

Sermon for April 7, 2024 – Easter 2

Luke 24:36-49 EHV

Theme: Peace be with you

- 1) Peace to calm our troubled hearts.
- 2) Peace to share Jesus with others.

³⁶As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” ³⁷But they were terrified and frightened and thought they were looking at a ghost. ³⁸He said to them, “Why are you troubled? Why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself. Touch me and see, because a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” ⁴⁰When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. ⁴¹While they still did not believe it (because of their joy), and while they were still wondering, he said to them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” ⁴²They gave him a piece of broiled fish and some honeycomb. ⁴³He took it and ate in front of them. ⁴⁴He said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms.” ⁴⁵Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶He said to them, “This is what is written and so it must be: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹Look, I am sending you what my Father promised. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

Are you feeling deflated, depressed, or at your wit’s end? Does the guilt of your sin weigh heavily on you? Are you worried about the future – feeling somewhat lost or hopeless in today’s world? Has grief touched your heart?

Dear Christian, if you answered yes to any of these questions, fix your eyes on your resurrected Saviour who comes to you through today’s Gospel lesson, saying: **Peace be with you.** 1) He offers us peace to calm our troubled hearts. 2) His peace encourages us to share the good news of His salvation with others.

Part One: Peace to calm our troubled hearts.

“Peace be with you.” When Jesus spoke these words to the disciples, they were anything but at peace. Just two days earlier, they witnessed their beloved Lord brutally beaten, scourged, crucified, and pierced with a soldier’s spear. They saw Joseph and Nicodemus prepare Jesus’ body for burial. Jesus was dead, and their hope also died with him.

But now, the tomb was empty. Women claimed to have seen him. Peter spoke with him. Cleopas and his friend walked with him to Emmaus. Could it be true? Could Jesus be alive? How? It did not make sense. And so, with hearts astir with excitement, fear, hope, and skepticism, they talked amongst themselves. *As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.”*

But they were terrified and frightened and thought they were looking at a ghost. Now, before we condemn them for their foolish superstition and unbelief (especially since Jesus had shown himself alive throughout the day), let us be honest about how we would have reacted. Jesus, who they saw die, now appears in their midst in a locked tight room. What other explanation could there be?

To get their thinking on the right course, Jesus said to them, "Why are you troubled? Why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself. Touch me and see, because a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.

Jesus was no ghost. He was truly alive. His hands and feet were composed of actual flesh and bone. His wounds proved his identity. I can imagine the disciples holding his hand, patting his back, and hugging him in amazement. And yet, it still felt too good to be true. I mean, try to put yourself in their place for a moment — picturing the roller coaster of emotions they must have felt. Jesus was dead - they saw it. But now he is alive? How can this be?

For this reason, while they still did not believe it (because of their joy), and while they were still wondering, he said to them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish and some honeycomb. He took it and ate in front of them.

He said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms." Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.

Jesus points to the real proof that He is alive: The Scriptures had foretold it! Jesus accomplished everything prophesied concerning him in the Old Testament. As He told his disciples on numerous occasions before his crucifixion, He had to suffer, die, and rise again to win our salvation. Jesus explained to his disciples how He won peace with God for them. He dispelled the doubt and fear from their troubled hearts.

"Peace be with you." How often are not our hearts like those of the disciples: fearful about our future? We know God's promises, and yet we doubt. We wonder if God will really forgive our sins. We wonder how God can work for our best in this or that situation. Locked tight, deep in our hearts where no one can see, our thoughts are in turmoil. We are not at peace. We do not know what to do. We simply pray: "Lord, help me."

And then, as we are reminded of His Gospel promises, He appears in our hearts with his message: "Peace be with you, brother. Peace be with you, sister. See the nail marks on my hands and my feet? It is I, your Saviour. I suffered and died to reconcile you to my Father. All your sins have been paid for in full. My Father has raised me from the dead, proving He accepted my sacrifice on your behalf. Peace be with you: my Father is now your Father, and he loves you. He forgives all sin for my sake and will work in all things for your everlasting good. Peace be with you: because I live, you will live in our Father's house forever. Peace be with you!"

And as we continue to study God's Word, the Holy Spirit continues to give us understanding and encouragement as we meditate on everything Jesus accomplished for us. Yes, the more we meditate on His Gospel, the more peace our troubled hearts enjoy.

Part Two: Peace to share Jesus with others.

The peace that Jesus gave his disciples was not meant to be kept locked up in their hearts for themselves alone. Jesus intended it to be shared with the world so that all who believe in Him might have everlasting life.

He said to them, "This is what is written and so it must be: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things."

Jesus' death and resurrection reconciled the world to God. But this reconciliation does not do any good unless it is believed. But how can people believe what they are not told? And who will tell unless God sends them? This is where the disciples come in: The Lord chose them as witnesses. He chose them to tell the world what they saw and heard: Jesus lived, died, and rose again to reconcile us to God. Whoever repents of their sin and turns to Jesus in faith will have everlasting life.

This duty was given not only to the disciples but also to each of us. When the Lord called you to faith, he chose you to be his representative to the world. He came to bring us peace, but he never intended us to keep this peace to ourselves. He wants you to share it with others so they, too, might repent of their sin and believe in Jesus for salvation.

But how do we confess Christ to the world? The same way the apostles did: by sharing the Scriptures with others when given the opportunity. Just as God's holy law convinced us that we are so sinful that we cannot save ourselves, so it will do the same for those to whom we proclaim it. Just as the good news of forgiveness gave us great joy, it will offer the same joy to those to whom we announce it. How so? Because the Gospel points to everything Jesus did to save humankind. This is the peace Jesus gave us and the peace he wants us to share.

While the prospect of confessing Christ to others might terrify us, it is not scarier than it was for the disciples. Think about it for a moment: realistically, the worst thing we face when confessing Christ in Canada is a person getting upset and telling us to get lost or mocking us for being Christian. The disciples, however, faced arousing anger in their fellow countrymen so hot that their lives would be in danger. I can imagine how the thought of unlocking the doors and going out into the world probably terrified the disciples, especially after witnessing Jesus' brutal crucifixion. Therefore, Jesus told them: *Look, I am sending you what my Father promised. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.*"

As Jesus promised before his crucifixion, He promised again that He would not leave the disciples as orphans but send them the Holy Spirit after his ascension. The Spirit would instruct them in all

righteousness and empower them to be His witnesses. He would be their armour, shielding them from every evil attack of the devil that would try to prevent them from confessing Christ.

And guess what: Jesus has promised the same Spirit to help you confess Christ in your community. He opens the Scriptures so that you might understand them and see Christ on every page of the Bible. The Holy Spirit points you to Jesus for forgiveness and strength. He empowers you to share the Gospel with your family, friends, and neighbours. He guards and protects you from every evil – working in all things for your everlasting good. Yes, He enables you to convey the message to all who will listen, “Peace to you, from God our Father and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

Peace be with you. This was not only Jesus’ message to his first disciples but also His message to us. He stands before us, pointing to his hands and feet in the Scriptures - showing the marks of his crucifixion to reassure us that our sins are forgiven. And not only does He stand before us, but He also stands with us as we share His message of salvation with our family, friends, and neighbours. He holds out his nail-pierced hands through the Gospel we proclaim, declaring forgiveness, peace, and everlasting life to all who repent and believe in Him.

Therefore, brothers and sisters in Christ, whenever your hearts are anxious, remember your resurrected Saviour and the peace He won for you. He stands with you through faith in the Gospel. Your future is secure in Him. Let the joy of these truths move your heart to peace and your mouth to tell others about that peace so they, too, may know the Saviour and live. Amen.