

The Number Four

For those who might not remember the current spiritual season started with the Feast of the Three Kings in January, and then we moved into Mardi Gras, though it's not a spiritual season, then Lent, and now the Easter Season, which ends with Pentecost Sunday, the first weekend in June.

Do you realize that Easter is the second most important period in a Christian's life. Reminding everyone the most important day in our Christian Faith was the Birth of our Lord, but I digress.

In preparing for this morning's sermon, I began looking through the Bible for other instances of the number four and its multiples. Here are a few examples that I found: Noah was on the Ark for 40 days and 40 nights; Exodus 5:16 explains how the Jewish people only ate manna for 40 years; Exodus 24 explains how Moses spent 40 days and nights with God on the mountain; Deuteronomy 8 talks about the Israelites being in the wilderness for 40 years after getting out of Egypt; Judges 3:11 explains how there was rest and peace with no conflicts for 40 years. Matthew and Mark tell us the story of how Jesus fed 5,000 people but on the second time, he fed 4,000 people. Mark 2:3 tells the story of the paralytic man being carried by four people; John 11:17 talks about the death of Lazarus and him being dead for four days before Jesus visits the tomb and raises him from the dead; and a last example is in John 19 that discusses how Jesus' clothes were torn into four pieces and divided among the soldiers after he was crucified. There are many other examples.

In Luke, we learn about what happened after Jesus came out of the wilderness after 40 days, and preached, performed miracles, and spread the Word of God. The persecution and the resurrection of Christ is what gives us the road map for our everyday lives.

I have given you some background this morning, but the title of this morning's sermon was the number four. Christ appeared to his Apostles on the road to Emmaus on the fourth day. (Read Luke 24:13-34)

After hearing this reading, think about the fact that no one realized who he was, including the disciples. They knew that he had been crucified and they knew he had risen, but I don't believe anyone expected to see him

again. To them, once you died, the person was only in your thoughts, heart, and mind, but not in your vision. But they got the awesome chance to see, touch, and speak with him again. Christ's return on the fourth day was to remind them the journey was just beginning, not ending--that it was their turn to preach the gospel and spread his Word.

I am privileged and blessed enough to have gone on an Emmaus Walk in Tennessee and some of the people in this congregation have been privileged and blessed enough to attend Cursillo, which is the same type of event, just a different name. I would encourage anyone to take this journey in your Christian walk. This walk reminds you that every day is your fourth day. Every day is a new day with Christ. Yesterday, Christ died on the cross. He dies every day we sin. You might be able to even say every moment is the beginning of a new fourth day. You see, God cares if you sin, but he cares more that you ask for his forgiveness. He would probably rather you learn from your mistakes, but he knows we are not perfect. Remember, God gave us free will knowing that we were going to mess up.

Last week, Brother Mike talked about evangelism, and the Methodist Church's mission statement says to "Make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." Brother Mike changed it to read "transformation of Tangipahoa Parish" so that we can do this for our surrounding communities. But first, we should follow Christ's teachings that say feed my lambs.

My questions for you today are: Would you recognize the risen Christ if you saw him knowing that he had died and gone to heaven? Do you accept the fact that every second is the beginning of a new beginning? Are you ready to pick up his staff and fulfill his Word? At this moment, Christ just rose again, do you accept it?

Prayer: Lord, let us hear and feel your Word from this moment forward. Let us show by our actions, our thoughts, and our Words, your love and dedication to us and our neighbors. AMEN.