

Augustana College
Chapel of Reconciliation

Faith

Aaron Graumann

April 28, 2006

When we read the Gospel for today, we have the tendency to look down on Thomas. He doubted Jesus. Yet, there is a little bit of a doubting Thomas in all of us at some time or another. In order to believe anything, whether it is a friend's story or the Gospel, we need to see, to touch and to hear for ourselves. So the saying goes, "I'll believe it when I see it."

So the question arises, "How can we believe?" Jesus is not visible standing here next to me. I in no way mean to say that I do not believe that JC is not here, far from it. But I certainly cannot see him in a physical sense. With some logical reasoning, it would seem that we than cannot believe. We missed the boat, Jesus was here 2000 years ago and now he's gone and we cannot be saved cuz we can't see him.

But this of course is wrong. So how then can we have faith? One way comes from the other readings for today. Acts 4 talks about the community of believers and how they were one in spirit. Psalms 133 talks of unity and 1 John speaks of fellowship with one another and fellowship with Christ. We have this community that witnesses to Christ, a community from 2000 years ago and thousands of years before that that continues to this day, testifying to his good news. It is this community that strengthens us when our faith is weak. We talk often about sharing our faith, and when I hear it said this way, I think of passing something on, something tangible.

The Bible also says that where 2 of you are, there I am also. It is something that you can feel, not necessarily a shout in the dark, but a feeling of excitement and presence that is there if you are paying attention. It is that good feeling that you get from sharing your faith and praising the Lord.

So community is important to our faith, but it is easy to fall into the old trap that "Oh I don't need to go to church. I believe, and I am saved then." Certainly in some respects faith can be yes or no. But it is not that simple, faith is something that waxes

and wanes and we need others and Christ to nurture it. It is not to be thought of as a light switch, but rather a seed we must plant and grow.

Beyond the community, we have other tools at our side like His Word. The Gospel of John stresses the Word of the Lord more than any other Gospel. It is this Word that takes us from the dark and puts us in His light. His Word, the Bible, holds something for all of us in all times of our life. There are stories in there of great men and women like Abraham, David, and Mary. But their story is not sugar-coated. It shows their trials and their mistakes along with their righteous acts. It shows us that we do not have to be perfect and it is a model for us to live by. We can learn from their mistakes, like for instance we all know that if God tells you to save a city, you better do it or you may end up in a whale.

Another way we can have faith is through his Works. We have testimony of His life in the Bible. We have four different stories just to make sure we get it right. Beyond this, I think just in life itself there is evidence of His presence. In looking at the world, we have around us, I am amazed and feel this is testimony of a Creator. The more I find out about the world through my studies in biology and chemistry, first of all the dumber I realize I am, or I guess I see that I do not really know that much. And the more I know, the more I see shouting at me that there is indeed a God who put this world together.

In my faith, another important aspect of strengthening my belief has come in looking back at my life. Sometimes in the heat of the moment, I miss His presence. But after the fact, I look back in retrospect and see that He was there. I think of turning points in my life and they coincide with turning back to God. They coincide with bringing my priorities to where they ought to be. With Him I am so much happier. Now I do not mean to see that we ought to believe so good things will happen to us. Not true. Bad things happen to good people, and it is not a punishment from God. This is such an easy lie to fall into, and we do it without even noticing. God's punishing me for missing church. And No this is not true. But with Christ and the community of believers you can better enjoy the good, and more easily get through the bad.

So now by this point. We all have faith, which is great. But there might be one more question: Why have faith? I have three great answers to that. Obviously one good reason is that with our faith we are saved. Another is one I already mentioned, that we

live better. And a last one is related to this, we live healthier. I could not talk to you today and not say something about healthcare. Sorry. Shalom is a very old concept that goes back to the Hebrews. It is a wholeness of self, physically, mentally, spiritually. People used to go to priests for healing, and it was through this belief in wholeness. We are starting to get back to this. Patients with something to live for and a strong spiritual side have the will to live. You cannot just take care of the mental and physical aspects of your health while ignoring your spiritual side. When we are hurting, we need to heal all aspects of our self. I may not ask Pastor Paul to cure all of my medical conditions, but I also cannot forget that he is a resource in caring for me, and care is something all of us need to be healthy.

In wrapping things up, we have many avenues we can travel down in our walk to faith. We have our community, we have His Word and we have His works. So all of you Thomas's out there, I ask you to look around, to see and to believe. Amen

MORNING WORSHIP

Friday, April 28, 2006

PRELUDE

“Faith”

Andre VanderVelde

WELCOME/ANNOUNCEMENTS

INVOCATION/CALL TO WORSHIP

LITANY

Psalm 133

Congregation will read by half verse - LBW p. 282

SONG

“In the Secret”

CHORUS: I want to know You, I want to hear Your voice

I want to know You more

I want to touch You, I want to see Your face

I want to know You more

Verse 1: In the secret, in the quiet place

In the stillness You are there.

In the secret in the quiet hour I wait only for You

‘Cause I want to know You more *Chorus*

Verse 2: I am reaching for the highest goal

that I might receive the prize

Pressing onward, pushing every hindrance aside, out of my way

“Cause I want to know You more *Chorus*

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SCRIPTURE

Acts 4:32-35, I John 1:1 - 2:2,
John 20:19-31- Angie Hummel

MESSAGE

Aaron Graumann

Hometown: Sioux Falls, SD

Majors: Chemistry and Spanish

SONG

“We Walk By Faith”

WOV 675

PRAYERS

Jessica Cooper

BENEDICTION

SENDING

POSTLUDE

“Faith”

Andre VanderVelde

CAMPUS MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS

THANK YOU to all of those helping with the service and those who came to worship with me today. - Aaron

Outreach end of the year party/pre-Cinco de Mayo party!!

The party will be Sunday, *April 30 from 7:00-8:00 p.m.* in the Chapel. All current Outreach participants and students interested in Outreach for next year are invited to strike the pinta, enjoy a festive nacho bar, learn the tango, and celebrate the awesome ministry of Outreach!!

COMMUNITY SERVICE DAY - Sat., April 29th.

What can Ole do for you? On Saturday, April 29th Augustana will be delivering service to the Sioux Falls community on Community Service Day. You can still join in! Contact Karina Stander at x5415 to sign up.

GULF COAST RELIEF - A towel drive is being conducted by the Spring Break Service Learning group for use by families who continue to struggle in the Gulf Coast. Any new or gently used, clean towel will be great appreciated. You may bring them to Sarah's office in the chapel.

CHAPEL SCHEDULE

Sunday (30)	Worship, 11 am - Sarah Sumner-Eisenbraun
Monday (1)	Worship, 10 am - Gary Earl, Chem.; Brass Choir
Tuesday (2)	Roman Catholic Mass - Fr. Michael Griffin, CTK parish
Wednesday (3)	Holy Communion, 10 am - Anna Madsen, Reli; Collegiate Chorale
Friday (5)	Worship, 10 am - Angie Hummel, Sr. Speaker; Faculty Recognition award
Sunday (7)	Worship, 11 am - Pr. Paul
Monday (8)	Worship, 10 am - Peg Preston, Hist
Tuesday (9)	Koinonia, 10 am
Wednesday (10)	Holy Communion, 10 am - Jim Bies; ASA Inauguration; Women's Choir
Friday (12)	Worship, 10 am - Celebration of Intern Sarah!!
Sunday (14)	Worship, 11 am - Sarah Sumner-Eisenbraun