

## ***“When Jesus Is With Us”***

Matthew 28: 1 – 8 & 16 - 20; Acts 1: 1 – 11; **John 20: 19 – 30 (Sermon)**

John 20:19 tells us that on the first Easter evening the disciples were together hiding behind locked doors for fear of the Jews when ***“Jesus came and stood among them.”*** The Apostle John also tells us 7 things that were different in the disciple’s lives after the risen Jesus was present with them. I have listed these seven things in your bulletin insert and I encourage you to take out your bulletin insert and to take notes.

Jesus brought peace to their troubled souls. As you know the disciples had spent the past three years following Jesus. They thought Jesus was going to establish His earthly kingdom and they thought each of them would be given an important role in Jesus’ Kingdom. They had seen Jesus perform many miracles so it was hard for them to understand why Jesus did not speak up when the Jewish leaders falsely accused Him. They did not understand why Jesus let the Roman soldiers crucify Him. After Jesus’ crucifixion His disciples were afraid, confused, and devastated. They felt abandoned and hopeless. Three times in our text the resurrected Jesus promises His disciples ***“peace.”*** (Verses 19, 21, & 26)

Luke’s gospel tells us that at first the disciples thought they were seeing a ghost. However, Jesus assured the disciples that it was really Him and Jesus assured His disciples that He was alive by letting the disciples examine the holes in His hands and in His side. ( Verse 20) When Jesus appeared the resurrection rumors became a reality. The disciples had a personal encounter with The Resurrected Jesus. Prior to Jesus appearing the disciples were afraid the Jewish leaders would kill them. But after Jesus appeared in that room Jesus replaced their fear with boldness. These disciples are the same ones who changed the world with their message because they no longer feared what man could do to their bodies. The disciples were beaten, thrown into prison and killed for their faith because they knew that Jesus was alive. Years after the resurrection the Apostle John wrote; ***“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of Life.”*** (1<sup>st</sup> John 1:1)

Jesus changed the disciples sorrow into joy. In verse 20 we read ***“The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.”*** The disciples were overjoyed because Jesus was alive. The disciples were filled with joy because they were reunited with their leader, their teacher, their friend, and their Lord again.

Jesus gave the disciples a new perspective on life. Before the resurrection appearances Jesus disciples were struggling with disillusionment and were feeling defeat. Then in verse 20 we read; ***“He showed them His hands, and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.”*** That act gave these disciples a whole new perspective on life. They knew Jesus had been crucified. They knew Jesus body had been placed in a tomb. However, when they saw the risen Jesus and they touched Jesus’ resurrected body they knew Jesus had conquered death. The disciples no longer feared physical death because they knew that physical death was not the end of life but rather physical death is only the beginning of eternal life.

Jesus gave the disciples a mission. ***“As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you.”*** (Verse 21) Jesus commissioned them to carry on the ministry Jesus started while He was on earth. The disciples went from being weak vacillating men to being bold men of God. God used them to change the world.

Jesus gave the disciples Devine power. ***“And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”*** (John 20: 22) Jesus gave the disciples the power they needed to do the job He had given them. Notice the transformation that takes place in the disciples. Up until that moment Jesus disciples were the frozen chosen. They were petrified with fear. They had been neutralized into

ineffectiveness. According to church history and tradition, most all of Jesus disciples died a martyr's death. A person will not lay down their life unless they have found something they really believe in.

Jesus gave the disciples a message of reconciliation. Verse 23 says; ***“If you forgive anyone his sins they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”*** Jesus did **not** give the disciples the power to forgive sins but rather Jesus gave His disciples the authority and the power to boldly declare that God forgives sins because Jesus' death on the cross paid the price of the sins of the world. They could also confidently declare that a person's sins will **not** be forgiven unless they repent and ask for God's forgiveness through faith in Jesus Christ.

Before the resurrected Jesus came to the disciples they were afraid and hid behind locked doors. They were sad, confused, and devastated. They felt abandoned and hopeless. But after the disciples had a personal encounter with The Resurrected Lord Jesus these same disciples were fill filled with peace and joy. The disciples had a purpose and the power to boldly proclaim The Good News of Jesus. God used these disciples to change the world with Jesus' message.

I trust that you noticed that Jesus did not wait for the disciples to rise to His level. Today Jesus takes the initiative and comes to each of us. Jesus came to earth to be with His people, Jesus died to pay the price of our sins, and Jesus rose from the grave so that all of His disciples could enjoy a close personal relationship with Him both now and throughout eternity. Friends, that is exactly what Easter is all about. God's word to us this morning challenges each of us to honestly evaluate our relationship with Jesus Christ. God's word to us today is to stop ***“doubting and believe.”*** *Jesus is saying; don't you get it? – I came, I died, I rose from the tomb to provide a way for you to enjoy a personal relationship with me.*

If you will make Jesus the Lord of every aspect of your life Jesus will be as real to you as Jesus was to Thomas. What happened to the disciples 2000 years ago can happen to you today if you will open the door to your heart, if you invite Jesus to be a part of your daily life, and if you truly believe in Jesus. (Revelation 3:20) These same 7 changes will occur in your life when Jesus is present in your daily life.

