

## Scripture Readings for Sunday, April 11, 2021

### Introduction to 1 John 1:1 -- 2:3

The late, great Eugene Peterson, translator of the Bible into “The Message,” says of the three letters of John, that “**the most difficult things to get straight in life are love and God.**” These two subjects are intricately related. Listen to this introduction to the three letters from 1, 2, and 3 John: “If we want to deal with God the right way, we have to learn to love the right way. If we want to learn to love the right way, we have to learn to deal with God the right way.” God and love cannot be separated. Listen to John’s explicit directions to how all this works for us to be witnesses of God’s love in the world. Listen as we read 1 John chapter 1, verse 1 through chapter 2, verse 3:

### The Reading of 1 John 1:1-2:3 The Message

**1** <sup>1-2</sup> From the very first day, we were there, taking it all in—we heard it with our own ears, saw it with our own eyes, verified it with our own hands. The Word of Life appeared right before our eyes; we saw it happen! And now we’re telling you in most sober prose that what we witnessed was, incredibly, this: The infinite Life of God himself took shape before us.

<sup>3-4</sup> We saw it, we heard it, and now we’re telling you so you can experience it along with us, this experience of communion with the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ. Our motive for writing is simply this: We want you to enjoy this, too. Your joy will double our joy!

### **Walk in the Light**

<sup>5</sup> This, in essence, is the message we heard from Christ and are passing on to you: God is light, pure light; there’s not a trace of darkness in him.

<sup>6-7</sup> If we claim that we experience a shared life with him and continue to stumble around in the dark, we’re obviously lying through our teeth—we’re not *living* what we claim. But if we walk in the light, God himself being the light, we also experience a shared life with one another, as the sacrificed blood of Jesus, God’s Son, purges all our sin.

<sup>8-10</sup> If we claim that we're free of sin, we're only fooling ourselves. A claim like that is errant nonsense. On the other hand, if we admit our sins—simply come clean about them—he won't let us down; he'll be true to himself. He'll forgive our sins and purge us of all wrongdoing. If we claim that we've never sinned, we out-and-out contradict God—make a liar out of him. A claim like that only shows off our ignorance of God.

**2** <sup>1-2</sup> I write this, dear children, to guide you out of sin. But if anyone does sin, we have a Priest-Friend in the presence of the Father: Jesus Christ, righteous Jesus. When he served as a sacrifice for our sins, he solved the sin problem for good—not only ours, but the whole world's.

### **The Only Way to Know We're in Him**

<sup>2-3</sup> Here's how we can be sure that we know God in the right way: Keep his commandments.

### **Introduction to the Gospel Lesson: John 20:19-32 (NRSV)**

Our gospel text this morning comes from John's gospel, chapter 20, verses 19-32. This is one of the several post-resurrection appearances of Jesus before the disciples. In this story, on the evening of the day Jesus was raised from the dead, the disciples, in their frightened state, go back to the house where they had stayed before. To their great shock, Jesus appears to them and engages them. Listen to their encounter with the risen Jesus:

### **Reading from the Gospel Lesson: John 20:19-32 (NRSV)**

<sup>19</sup> When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." <sup>20</sup> After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. <sup>21</sup> Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." <sup>22</sup> When he had said this, he breathed

on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup> If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

<sup>24</sup> But Thomas (who was called the Twin<sup>[a]</sup>), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

<sup>26</sup> A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." <sup>27</sup> Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." <sup>28</sup> Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" <sup>29</sup> Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

<sup>30</sup> Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. <sup>31</sup> But these are written so that you may come to believe<sup>[b]</sup> that Jesus is the Messiah,<sup>[c]</sup> the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.