

A BOAT WITHOUT A RUDDER

Have you ever been in a boat with out a rudder? A rowboat or a canoe a boat with no control with where it is going. A boat that drifts? The disciples were locked into the upper room. Jesus was dead but then alive and now they waited. They were frightened, alone and worried. They had no rudder, no one to tell them what to do next, their leader was not with them. For three years they had depended on Jesus to tell them where to go, what to do. He instructed them but were they prepared to take the helm? Have you ever been there, lost and alone, working through a seemingly endless grief, unable to decide what to do next, even to decide how to get through each day? Many people have experienced this sense of despair, they will tell of a dark blur where they merely went through the motions of living. For many it is the loss of a loved one, someone that defined who they were, who was there for them through the good and the bad, someone who strengthened them. For the disciples it was Jesus. For me it was a Brother. He was my protector, my mentor, my confessor, my talk to person, my helper. But Jesus did not leave the disciples, neither does he leave us. He is with us through the good times and the bad, through the celebrations and the trials, through the grief and the joy. Neither did my brother leave me, I hear his voice in my decisions and in my joy, and in my grief and in my sadness, he has left me a part of himself. He is still the empty chair at the table, and I know that he is with me. I had a hard time learning this but I see now where he influenced me, where I knew what he would say, where he was in my decisions as surely as if he were in my presence. When I found Christ and learned of how much he loves each of us, I was able to lay down my grief, my anger, and my disappointment in those that were around me when my Brother died and to see how God used that to strengthen me. Jesus came to the disciples and they were able to lead others to Christ, to tell of his miracles, and to go on and do his work. Thanks be to God.

John 20:19 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again, Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

Lord, we need you in our lives every day. Be with us. Be with those who feel alone and those who grieve. Be with those who suffer illness, anger, disappointment, those who have been hurt by those they love. Heal them we pray, may they know you are as close as a breath, as close as a whisper. Be with our church as we gather in our building once more and still in our Parking lot. May we keep the lessons learned from this pandemic, that church is not just a building but that it extends beyond the building, beyond the parking lot; that it is the people reaching out and caring and continuing the work. Be with our Pastor and his family, give him strength and wisdom and bless his ministry. We pray in Jesus name, Amen.

Grace Epperson