

“Life Lessons from the Games We Play”
“Apples to Apples: If this, then that”

Easter continues! Christ is Risen! Christ is Risen, Indeed! We are an Easter people! While Lent is forty days, the Celebration of Easter is fifty days ending with Pentecost and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Easter is a celebration of resurrection of new life and of the power of Christ to change and transform the world through his followers. We have encountered the Risen Christ in so many ways. We are in a new sermon series: Easter Encounters: Life Lessons from the Game we Play.” This week our game is Apples to Apples. If you ever played it, you know it’s a game where comparisons are made and new combinations are formed. It is funny and silly, but very popular. Following Jesus resurrection, the disciples were comparing the old with the new and trying out this new combination of faith and belief and how life was radically different. This week we focus on the disciples hearing how their lives would forever change once Jesus was no longer with them. May we experience the assurance that Christ is with us always.
Pastor Cindy

Things I’d like to remember from today’s sermon: **“Apples to Apples: If this, then that”**

Prayer for the Week

Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on us this day. Move us in ways that we cannot imagine. Once we were no people, now we are your people. Bless us and embolden us to be your hands, your feet, your heart, your body bringing your grace and peace and new life to all we meet. We pray in the name of the Risen Christ, Jesus. Amen

Study Guide

Monday, May 1, 2017 John 14: 1-9

Jesus begins this time with his disciples with words of hope. “Do not let your hearts be troubled, Believe in God, believe also in me.” He promises to prepare a place for them. The disciples were confused, they really couldn’t grasp this future that Jesus was sharing. Philip finally says, “Show us God and we will be satisfied.” Like people since then, Philip wanted something concrete, something that “proved” that Jesus was real and that the faith Jesus shared would change lives. Jesus’ response was “really?? If you have seen me, you have seen God. How can you ask?” Each generation must wrestle like Philip. Do people see in Jesus the face of God? *Do you believe that in Jesus you can see the face of God? How does that impact how you live your life?*

Tuesday, May 2, 2017 John 14: 9-11

Again we read Jesus’ first response to Philip. Then, Jesus continues. “If you can’t believe that God is in me, then look at what I’ve done.” What had the disciples seen? They had their feet washed by their rabbi, and were told to be servants. They had Lazarus raised from the dead, 5000 fed by a little boys lunch, the blind received their sight, they had heard amazing teachings that brought people to God and they had seen lives changed and hearts connected to God. If words and presence are not enough to believe, Jesus said, “then, pay attention to what you have witnessed in my works.” It is easy to criticize the disciples, but most people are skeptics, they want proof, solid proof and in the 21st century it is even more so. Jesus is defining a new way of living, a new way of having faith. *How do you handle your need for proof? What do you look for in order to believe Jesus is who he says he is?*

Wednesday, May 3, 2017 John 14: 11-13

The 11th verse is re-read in order to put the next two verses in perspective. Not only does Jesus point to the works that he has done, he says that those who follow will do the same and “greater” works. If people ask in his name, it will be granted. Of everything in the 14th chapter of John, these words are the most stunning. Often the words from the chapter are used for comfort, for promise that somehow the disciples and others who follow will never be left alone. In the midst of that comfort comes this promise, that those who believe are able to do amazing and great things. *What would the world look like if followers of Jesus actually believed and lived out the call to feed, to heal to offer love and grace?*

Thursday, May 4, 2017 1 Peter 2: 2-8

The author of First Peter is reminding the followers of Jesus that they are a part of something much bigger. People in many places are being built into this “spiritual temple” and Christ is the foundation, the cornerstone of this temple. People who follow Jesus are built together into a house, if you will, and every stone, every rock, every piece of lumber matters. In the game Apples to Apples, comparisons are made and new definitions are explored, often with much laughter. The author in this passage looks to compare what this new faith is all about. It is not totally different from some of the religions they have come from. In fact, the author uses Old Testament scripture to compare to what is currently happening. Jesus is the new cornerstone, the foundation of this new building. *How do you define your faith now? How are you part of this new creation?*

Friday, May 5, 2017 1 Peter 2: 9-10

These beautiful verses remind believers that “once you were no people, now you are God’s people.” You are “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation.” Now this is not exclusive to a particular culture, or race, or ethnic group or gender. This is GOD’S people, who are called from every place and every nation and every group imaginable. In this “building” or “temple” or community of faith, people look to see Jesus, the Risen Christ in each part of the temple, in each face and in the lives and actions of those who say they follow Jesus. As noted in the John passage, Jesus says that we will do greater things because of our faith in him. *How does your faith, your words, and your life point to the risen Christ? How do your gifts help create this new community of faith?*