

After Easter, now we are here. After all the hoopla surrounding Easter—all special services, recreating the emotional aspects of the passion story of Jesus—after pulling out all the stuffs and singing at the top of our lungs, "Jesus Christ is Risen Today"... what then? Where do we go from here? Is the rest of the year just one big anti-climax?

I hate to say this but be honest: Here we are. Only a week after Easter, already the lilies and flowers are beginning to fade. And, we're experiencing the post-Easter doldrums. Of course, we are not the first ones to experience the post-Easter doldrums. Jesus' disciple Peter announces to the others, "I'm going fishing." Some take that to mean, "I'm going back to fishing...back to my old way of life." The others respond by saying, "We are coming with you" (John 21:3).

So, it's a valid question: After Easter, then what? After hearing Jesus' story, then what? I think we, the church, often fail to guide ourselves and others on what to do with the story of Jesus we've just heard and celebrated on Easter Sunday. So, today we will try to think together what to do with the story of Jesus.

To get the answer, I've looked up the First Letter of John as this letter's context is somewhat similar to where we are. William Barclay, a Scottish author, explains the context of the letter this way: "Many [of John's readers] were now second or even third-generation Christians. The thrill of the first days had, to some extent, at least, passed away. In the first days of Christianity, there was a glory and a splendor, but now Christianity had become a thing of habit, 'traditional, half-hearted, nominal.'"... John was writing at a time when, for some at least, the first thrill was gone, and the flame of devotion had died to a flicker."<sup>1</sup>

To reignite the thrill of Jesus' story in us, Apostle John encourages us to declare what we have seen and heard to ourselves and others (1 John 1:1-4). Becoming a witness of Jesus Christ is the answer to our question we have this morning. Apostle Paul in today's scripture guides us to do so with a simple exercise of ABC.

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<sup>1</sup> Barclay, W. (1976). *The letters of John and Jude- The Daily study Bible series*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.

The **A** stands for **admitting**. We have to admit that we are unrighteous persons who cannot make ourselves right with God by our own efforts (Romans 10:1-4). We have to admit that we are wrong and incapable of fixing it ourselves to be made right with God. Earlier in the Book of Romans, Apostle Paul wrote that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (3:23) and "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23a). We are imperfect sinners. Once we admit that, then we have to decide how we are going to make that right with God.

Jesus' story we've heard during Lent and celebrated on Easter tells us that righteousness is in Jesus and not in our own works. John Calvin, a French theologian, wrote, "The first step to obtaining the righteousness of God is to renounce our own righteousness." John Stott, a leader of the worldwide evangelical movement, wrote, "All human beings, who know that God is righteous, and they are not, naturally look around for righteousness which might fit them to stand in God's presence.

There are only two possible options before us. The first is to attempt to build or establish our own righteousness by our good works and religious observances. But this is doomed to failure, since in God's sight, even 'all our righteous acts are like filthy rags.' The other way is to submit to God's righteousness by receiving it from God as a free gift through faith in Jesus Christ." Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."

You who think that you are righteous than anybody else will never have a thrill in Jesus' story. You will not have any excitement or satisfaction in Jesus' story. Because of that, you will not have any excitement for being in church or worshiping with others. You will have something to complain about always as you see unrighteousness or wrongs in others.

Do you want to have some excitement in following Jesus? Do you want to have some joy or thrill in life? Then, admit that you are not righteous and submit yourself to the Lordship of Jesus Christ to make things right in your life each and every day. This is not a one-time deal. We need to remind ourselves about it repeatedly to maintain the thrill of Jesus' story every day. This leads to the second step of ABC.

The **B** stands for **believing**—to believe in Jesus Christ (Romans 10:5-11). We are saved by the grace of God manifested in the finished work of Jesus through faith.

We have to trust Jesus alone as the only way to God (John 14:6). We believe Jesus is God who came in human flesh, died on the cross in our place for our sins, and literally and bodily rose from the dead. This means that we give mental assent to these claims' truthfulness and that we are personally relying on Jesus to save us from our sins and bring us to God.

For those who are having a hard time believing in Jesus Christ, let me know. I will do my best to assist you. Meanwhile, I pray that the Holy Spirit will be present with you and help you to believe.

The third step in remaining in the thrill of Jesus' story is “**C**” which stands for **choosing**—choosing to confess Jesus as Lord and calling on His name for salvation (Romans 10:9-13). It is about choosing to follow Jesus for the rest of our lives. "Jesus is the Lord" is the foundational confession of the Christian church. When we confess Jesus as our Lord, we acknowledge Him as God, as our personal God, and as our master or boss. Jesus is our Lord as much as He is our Savior. We believe internally and externally confess what we believe. Calling on His Name is asking Him to save us based on who He is and what He has done for us.

What is holding you back from having the excitement in hearing Jesus' story? Whatever that might be, I would like to encourage all of us to do the ABC exercise—admit, believe, and choose—each and every day for maximizing the joy or thrill in hearing and celebrating the story of Jesus Christ starting today. Would you? The choice is yours. Amen.