

Christ Appears to the Assembled Disciples
John 20:19-23

INTRO: We come now to the evening of the resurrection day, one of the most eventful days in all of history. On the resurrection day, Christ had appeared four times in His risen glory:

1. First, Mary Magdalene had seen Him - Jn 20:14-16.
2. Then, the women returning from the grave met Him- Mt 28:9.
3. He then appeared to Peter.
4. And then He appears to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus– Lk 24:33-35; I Cor 15:3-5.

I. VSS 19-20, GLAD DISCIPLES

A. Vs 19, And now in the evening of that great and wonderful day, the disciples are gathered together in a room, probably the upper room where Jesus had washed their feet and where they had shared in the Lord's Supper.

1. "Then the same day," the resurrection day, the day Christ rose from the dead, the day the tomb lost its grip, the day the stone rolled away.
2. "Being the first day of the week."
 - a. Emphasis is put on the specific day that Christ arose and appeared to the disciples.
 - b. Everywhere in the New Testament, the day of Christ's resurrection is singled out as being chief among the days of the week (Mt 28:1; Mk 16:2; Lk 24:1; Jn 10:1, 19).
 - c. The early church worshiped on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7).
 - d. The offering was taken on Sunday, the first day of the week in the early church (I Cor 16:2, *Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come*).
 - e. Rev. 1:10 specifies the first day of the week as the Lord's Day.
 - f. If the scriptures put so much emphasis on the first day of the week, Sunday, the Lord's Day, shouldn't we set it aside as a special day, a day of worship?

3. "When the doors were shut." The Greek signifies that the doors were barred and locked.
 - a. Why were the doors barred? "For fear of the Jews."
 - b. The disciples were well aware of the bitterness of the Jews toward anything and anyone associated with Jesus Christ. Being aware of this, the disciples feared that they might be the next to be crucified. Every step on the stairs caused concern, every knock on the door brought a sense of terror. Fear because the body was missing, and the disciples had been accused of stealing it while the Roman guard slept (Mt 28:12-13).
4. The doors were barred, but that did not stop Jesus. Then "...came Jesus and stood in the midst..." All of a sudden, Jesus is in the midst of the disciples. He did not knock; He did not open the door; He simply appeared.
 - a. No barred and locked doors could keep out the conqueror of death.
 - b. He did not need to knock for admission.
 - c. He did not need an angel to let Him in as Peter did in Acts 12:10.
 - d. In His resurrection body, Jesus entered the room right through the locked doors, the gate and door to the room.
 - e. One day, believers will have a resurrection body: a body not subject to the limitations of the mortal body (I Cor 15:43-44, 51-54).
5. "Peace be unto you."
 - a. Christ greeted His followers with the everyday middle eastern greeting, "Peace be unto you." The meaning of this greeting is, "May you be saved from trouble and may God give you every good thing."
 - b. One of the last words Jesus spoken before His crucifixion was "peace" (Jn 16:33).
 - c. This word "peace" reminds us that peace was made by the shedding of the Lamb's blood on the cross:
 - 1- Col 1:20, "And having made peace through the blood of His cross by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."

- 2- Eph 2:14, "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;"
 - 3- Rom 5:1, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:"
 - 4- The Gospel is also called the Gospel of peace (Rom 10:15, "... How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!")
 - 5- Acts 10:36, "....preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)"
 - 6- I Pet 1:2, "....Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied." Without grace there is no peace. Grace always comes before peace.
- d. You will never have peace until you trust the crucified and risen Son of God as your Savior.
- B. Vs 20, After Jesus had calmed the fears of the disciples, He showed them His hands, feet, and side (Lk 24:39).
- 1. The nail pierced hands and feet, and the spear riven side point back to the word peace in verse 19.
 - a. The wounds identified Jesus as the Master.
 - b. We are once again reminded that the nail prints are reminders of the price of eternal peace. Col 1:20: "And having made peace through the blood of His cross...."
 - c. The spear riven side reminds us of the blood and water. Matthew Henry said: "Blood stands for remissions, water for purification. The two must always go together" (1203).
 - 2. As the disciples beheld the nail pierced hands and feet of Jesus, and as they looked upon His spear riven side, their doubts vanished and joy and gladness filled their hearts.
 - a. Faith still looks at the nail pierced hands and feet of Jesus.
 - 1- Peace with God is not what we have done, but what He has done for us.
 - 2- We have not seen Him by the physical eye, yet we believe and are glad (I Pet 1:8).
 - 3- One day, the Jews will see Him as the crucified

Messiah (Zech 12:10).

- b. Believing on the crucified, buried, and risen Lord brings joy and gladness.

II. VS 21, COMMISSIONED DISCIPLES

A. Once again Jesus says, "Peace be unto you...." Friends, this is no mere repetition.

1. The first, "Peace be unto you," was for the conscience; the second for the heart. The first was "peace with God," the peace of redemption (Rm 5:1). The second is the peace of fellowship: "The peace of God" (Phil 4:7). The first is the consequence of the atonement; the second comes from communion.
2. You can't have the second peace without the first peace.
3. The church needs someone to turn to when in times of trouble and pain. The church needs someone to turn to for direction and for wisdom. The church is depending on Christ.

B. "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."

1. As the Father had sent the Son with the message of grace to a sinful world; we are sent by the Son with the message of grace to a sinful world.
2. Jesus came to atone; we are to proclaim His atonement.
3. We are Ambassadors for Christ (II Cor 5:20).
4. "So send I you...." This means that the church needs Jesus. The church is commissioned; it is sent out by Jesus. Without Him, we have no authority, no message, no power.
5. Jesus needs the church. The church is His mouth to preach the Gospel and His feet to carry it to the regions beyond.

III. VSS 22-23, ENABLED DISCIPLES

A. Vs 22, The word "breathed" is the Greek word *emphusao*. This is the same word used in the Septuagint in Gen 2:7 where the Lord breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life so that he was made a living soul.

1. The living, risen Lord now breathes on the Apostles so that they might receive power, divine power from the Holy Ghost.
 - a. The Apostles had a task that was humanly

- impossible: to evangelize a God hating, Christ rejecting world.
- b. How could they accomplish such a task? By the power of the Holy Spirit indwelling them.
2. The Son had received the power of the Holy Spirit for His mission (Jn 1:32-34; 3:34), and now He give the Apostles power for their mission.
- B. Vs 23, This is a very important verse and a greatly misunderstood verse.
1. Note the word's of John Calvin on this verse: "When Christ enjoins the Apostles to forgive sins, He does not convey to them what is peculiar to Himself. It belongs to Him to forgive sins. He only enjoins them in His name to proclaim the forgiveness of sins."
 - a. Forgiveness of sins is only and alone through the blood of Jesus Christ.
 - b. Eph 1:7, "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace."
 2. How can you and I be involved in sins being forgiven? By the preaching the Gospel!
 - a. If we do not preach the Gospel, then sins will not be forgiven for, "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."
 - b. Peter preached that Christ alone could forgiven sins: "Whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43).
 - c. Paul pointed to Christ alone as the one who forgives sins: "Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins" (Acts 13:38).
 3. It should also be stated that the local church does have authority to declare that which God declares, and the church has authority to practice discipline on that basis (Mt 18:15-18).

CONCLUSION: Let us faithfully declare the Gospel!

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