

Weekly Study Guide

The week of September 6, 2015

Next Week in Worship

Next week's message: *Best Kept Secret*

Next week's readings: Mark 9:33-37

Jesus turned the notions of human value upside down! Jesus sees the dignity in every human being. He sees it in you, and he teaches us to see it in one another. Jesus makes us human.

first lutheran church

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Daily Readings

Monday

Read Jude 17-25. According to this letter to the early church, what is the proper response to those who are in doubt? Why do you think this is important? How have people responded to you in the past in your times of doubt? How did the response of others impact you?

Pray: Lord, teach me to approach others with mercy in their times of doubt.

Tuesday

Read John 20:19-20. At this point in the Gospel of John, Mary Magdalene has already seen Jesus alive and has told the disciples about it. Having not seen what she had seen, the disciples were largely reacting in doubt rather than faith, doors locked, and hiding. What do you imagine their reaction being when they see Jesus in the flesh? Are there times when, though you've heard the good news, you still live behind locked doors of fear?

Pray: Lord, show me where I still live in doubt protecting my heart behind locked doors.

Wednesday

Read John 20:21-23. Jesus wastes no time in this reunion! While the disciples are still reeling from seeing Jesus alive again before them, Jesus gives his blessing of peace with a purpose: to send his disciples on to the task that is next! But Jesus doesn't send them out with nothing— he equips them with the gift of the Holy Spirit. In what ways today do you seek the Holy Spirit's power?

Pray: Lord Jesus, send me the gift of your Holy Spirit to fall afresh on me today.

Thursday

Read John 20:24-25. Thomas gets a bum rap. For all of Christian history he has been called "Doubting Thomas." But remember, Mary Magdalene had already told them all she had seen the Lord, and it didn't lead them to believe either until they saw him. I'm sure the joy on their faces was pretty convincing in theory that something had happened, but Thomas wanted to be sure. Have you ever wanted to believe but have found it hard to do?

Pray: Lord, help me be honest with my times of doubt so I can be honest with real faith.

Friday

Read John 20: 26. A full week went by since the disciples had seen Jesus and knew he was alive and only Thomas had not. There must have been many times when Thomas felt very much an outsider in their conversations. What do you think Thomas learned in this time? What do you think made up the content of his prayers? What do you think Thomas's first emotions were when Jesus appeared a week later?

Pray: Lord, when I feel I am missing what others see help me to trust you are bigger.

Saturday

Read John 20:26-29. It is clear that much work must have been going on in Thomas's heart in this time. It doesn't take more than five minutes for Thomas to respond to Jesus in a greater way than all the others: "My Lord and my God!" Perhaps this time (when Thomas had not yet seen) allowed him to think about what seeing Jesus alive would mean. His heart then was prepared to receive.

Pray: Lord, prepare my heart to receive what you would show me today of who you are.