

Andrew K. Frey. Easter Sunday. Luke 24:36-39.  
April 4, 2021. St. John, Town of Center, WI.

**<sup>36</sup>As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.”**

**<sup>37</sup>But they were terrified and frightened and thought they were looking at a ghost.**

**<sup>38</sup>He said to them, “Why are you troubled? Why do doubts arise in your hearts? <sup>39</sup>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.” (EHV)**

Theme: Jesus’ Resurrection Gives us Peace

Has your life been full of peace lately? Probably not. The world certainly isn’t full of peace. Especially with Covid-19 and everything associated with it: deaths and sicknesses, lockdowns and mask mandates. There is political strife and racial tensions, economic woes and a list of troubles that goes on and on and on. Of course, you know all of this—you are well aware of everything that I just mentioned, and frankly, you are sick of hearing about it—I was sick of it last Easter! That’s the point. If you watch the news, are on social media, or are otherwise somewhat cognizant of the world around you, you can’t avoid it. You are constantly bombarded by all the bad news going day after day after day that it wore you down. And that’s just in the world in general—you also lack peace personally: you are worry about the uncertain future, you are beyond stressed, you might have health issues, financial woes, problems at work or home. Sins weigh heavily upon you; and you know, at least in the back of your mind, that death could come at any time. There isn’t much peace in your world right now.

The disciples also had no peace. They had followed Jesus around for three years or so. They heard him preach God’s Word with authority, they saw him perform miracle after miracle, and got other glimpses of his divinity. They believed as true what Jesus said about himself—that he was the Son of God, the long-promised Savior of the world, the Messiah.

But then he died. But how could it be? Jesus was supposed to set-up an eternal kingdom. He said that we would live with them forever. But if Jesus is dead, then everything that he said about himself would be a lie and everything they believed about him would be worthless. Worst of all if Jesus was dead it meant that he wasn’t the world’s Savior that the disciples were still in their sins.

Plus, the disciples were uncertain what was going to happen to them. Jesus warned them that if Jesus’ enemies hated him, they were going to hate his followers too. And if the Jewish leaders were able to get the popular Jesus crucified, what was stopping them from doing the same thing to the lowly disciples? By the time our text takes place, it is Easter evening. Jesus had made a number of appearances throughout the day and rumors were circling that Jesus had risen from the dead. But where were the disciples? Behind locked doors in fear of the Jews.

But then, suddenly, **Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.”** That greeting of peace, or *shalom* in Hebrew, was a common Jewish greeting among friends. But here it is given a deeper spiritual meaning. As he told his disciples on the night he was betrayed, **Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, and do not let it be afraid.**

But the disciples were still afraid. Luke tells us, **they were terrified and frightened and thought they were looking at a ghost.** And so, as John tells us, Jesus said a second time, **Peace be with you.**

Then he showed them his hands and feet, with the nail marks through them. It was Jesus’ alright, his nail-marked hands and feet proved it! He had truly risen from the dead.

But his hands and feet mean so much more. His crucifixion was the means by which Jesus paid for our sins. He sacrificed himself on the cross—once and for all people of all time. On the cross he shed his holy precious blood and covered over all of our guilt. It was on the cross that all our sins were placed on Jesus and he suffered the eternal damnation that our sins deserve. It was on the cross, that Christ gave us his perfect life, so that we would be perfect or holy in the eyes of the Lord!

And Jesus' resurrection is proof that he has paid for our sins. If God had not accepted his payment for our sins, he would not have raised him from the dead. But the fact that he has raised him from the dead is like a receipt that proves that his payment for our sins has been accepted. Paul writes in Romans that Jesus was, **handed over to death for our sins, but was raised to life for our justification.** Jesus died for our sins and by his resurrection we are declared not guilty! The nail-marked hands and feet of Jesus, gave peace to the disciples, who knew that all of their sins had been paid for by Jesus. And what is true of the disciples is also true of us! All of our sins paid for by Jesus on the cross—and so we have the peace of forgiveness!

Jesus' resurrection, of course, means more than Jesus paid for our sins. It also means that he has defeated death for us! As Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15, **if Christ has not been raised from the dead then we are still in our sins and our faith is futile...but Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.** Jesus won the ultimate victory three days after his death when he rose from the dead. His body was given a new life and reunited with his soul!

It wasn't a ghost that the disciples saw. Jesus was truly alive. In his real body—still with the marks of love in his hands, feet, and side. He lives! He was alive then that Easter evening, and he is still alive—body and soul together in heaven!

As the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep, Jesus' resurrection is a guarantee that we too will rise from the dead. He is the first to rise from the dead and remain alive and the same thing will happen to us! Just the first fruit of a harvest is a guarantee that more are to follow, Christ as the firstfruits from the dead is a guarantee that our own resurrection will follow his! Yes, we will all die, unless the Lord comes again soon; but when we die we live! Jesus promises us, **because I live you also will live.** And, **Whoever believes in me will live, even if he dies. And whoever lives and believes in me will never perish.** Death for a believer is not a bad thing—it's not something to be afraid of or run away from, because it is the beginning of an eternal life in heaven. And on the Last Day, the Lord will reunite our bodies with our souls—just like his body was given new life—and we will live in heaven with our bodies and souls together!

The disciples had peace—peace in death. It didn't matter what the Jewish leaders might do to them—they were going to be in heaven with Jesus when they died because his victory over death. Like the disciples we can face death without fear, and in peace. Death is not the worst of evils for believers for death ushers in an eternal glory! We can have peace even when faced with our own deaths because Jesus's victor is yours!

Notice that Jesus did it all for us. It is Jesus who has paid for our sins. It is Jesus who has risen from the dead. It is Jesus who has accomplished our salvation as he gives us the forgiveness of sins and eternal life by his death and resurrection by a gift of his grace, received only through faith in him.

And it is Jesus, then, who gives us peace. The same peace that he gave to his disciples on that first Easter Evening is the same peace he gives to us by his resurrection from the dead. It's a peace that the world cannot give because it's the peace of forgiveness and the peace of eternal life with our Savior forever—a peace that he could only give us because he is God and man at the same time!

But you might be thinking, "I love Jesus for giving me the peace of forgiveness and eternal life to come, but what about all the problems that I'm dealing with in my world right now that cause

me a lack of peace? What about the discord going on in our society, the political strife and the economic woes—and everything else going on in my life that causes me stress, and anxiety? Well, Easter teaches us that the Lord keeps all of his promises. He told his disciples about his resurrection again and again. And when it seemed impossible Jesus proved he could do all things and defeated death!

For you, Jesus' resurrection proves he can do all things and that he keeps his promises. He promises to watch over you, to guard, and to protect you. He promises to always be with you and to hear your prayer. He promises to make all things work out for your eternal wellbeing and he promises eternal life to all who believe in him.

Jesus' resurrection proves where you stand with God. You stand forgiven by the grace and mercy of our Lord through his death on the cross. And so no matter what happens in your life, no matter how much stress or anxiety you have, you know your life ends in paradise! You will enjoy a glorious and perfect life with Jesus forever. And there in heaven there will be no stress, no anxiety, no strife. Just peace! And this future peace leads to peace right now. It's a peace here and in eternity that is yours only through Jesus' resurrection from the dead! Amen.