin, death and the grave and we rejoice that ours is not a life of misery and slavery to sin, but a life transformed; a life of joy and freedom. Like Thomas and the other disciples, we too often forget that Easter never ends and that Jesus is currently risen.**

**I can't blame them, hiding out in the upper room and doubting God. I mean first of all, how could anyone rise from the dead having been in the tomb for three days and second of all, if he had indeed risen from the dead, how would he feel about them? We fall into the second category most often. How does Jesus feel about us? The disciples had all denied him. Peter gets the wrap for denial like Thomas gets the wrap for doubting and Judas gets the wrap for betrayal but they were all guilty of the same crime. They had all failed to believe and trust God. They did not believe he knew what he was doing. They did not believe that he could or would rise from the dead. They did not believe that he had redeemed them from sin, death and hell. And now if he was risen, what would he do with them? What would he say to them?**

**Do we not experience the same thoughts and fears? We come here and worship for our hour or so, but what about the rest of the week? We do things of which we are ashamed. We say mean and hurtful things to others. We act as though we are the center of the universe and the only one who matters. Shall we then come to this place and buddy up to Jesus?**

**"Hey, Jesus, good to see you. Glad you died on the cross and rose from the dead so that I could live a miserable sinful life where I wallow in my own hedonistic carnage!" I have no doubt that the**

**disciples were in fear of the Jews. They had banked on Jesus to save them from the Jews and now Jesus was dead! They had been so intent on avoiding any discomfort over their association with their Savior that they forgot that he was the only barrier between them and eternal death, not to mention the Jews.**

**Easter was so last week. It's old news. Now it's back to the grind. Sin, sin, sin, confess, do your time in church and back to the fun! Pretty soon we get tired of feeling bad about our sin so we skip a week of church. Sin, sin, sin, sin, sin, sin confess, do your time and back to the fun. Then we realize that having fun is a lot more fun than feeling bad about having fun so we skip a few more weeks of church. Sin, sin, sin, sin, sin, sin, sin, sin, sin, sin...wait, why confess? I'm just going to sin more. And if I'm just going to sin more, what's the point of doing my time in church? And now we have joined the disciples in the upper room. We know that the choices we are making do not please him, so let's just avoid him all together, huh?**

**Why avoid the one who come to us with love and complete acceptance. The only one who ever completely and unreservedly loved us is still here with us. IT'S STILL EASTER! Our lives are not centered in confessing our sins. They are centered in Christ, who is alive and well thank you very much! Salvation is not about what WE**

**do. Confession of sins is just for us, not for God. He already knows everything that we messed up last week. Confession of sins is to help us grasp the enormity of the gift God has given us and to help us let go of shame and guilt that he does not want burdening us. It is not something we have to do in order to get forgiveness. Because of Jesus' death and Resurrection we live in a constant state of grace. Our Baptisms created faith to grasp this promise and the Lord's Supper strengthens that faith as does God's Word but do not be misled. You are saved by Christ's death on the cross for your sins not by anything you do no matter how pious and holy. Neither can you undo his work by the mean and nasty things you do.**

**Many times I have heard from people who believe that their sin is unforgivable. They have hated people, killed people, betrayed people, treated God as though he does not matter. I always ask the same thing. What is it about you that is more powerful than the God of the Universe? Are you so amazing that you can undo his work? The cross is empty! The tomb is empty! Your debt is cancelled and it is still Easter.**