

“Delivering Peace” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Second Sunday of Easter April 7, 2024

- I. **John 20:19** – “Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’”
- II. **What does it take to feel like you are at peace?**
 - a. Peace in the world comes and goes because it is mostly attached to our feelings.
 - i. Some days, I feel at peace because all seems right...
 1. No car troubles, no flooding bathrooms, no family problems...
 2. You might even feel at peace working outside and enjoying the springtime when you can grow the plants you like and reap the rewards later (not me, but maybe you find it gives you peace).
 3. You might feel at peace when you are hiking out in nature, enjoying the wildflowers or beautiful Oregon scenery.
 4. Some of you might enjoy going to spas or salons and having others pamper you... and a sense of peace washes over you.
 - ii. However, everything is going wrong some days... and it's nearly impossible to feel at peace.
 1. Your dog or cat needs to go to the vet... and it's Sunday.
 2. You forgot to put the coffee pot in your coffeemaker, and it overflows all into your cabinets, drawers, and on the floor – and you're already running late.
 3. You get a call from your neighbor that your mailbox was broken into and your pretty sure there were some important bills and papers stolen.
 4. Or, maybe you get news about an illness in the family, or even a call from the doctor about your own health problem.
 - b. Peace is fleeting just like our happy feelings... and much of it seems to depend on what's happening in the world around us.
 - c. One of the first things Jesus says to His disciples in our reading today as He comes upon their gathering is, “Peace be with you.”
 - i. Just stop for a moment and think about this gathering... what does the reading say? (vs 19)
 1. Later, on the same day of Jesus' resurrection, they were gathered somewhere with the door locked for fear of the Jews.
 2. They were afraid, huddled together in a locked room... and it's very doubtful that they were sitting there feeling any peace.
 - ii. It was just a few hours from the amazing discovery of that first Easter morning, and they weren't one hundred percent sure Jesus was truly alive.
 1. Sure, they had seen an empty tomb, with the stone rolled away... the grave cloths sitting there with no body... and the

angels had spoken... and of course the women were adamant that they had seen Jesus alive and well.

2. The disciples in that room were afraid that the Jews were after them next... that someone perhaps stole the body of Jesus and this was some kind of deception or fraud... and finally, they had lost their Teacher under the worst of circumstances – it was a tragic and traumatic death!

3. No peace... fear and anxiety for sure... but no peace.

III. **Jesus comes to us to deliver peace.**

- a. Yes, these disciples were scared, so Jesus puts them at ease when He suddenly appears by saying “Peace be with you.”
- b. But we should recognize the magnitude of what happened as Jesus walked in (or appeared somehow) to stand right in front of them... alive and well!
 - i. He is risen! **He is risen indeed, alleluia!**
- c. Can you just imagine the joy and relief? Not only what the women said was true... but also what Jesus predicted would happen came to pass.
- d. Hear what Jesus tells the disciples in John 14 before He went to the cross, “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid... And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe.” (John 14:27; 29)
 - i. As they remembered what Jesus shared with them, they believed... they had faith and trust in their Lord and God... they had peace.
- e. From fear, confusion, turmoil, and trepidation to... peace.
 - i. God is real.
 - ii. God is good.
 - iii. Jesus is alive and well.
- f. Real peace that God provides cannot come from anywhere else... and cannot be taken away... because it is much bigger than a feeling alone.
 - i. Sure, we might have a terrible day with everything going wrong... or even the bigger issues of health, relationships, and loss.
 - ii. But none of these things that come from the world and its struggles have the ability to take away the peace that God provides...that God delivers through Jesus.

IV. **The gift of Jesus’ death and resurrection is peace...with God.**

- a. I know how much we want peace with the world and in the world, but the far better thing is to have peace with God.
- b. Our troubles began all the way back at the Garden of Eden, as Adam and Eve became enemies with God – and every person born after that had this sin sickness in them that made them God’s enemy.
 - i. Yet Paul says in Romans 5 that even though we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through Jesus dying on the cross. (Rom 5:10)

- ii. We could never have true peace until God did the work of making us right again... and giving us faith to believe that Jesus really did die and rise again to break down the barrier of sin.
- c. St. Paul tells us in Romans 5, “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Rom. 5:1)
 - i. You see, God delivered the only peace that matters through His Son – that our sins would be paid for on the cross in Jesus’ death, and our forgiveness handed over to us when He rose from the dead. (Romans 4:25)
- d. I know worldly issues that go on with us can cause all kinds of trouble in our hearts and minds – but the worst trouble – our brokenness and inability to save ourselves from eternity without God – is fixed.
 - i. We can be at peace with the faith that God provides us... that He has walked into our fear, our trepidation, our confusion, and our turmoil, and He says, “Peace be with you...”
 - ii. You cannot have lasting peace by taking hikes, long baths, fishing, or watching your garden grow...
 - iii. Only Jesus and His love could undo the massive chasm between God and us... and that is a peace that passes all human understanding. (Philippians 4:7)

V. **The peace we now have in Jesus makes our lives different.**

- a. The Apostles in that room were transformed as the whole picture became clearer – all the sayings Jesus told them over the prior 3 years were leading up to this day of His resurrection...
 - i. Jesus told them many times that He would die and rise again, but how could they know He meant a literal death and resurrection?
 - ii. Yet, now, all the words that Jesus spoke were beginning to take on the meaning that we now know from the Bible – that Jesus is God... and by believing in Him, we are new people who live to follow Him.
- b. The Apostles, the women, the believers that came after this event – and yes even Thomas – all began a journey of living for Jesus and delivering this peace to the world around them.
 - i. No matter who tried to shut them up... no matter what kinds of trials or persecution they faced... these followers of Jesus took the message with them and witnessed to what they had seen and heard.
- c. Even to this day, the resurrection is good news of people’s salvation!
 - i. The fact that He died and rose again to forgive us of our sins is still bigger than the world and whatever it provides.
- d. The transformation that takes place in our hearts and minds through faith in Christ shows itself to the people around us –
 - i. Whether it be like those first Christians in Acts that shared with others to support their needs within the Church...

- ii. Or whether it is witnessing about Jesus to those who have yet to believe by sending a card, inviting them to church, or sharing the hope (and peace) we have in Christ as the opportunities arise.
- e. Easter makes a difference... as followers and believers in Jesus, we also make a difference in a world that desperately needs the peace that only God can provide. Amen.