

John 20:19-31 (NIV)

¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

²¹ Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

²⁴ Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where

the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

²⁶ A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

²⁸ Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

²⁹ Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

³⁰ Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Sermon for April 7, 2024: www.collegechurch.org/college-church-online

KNOW ... *God and his Word.*

- We begin this passage with Jesus' disciples gathered and fearful with the doors locked. How ironic! After the greatest day in human history — God defeated death and inaugurated new creation life — his followers were filled with fear and went into hiding instead of celebrating. What caused fear in the disciples? Were their fears reasonable? Why or why not?

A week later, they are together, once again behind locked doors. What does this repeated behavior indicate about their mindset, level of understanding around Jesus' death and resurrection or even their faith?

- Jesus comes to where the disciples are, appears and speaks to them. Of all that Jesus may have said, John chooses to record these words, "Peace be with you!" The word peace used here comes from the word *shalom* — which means "wholeness, health, and completeness." Why might John have recorded those words three times? How does this repeated proclamation relate to their fear? What do these words mean for their (and our) sending into the world?
- A part of Jesus' appearance to the disciples was showing his wounds to them — revealing his identity as the crucified and risen One who had conquered sin and extends divine grace. How do the disciples respond to what they see on the first occasion? What is significant about Thomas' response on the second occasion? Think back to your first confession of Christ as Lord. How did it sound?

- In this passage, Jesus commissioned the disciples — sending them as the Father had sent him. Describe what Jesus was sent by the Father to do. What does this “sending” entail? Specifically, what does John say is part of the sending of a disciple? How does this aspect of their sending convey God’s mission and purpose in the world? What does Jesus do to equip them to be sent?
- Discuss any additional insights, thoughts or questions you may have for John 20:19-31.

ACT ... responding to & applying what we know.

- Discuss a time that you struggled to believe in Jesus, understand God’s Word or the Holy Spirit’s leading and battled fear. How has that battle with fear been used to strengthen your faith? Share how your fear battle opened doors to testify about Jesus or God’s work in the world and strengthened someone else in their faith.
- John 20:30-31 states, “Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” Do you ever desire more physical evidence (signs and miracles) today for you to believe or understand Jesus? Why or why not? How can the testimonies of Jesus’ disciples today bear witness to who Jesus was and is and help build our faith?

BE ... living in light of what we’ve heard, becoming more like Christ.

Pastor Joel shared in his sermon Sunday, “The witness and testimony of our faith has always been for others. We don’t do what we do simply for our own sake. We don’t do what we do for our own salvation. We don’t do what we do for our own comfort or care. ... From the very beginning Jesus tells us, his disciples, to pass along the gift of faith we have received.”

Who is depending on you (us) to pass along this incredible gift you (we) have received?

I challenge you to spend time THINKING and PRAYING about the faith you have received. Who passed it to you? How are you sharing it with others so that this gift is multiplied in your sphere of influence (your peers and the next generation)?

ASK God to prepare you for an opportunity (opportunities) to pass the gift of faith on to others. LISTEN for the Holy Spirit’s leading for when and how to share this gift and OBEY, boldly sharing Jesus this week.

KEEP becoming more like Jesus!

Grace and peace,
Pastor Angela

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