When Jesus is with you in every aspect of your life you will have peace. Jesus said ***“My peace I give to you.”*** (John 14:27) Biblical peace is much more than the absence of conflict. Biblical peace is the absence of guilt, uncertainty, and fear. Philippians 4:7 says: ***“And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”***

When Jesus is with you in every aspect of your life doubt is erased and fear is removed. Jesus said; ***“Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hell.”*** (Revelation 1:17 -18) 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 1: 7 tells us ***“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”*** Hebrews 13:6 says; ***“So we say with confidence The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?”***

When Jesus is with you there is joy in every aspect of your life. We have joy knowing that Jesus loves us, Jesus uses every situation for our benefit, and that Jesus is in total control of everything. Jesus said; ***“In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”*** (John 16:33) We have joy because Jesus forgives our sins. ***“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”*** (1<sup>st</sup> John 1:9) We are joyful because we can enjoy fellowship with The Lord both now and throughout eternity.

When Jesus is with you in every aspect of your life you will have a new perspective on life. Jesus conquered death by death. Jesus said: ***I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even***

*though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.* (John 11:25 - 26) Jesus' resurrection proves that physical death is not the end but rather physical death is only the beginning of eternal life. In Philippians 1: 23 the Apostle Paul spoke of physical death as the way we depart this world to be with The Lord. In 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:8 the Apostle Paul said, **"...absent from the body is to be present with the Lord."** Physical death is simply the vehicle that takes us home to be with our Lord. Our belief in life after physical death gives meaning and purpose to our present life on earth.

When Jesus is with you in every aspect of your life you have a new purpose in living. When we have a first hand encounter with the living Jesus we will become committed disciples like Thomas. There are people all around you who are living in darkness, who are afraid, and who are hopeless. And Jesus is depending on you to bring them meaning and purpose in life. We are to be feet to run errands for Jesus. We are to be hands to do the work of Jesus. We are to be a heart to love people like Jesus did.

When Jesus is with you in every aspect of your life He gives you Devine power. **"And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'"** (John 20: 22) Acts 1:8 tells us **"but you shall receive power when The Holy Spirit comes on you"**. The Holy Spirit gives us power over sin and power to live the victorious abundant life God planned for us. Philippians 4:13 says **"I can do all things through him who gives me strength."**

When Jesus is with you in every aspect of your life you have an opportunity to deliver the Good News of Jesus. **"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us.** (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:20) We were given the Great Commission **"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey 'I have commanded you.'"** (Matthew 28:19) We are to be His witnesses (Acts 1:8) We have also been given the ministry of reconciliation. (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:18) We are to speak for Jesus. Jesus gives us joy, power, and assurance so we can share His good news with the people around us.

God's word to us this morning challenges each of us to ask ourselves; *has Jesus' resurrection made these seven changes in my life. Are you experiencing peace, joy, and power in your daily life? Do you have an earthly perspective or a heavenly perspective on life? Is there purpose and meaning in your life? When was the last time you told someone about your Jesus? Are you useful to Jesus in advancing His kingdom on earth?*

God's word to us today also challenges each of us to ask ourselves *"Is the Jesus I know dead or alive"*. If the Jesus you know is still on the cross or still in the tomb you probably will feel abandoned and hopeless. If the Jesus you know is still in the tomb you will have a limited perspective on life, you will fear physical death, and you will not have a message to share with your co-workers and neighbors. Friend if that is you Jesus The Risen Christ is inviting you to enjoy a close personal relation with Him. Jesus said; **"Here I am I stand at the door and knock. If anyone opens the door I will come in and eat with him and he with me."** (Revelation 3:20) You see the good news is The Risen Living Lord Jesus wants to transform you and The Risen Living Lord Jesus wants to be a real part of your daily life so you will experience peace, joy, hope, and contentment as you go about serving The Lord Jesus and sharing the good news of Jesus The Christ. Jesus said; **"whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."** (Luke 9:23) The Christian life is not like a cafeteria where you take what you want and leave the rest. You can not claim Jesus as your savior and refuse to make Jesus the Lord of every aspect of your life. Jesus said; **"if anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when He comes in His Father's glory with the holy angels."** (Mark 8:38) Today if you hear The Lord's voice do not harden your heart. (Hebrews 3:15) AMEN