

Lessons for Second Sunday of Easter

April 3, 2016

Psalm 148 (*antiphon: v. 13*) – *All creation praises God who has provided a strong champion for his people.*
Acts 5:12-20 (21-32) – *No threat could silence the apostles, who proclaimed Jesus' redeeming work.*
Revelation 1:4-18 – *Jesus appeared to John on Patmos to give him a message and the courage to tell it.*
John 20:19-31 – *Jesus' risen presence with His disciples overcame their fear and empowered their faith.*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: When the Lord Speaks...

..we believe! After the apostles' miraculous release from jail, they could not be silenced, but continued proclaiming repentance and forgiveness of sins in Jesus' name. In response to the Lord's words, "I am the Alpha and the Omega," the Apostle John wrote the Book of the Revelation. One week Thomas lamented the fact that he was trapped in unbelief, and the next week, in response to Jesus' command: "Stop doubting and believe," Thomas exclaimed in faith, "My Lord and my God!"

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: Lord Jesus, you were dead, but now you are alive for ever and ever! By your death you show me how to die confident of forgiveness for my sins; in your resurrection, teach me how to live trusting in your love to uphold me in all I do. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: Although sin and death held us in bondage, Jesus has claimed our lives by His victory over death, which He has made our own! All that we have and are belongs to the One who is First and Last and Always! We cannot help but use our talents, our resources, our lives to proclaim His Lordship and His Love.

OFFERING PRAYER: Alpha and Omega, First and Last of all things,
You have rescued us from death, and Yours You named us!
You are both our source of life and goal of living.
Use these gifts to tell the world that You have claimed us! Amen.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: The presence of the risen Christ in our lives is over-whelming! He stops our doubts and creates faith in our hearts! He propels us to obey God at all costs! He is the First and the Last, who encompasses death but lives forevermore! And yet we live our complacent lives as though Christ is only a distant memory and a child's fairy tale! Still He comes to us, searching us out, putting our hands into His side, compelling our faith with His forgiveness