

When I was about 5 years old, something happened to my right eye which meant I had to walk around for a couple of weeks with a patch over it. This would have been fine, except at the time, I didn't know how to wink with one eye open and one shut. So, I thought "no problem: I'll just walk with both eyes closed!" Which I did – with results about what you would expect! I can remember me with the patch over my eye and walking into an old upright radio we had, and Mom and Dad telling me "David, open your other eye!" until finally I figured out how to have one eye open. Though I could not see something, did not mean it wasn't there...

Biologists are telling us that most of life is too small for us to see. Viruses, bacteria, single-celled creatures – there are bacteria inside of us which make us sick, and other bacteria inside of us, which if they weren't there then we would be sick. In fact, I read that our bodies may not really be "ours" -- they may be giant colonies of bacteria and other independent creatures all working together to function, ultimately, as one unit – and none of those creatures are we aware of, even though in a very real sense, "they are us."

I read a book by a man named Frank Wilczek, called "The Lightness of being" -- the universe is made up of elementary particles – there are things called electrons, neutrinos, quarks and photons, which many of us have heard of, and there are also things called bosons, gluons, leptons and anti-leptons, quarks and anti-quarks, and many of these come in different colours – so there are 61 variants of very tiny things that no body can see, but which evidently, according to latest theories, make up everything there is. My understanding is that all of these particles are embodiments of energy – in other words, everything is made up of energy in some form or other. Everything is energy – from solids to liquids to gases to millions of things we cannot see.

There is so much that is in our universe that we cannot see or comprehend, that it is silly to hear of people debating God because "I don't see Him" or "I can't prove Him" -- I think 99% of what we think we know, we just THINK we know – it is theory, our best understanding of reality, until a better understanding comes along. Just because we can't see something doesn't mean it isn't real.

St. Thomas didn't believe the other disciples because he found the possible resurrection of Jesus to be too far-fetched to be real. As he said: "unless I actually touch him! I will not believe..." Then Jesus came and said: "ok, touch me ..." And then Thomas not only believed that Jesus was resurrected, but was also Lord and Master over everything: "My Lord and my God!"

We have the same situation that Peter wrote to his flock 2000 years ago: "You do not see Him but you believe in Him. You have not seen him, but you love him, and so you rejoice, as you are getting the goal of your faith: salvation of your soul."

Just like we have not seen many of the realities of the universe, most of us have not physically seen Jesus with our eyes and heard him with our ears. But we believe and we love Him. He comes to us and says to us, just like He did to His earliest disciples: "Peace be with you!" Do not continue in your unbelief, but believe. ... Blessed are the people who have not seen and yet have believed." -- and we know that we are indeed blessed.

We know this because, just like we can be affected by many things that do not see – by viruses and bacteria, by the wind, the changing temperature, by our emotions and the words of those around us – just as these things affect us, so does the working of God in Christ. We know we are blessed, because in Christ we receive the Holy Spirit. And we can walk in guidance with it.

Now Jesus gives us a curious statement. He says "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven; if you retain anyone's sins, they are retained."

This does NOT mean we are expected to walk around and arbitrarily decide people's futures. We're not to, like in an old Bill Cosby skit where they wanted to get to the front of the movie line up, eat soap so

they foamed at the mouth and then walked up the line saying “You're going to die” and “you're going to die” until they finally found themselves at the front. No! We're not to pretend we are ourselves able to control peoples' futures. Rather, Jesus is asking us to continue His work. He came not to judge the world, but to save it, by talking and demonstrating the Kingdom of God. In that though, is a huge responsibility – if we find it in our hearts to forgive another, Jesus is saying that He will honour that. And if we cannot, Jesus is saying their actions will remain with them, unforgiven.

*Receive the Holy Spirit. Peace, harmony, wholeness, completeness, health, prosperity, welfare and tranquility be with you. Know that you are loved beyond measure, and walk in that love. Share it with all who will accept it – those who accept it from you, accept it from Christ. Those who do not accept it from you, do not accept it from Christ. Just as our Father sent Christ, so Christ sends us.*

Blessed are you, for though you have not seen, you have believed. There may be trials, in fact there will be trials – as anyone who has had children knows, as soon as you love, there are sacrifices. But you are working out your faith, which is the salvation of your soul.

So, let us walk with Jesus, with the Holy Spirit, in love. Let us share His risen life with all who shall receive it. Let us walk with Him who we cannot see, in knowledge of His perfect love. Let us love Him with all our being, giving Him lordship over everything in our lives – and let us love those around us, all of them, as we love ourselves. Just as the Father sent Christ, so Christ also sends us. He sends me, and He sends you.

May you know, and believe, and be blessed. Blessed to your utmost joy. May you walk with Him, now and for all eternity.

Amen.