

## SERMON TEXT FOR EASTER 3B

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John opens today's second lesson with "See what Love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God." We are all children of God. We are baptized through God's name, born in his likeness, and raised to know who God is. The faith that we have as children is unwavering yet investigative. As children of God, we are taught early on that God is always there. We also learn the God's love is unconditional and never ending. We know that God created Jesus to come to Earth as God-incarnate. Jesus had a specific purpose for his time on Earth as a human. We spent the season of Lent preparing for Holy Week, when Jesus would complete his earthly mission for the divine love of God's children. US

According to thoughtco.com there are 4 types of love described in the Bible; *Eros*, *storge* (STOR-jay), *philia*, and *agape*. *Eros* describes the romantic and sensual side of love. *Storge* describes the love that can only be experienced through a family bond. *Philia* is the love found in and among very close friends- like the bond we share with those sitting next to us. The last, and arguably the greatest, is *agape*. *Agape* is the type of love that describes God's divine love for human kind. *Agape* is seen in the Bible through the way that Jesus interacts with his disciples and God. We see an example of *agape* between Jesus and his disciples in today's Gospel. Jesus appeared to his disciples, post resurrection and they are understandably startled and terrified. Jesus attempts to calm his disciples by doing human things to show that he was still among them as a human. He asks for something to eat and invites each disciple to "touch me and see", that he is truly there among them as a human. The disciples experience Jesus' *agape* for them.

"Touch me and see." This is Jesus' invitation to his disciples to show that he is still the same Jesus they watch die. The disciples struggled with the fact that Jesus was standing before them – ALIVE and eventually realize the Jesus is physically there with them in that room. I wonder though – why "touch me and see? Why not "hear me and see"? or "Smell me and see"- although, not sure I want to be smelling anyone post resurrection. Perhaps a more physical approach was needed. Jesus was not met with an abundance of awe. Instead he was met with mixed feelings of joy, disbelief and wonder. Jesus' disciples experienced a major blow to their faith, as they saw Jesus standing there. They watched their teacher brutally crucified, entombed, and then his body goes missing. Now Jesus appears to them in a locked room, and acts like nothing just happened. "Hey guys, I just died, but no big deal. Do you have any fish?" Understandably the disciples forgot about *Agape*.

I think I would forget *agape* as well.

The disciples, allowed doubt to creep into their lives the more they focused on life's everyday happenings. Jesus asks them "Why does doubt arise in your heart?" I invite you to take a moment and reflect on the doubts that have snuck into your lives (count to 10). How has that doubt affected your faith? (Pause) Touch me and see. Jesus invites us in *agape* love to physically remember that he died and rose for the cleansing of all our sins.

Jesus reminds us weekly here at church as we experience life and allows doubt to enter our lives. We as disciples of Jesus are invited, and will be today, to “touch me and see” as we dine at God’s table. Through communion, we are reminded that God loves us so much that Jesus died for us and is represented in the bread and wine. It is during this action that we also have a physical reminder of God’s humanity through Jesus- eating. We need *agape* to nourish our souls.

Touch me and see

Touch – God and the Holy Spirit both can’t touch us physically, Yet here we are sharing in agape, listening to God’s word and rejoicing in his name. We are being touched inside somewhere by something we have heard or sung today. God is touching the doubts of this week and easing them away to nothingness. We don’t know the future. We can only have faith and trust in God that he will get us through whatever doubts come to mind.

Touch me and see

This is the body and blood of Christ which has been broken for you. Take and eat.

Remember this week when doubts arise that each and every one of us is a child of God. God created and Jesus to us in human form, to die for us to that we may be saved. A divine, unquestionable, and love for us; his children.

Touch me and see

Agape

Amen.