

## Blessed Are Those Who Believe

This week I had an appointment to have my Hearing Aids checked. This is an easy chore but one I dread. Mostly I dread the long walk into the office. The office is on the second floor and there is an elevator, but it is a long distance from the parking lot to the elevator and then to the office. When it was first opened it was not too bad because the elevator was a short distance from the back parking lot and the handicapped parking was right there and I was 25 years younger. Now it is two spaces in the front of the building. they decided to change the parking lot and what was once handicapped in the back is now designated parking and the handicapped is quite far. It never bothered me before the last couple of years probably because I didn't need it. I dread the walk even though I stop at the drinking fountain and take it slow. Anyway, I did the trip and went into the office. They called me right into an examining room. As I sat down, I reached up to remove my hearing aids. They were not in my ears, and I realized that they were still in the charger at home. I could not believe I had done something so ridiculous and kept feeling my ears, refusing to believe they were not there. I then had to make another appointment two days later and repeat the process. When I walked in this time the receptionist asked me if I remembered to bring my hearing aids while laughing, and I said yes. I told her the one good thing about not having them was that I could not hear what they were saying about me, she laughed and said it happens all the time (I didn't ask her if she meant people forgetting their hearing aids or the staff talking about me). I was glad I was not the only one that did these kinds of things and told her about my car refusing to unlock and then I realized it was not my car. We have those moments in our lives when we do things that reveal we are either absent-minded or just do not get something and refuse to believe it. Thomas refused to believe it. The others had told him that the Christ had risen but he would not believe because he wanted proof, Thomas said he would not believe until he saw the wounds in Jesus hands and feet and side for himself This was a stumbling block for Thomas. Jesus showed Thomas his wounds and then said, "Blessed are those who have not seen and still believe." Christ calls us to faith and to faith in his words in the bible, faith in the birth, life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Thomas had a stumbling block, Jesus showed him the truth. Our stumbling blocks can be anything that keeps us from the love of God such as a bad relationship with those we feel estranged from, a bad habit that controls us, our disbelief in God, our own disbelief that God could possibly love us, and sins from our past. Do you have a stumbling block? I once did but it was taken from me when I gave it to God at the foot of the cross. Stumbling blocks become heavy and keep us from feeling the love of God and the love of Jesus who loved us so much he gave up his life on a cross to atone for our sins. It keeps us from forgiving others who have wronged us. If something is keeping you from feeling that love and acceptance, I urge you to talk to the Pastor or to take it to the Altar rail and leave it there and feel the forgiveness and love of God and his Son Jesus Christ.

Holy Lord, we thank you for this day and the blessings of it, we ask Lord that you be with those who are ill and those who grieve, give them strength and comfort. May we feed the hungry and help the homeless. Be with our church Lord, may we be your church and may we be the hands and feet of Jesus here in this place. Be with our Pastor, bless his ministry and give him strength for each day. Be with our staff and leaders, may they feel your strength and joy for the tasks before us. We ask your blessing on this our 200<sup>th</sup> year. In Jesus name, Amen

Grace Epperson