

Sermon: April 11, 2010

“Doubting”

Do you doubt much? Yourself? ... a decision you made a while back? ... God? ... your religion or church? ... the people you work with? ... the very fiber of life itself????

The disciple Thomas doubted. The others were so excited about Jesus' appearance ... they couldn't wait to share the news with Thomas and the others. But, for some reason ----- THOMAS WANTS PROOF!!

I'm not sure “why” ...

*If you say you love me ----- I'm not going to doubt you. Hey ... anytime you want to tell me you love me, please do ----- it's always good to hear.

*If you tell me you've seen Jesus ... I might be a bit jealous ... but I'd never doubt you.

*When Jude tells me she has talked to my mom ... whose been gone for 25 years, and whom she never met ...

I believe her. Hey, she's a “Polish Catholic” ... these things happen.

But I'm not going to go around and say ---- PROVE IT TO ME!!

On the other hand, when you live life with passion ... when you work and love and care from the very depths of your soul ... when you “lay it on the line” everyday ----- once in a while, YOU WILL

DOUBT. And ... we may doubt the very things and people and causes we love the most.

Doubt is not a lack of faith ... it's part of the risk of faith.

The hardest thing ... is when you doubt yourself. Then your faith and spirit are really on the line.

We all know ... it's a tough world out there.

People are struggling ... there's lots of anger and frustration.

Let's face it ----- LIFE CAN BE VERY HUMBLING.

This morning we all think of our Polish brothers and sisters ... in the wake of the death of so many of their leaders. Many of you know what's it's like when your life is interrupted by an unexpected turn ... and we have to step back and lean on each other. Yes, it's humbling ... and it's very “human.”

WE ALSO KNOW THE JOY OF GLORIOUS MOMENTS!!

Seeing grandma for the first time in 5 years ... your grand-kid's first hit in a little league game ...

being a teacher and having a parent come in and say ----- “You have changed my son's life!!”

In those “alleluia” moments ... nothing else matters ... just the joy of one of life's small victories.

I must admit I am stunned EVERDAY by the goodness of humanity. There are just “tons” of good people OUT THERE.

I keep thinking about my pre-minister time 4 years of college ... then 4 years of seminary ---- STUDYING RELIGION!@!! Professors smoking their pipes in class ... wearing old sport coats with patches on the elbows. My preaching professor was named Morrie. I remember my last day of class ... he puts his arm around me ... and gives me a bit of advice:

“Don ... preaching is about TELLING STORIES ...”

(I do tell stories ... you are kind enough to listen to most of them ...)

“And ... if you can't say it in 10 minutes ... then don't punish your congregation!@!!”

(Pretty honest, right???)

In school I learned a lot about Jesus ... but I forgot how to believe in him.

Being free TO BELIEVE ... it's magical.

Believing in dragons and unicorns ... it's fun.

Believing in stories and goodness ... it's a grand journey.

Believing in yourself and those around you ----- it's a gift.

I look at the guys who cut the church's grass every week. I look inside the doctor's eyes ... who is caring for my bride. The butcher at Randy's ... the bagger in aisle 3 ... the guy who makes our t-shirts, the mechanic

who changes the oil in the vans. The cashier at the dollar store, the nurse's aid who keeps
your grandma clean.

YES, THERE'S LOTS OF GOODNESS OUT THERE ... SO MANY PEOPLE WHOSE CUPS
ARE HALF – FULL ...

So many who ooze goodness in the common moments of life.
When you hang with people like this ...we don't need to doubt where the power in life really is.

Jesus doesn't live in satellite dishes and smooth-talkin' preachers ...

Jesus doesn't live inside the covers of a book ...

Jesus doesn't live in the judgments of people who can't see past their empty cup ...

JESUS LIVES IN HERE ...IN YOUR HEART, IN YOUR SOUL ...

Jesus lives in what our youth group calls ---- "random acts of kindness."

I'm at the "dollar store" yesterday ... with my basket full of dragons and unicorns "on a stick."

When I walk in ... all the cashiers suddenly "go on break" and roll their eyes.

I pull some cash from my pocket ... to pay the bill ...and I hear a voice:

"Hey, Rev ... need any help paying for those???"

I look to the heavens ----- "Lord, where have you been for the past 3 years???"

Once again, I hear the voice ----- "Rev, need any help?"

I turn around ... and a lady who is sitting in here this morning ... well, she hands me a 50-dollar bill.

It's fun to "hear God's voice" in places you don't expect.

I didn't learn this in school.

And ... yes ... sometimes I doubt: myself, my journey, even God.

But somehow ... in this crazy world we live in ----- I hear God's voice and feel
his presence ... now, more than ever.

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