

Walk With God
John 20:19-23

April 28, 2019

19 When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." 20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." 22 When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

When people that don't know me find out that I am a preacher it is quite common that their behavior changes. A lot of time people like to talk about religion. Well, recently I was engaged in a conversation with a person that obviously lacked theological understanding. During our conversation she made the statement "Jesus did not die." This statement shocked me. I was surprised to hear that. I wonder how many times she made that statement without being challenged. I thought this "the death and resurrection of Jesus is the foundation of our faith." My mind made a recap of all the extensive arguments of the Apostle Paul about faith being in vain if Christ did not die and rise. I'm jumping out of my skin and had to speak up. So I asked "Where do you get the idea that Jesus did not die?" The answer was "He was alive when he showed his hands to the disciples. Then I asked and "When did this happen." The other person did not know. So I said "It was Sunday. It was in the evening on the day that Jesus was resurrected. All four of the gospels show that Jesus was resurrected from the dead. He physically died and rose just like he said he would. It is a dominant theme of the Bible. We identify with Jesus as one who was crucified and is now alive. One thing that is significant in the Bible is that there are many encounters with the post resurrected Jesus.

The key point of today's Scripture is that the disciples doubted. Even though Jesus told them three times, and the women proclaimed he is risen, the disciples still doubted. Of all the people on the planet it is the disciples who doubted. They doubted because they saw him physically die and get buried in a sealed tomb. The disciples doubted until they encountered the post resurrected Jesus. The scriptures tell us that this occurred in the evening on the day that Jesus was resurrected. The house was locked for a very good reason. They were scared! Jerusalem was not a safe place for them. Their fear was legitimate; the enemies of Jesus are also enemies of theirs. The disciples saw what they did to Jesus and were afraid that the same thing could happen to them. So, they are in a locked house and Jesus stood among them. He does not unlock the door, or climb through a window, or slide down a chimney. The appearance of Jesus is sudden and mysterious. He appears out of nowhere. This is not a normal physical appearance. We do not know how this happens and we don't need to know. What is significant is that the gospel shows this unique characteristic of Jesus that is different from normal human physics. Now, the post resurrected Jesus, is not bound by normal space conditions.

We don't know all of the specifics. We don't know all of the dialogue that took place or the detailed responses of the disciples. What we do know is that Jesus puts them at ease by saying "Peace be with you." Behind the scenes there must have been some tension and fear. Apparently there was some doubt because he shows them his wounds. Jesus establishes his identity and then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Then there is a very important point in the Gospel of John - Jesus sends them on a mission. They are to continue the mission of Jesus to the world. Then Jesus breathes on them and says "Receive the Holy Spirit." This scene

is the beginning of the body of the church as it is inspired by the Holy Spirit and dedicated to spreading the gospel.

Gospel writers show disciple doubt because the encounters with post resurrected Jesus is a significant game changer. The disciples change from followers to leaders. They change from people that followed Jesus and learned from Jesus to people that step out on faith and testify. Now they walk with God. The title of the message today is *Walk With God*. To walk with God is a matter of stepping out on faith. It is a matter of believing that there is one God, the almighty creator, who loves us and gives us the Son to save us. Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God. Jesus died and rose again. Jesus lived and died and rose from the dead. It is because Jesus rose from dead that we have eternal life. Now, here is the deal. We cannot prove that we have eternal life. But, we can believe it because Jesus told us so. Thomas was having a problem with believing. It is unfortunate that he gets singled out because his problem is actually the same as the others. He needed to see Jesus for himself. We are fortunate because we believe what we have not seen. I find it ironic that the enemies of Jesus (the religious leaders) remembered that Jesus predicted his resurrection and placed guards at the tomb while the disciples forgot that Jesus predicted it and do not believe it until it is proven to them.

Here is the main thing. The picture that the gospel portrays is that there is something that is hard for some people to believe but it is proven true. It is proven by the real presence of the resurrected Lord. This changes everything in the lives of the people that it impacts and, in fact, it changes everything on earth. You are a part of this glorious change. You continue to make the impact the world. You continue to influence people and touch the lives of others with the love of the Lord. Right now, today, tomorrow, be proud of your walk with God. You are the continuation of the mission of Jesus. Take pride in it. Take ownership of it. Respond with joyous action and devotion. It is a pleasurable, spiritual journey, to walk with God.