

**John 20: 19-29; “The New Life Christ Brings”, A Devotional prepared by  
Pastor Paul Rendall, for our Easter Breakfast time together  
as a church on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018.**

Now, this devotional is meant to draw your attention to what Jesus, as the resurrected Christ, brought with Him when He revealed Himself to the disciples during those first couple of times that He made Himself known to them. That which He brought to them, He brings to us.

**1<sup>st</sup> of all – Christ brings with Him Peace and Joy and New Life to His apostles.**

Christ brought this peace to them during a time of fear and uncertainty. Verse 19 says – “Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ “Now when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side.” “Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.” “Then Jesus said to them, again, ‘Peace to You!’ “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” “And when He said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’ “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” Most of the disciples had not yet seen the Lord when this appearance was made, and so it says, they were afraid it says, because of the Jews.”

They were afraid because they knew the reality of the verse in Zechariah 13: 7 – “Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, against the Man who is My companion, says the Lord of hosts.” “Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered; then I will turn My hand against the little ones.” They saw themselves as defenseless against the persecuting power of the leaders of Israel. Their Shepherd had been smitten by them; they would probably be next. But Jesus suddenly appears and says – “Peace be with you.” And when He said this, He showed them His hands and His side to convince them that it really was Him. And it says that when they saw the Lord they were glad. This is always what Jesus brings with Him to His fearful disciples. He always has the power to dispel their fears by His presence. He always has the power to bring calm to their hearts and minds, and even more, joy and gladness when He comes to the weary or fearful soul. He came to them as their Risen Lord. He comes to us spiritually by the power of His resurrection. We seek the Lord and He answers us and delivers us from all of our fears. He brings calm to the mind, and joy to the soul, and peace to our hearts, when He comes.

Peace, I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives unto you.” “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” How often we need to remind ourselves of the truth that our Risen, Living Savior has all power in heaven and earth, and He can speak peace to our hearts in the most difficult and dangerous and trying situations of our lives. Jesus speaks this peace and He gives this joy to them even as He reminds them of their commission. “Peace to you!” “As the Father has sent Me, I also send You.” He has work for them to do. They are going to feed His sheep and tend His lambs. And, as they do this good work, He wants them to remember that He is the One who will give them peace and joy in their work and peace and joy in fulfilling their commission. Even so, you and I need to remember the same thing in all of our labors for Christ. “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the Age.” They already had the Holy Spirit with them because they were regenerate men, but now Christ breathes on them as a group of apostles. Even as He formed Adam out of the dust of the ground in the beginning and breathed upon him, giving him physical life. Even so, now He breathes on his apostles and says – “Receive the Holy Spirit”. He was showing them, and us here today, that all of our work and labor for the Lord, to do the right thing, and to spread the good news of His glory and His kingdom, and His great salvation, requires the life of Christ in our life. We must be renewed day by day. “Come, O Breath and breathe on these slain that they might live.” “Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!” (Ezekiel 37: 9-11) Shall these bones live? Yes, they shall by the power of the Spirit. And we shall live and flourish spiritually as the resurrection life of Christ comes anew and afresh to us, time and again. For Christ’s life is our life, and when He

comes to our souls He brings peace and joy when He shows us His good purpose to have us preach the gospel to the lost.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> – Christ brings with Him proof to the unbelieving among His apostles.**

You recall doubting Thomas. He was so unbelieving that he did not stay with the rest of the apostles after the crucifixion. He went apart by himself to weep and mourn over the loss of his Savior and the loss of Christ's cause. But where had his faith and hope gone? Jesus had told them in John 14: 3 that He was going to go and prepare a place for them, and He would come again and receive them to Himself; that where He was, there also they would be. "And where He was going they knew, and the way they knew." Thomas was the one who had said to the Lord in John 14: 5 – "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and so how can we know the way?" Jesus had said to Him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father except through Me." But still Thomas was confused. And so when he saw Jesus die on the cross, he felt like he could never believe in something like His coming back again. He had even heard the report of Mary Magdalene who told them that He was alive. And when the other disciples didn't believe, he found he could not believe either. He went away to his own home. And the disciples came to him later and said to him, "We have seen the Lord." But, so great was His unbelief that he said, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." And he didn't go to meet with the apostles on that night of Christ's resurrection, and thus he was not there when Christ came and revealed Himself to them.

Now, let us remember that this same apostle had heard that Jesus would rise again before Jesus ever went to the cross. And he heard Christ say this numerous times, and yet he allowed himself to fall into this great unbelief. He had heard along with the other disciples what is written in Matthew 16: 21 – "From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day." It was not as though he was a false Christian; he was a true believer. But he let himself fall into that unbelieving state. He did not remember all of the promises of Christ, to take heed to them, and believe them, and thus he fell into this doubting state. Let us take care that we do not do the same, for it can happen to any believer given the right circumstances. But let us see that after 8 days he was persuaded that he should come back and be with the disciples once again. So he came, and the doors were shut, and Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them once again, "Peace to you!"

Now I want you to notice how Jesus did not shun Thomas, but He immediately addressed him with words which answered the very statement that Thomas had spoken; not in the Lord's hearing, but in the hearing of the other disciples. This ought to show us something that it is very important that we remember. The Lord hears every word that we speak, even when we are not in His immediate physical proximity. The Lord is presently at the right hand of the Father on high, and yet He hears every word that you say. And for Thomas (who was a believer who had fallen into great unbelief) this meant that Jesus would prove Himself alive to him using the very words that he had used, to say that he would not believe unless he could see the print of the nails, put his finger into the print of the nails, and put his hand into His side. And the Lord commands him to do it all. Oh, the patience and kindness of the Risen Christ! He did not shun Thomas, He proved Himself to him. And He will do the same with us when we fall into unbelief as well. "If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself."

"Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side." "Do not be unbelieving, but believing." And Thomas answered, "My Lord and my God!" Let me ask you whether you as a believer need something proved to you about Christ's ability to prove Himself to you; something that is really bothering you, so much so, that you are tempted not to come to church anymore. Let me say to you from this passage, that Jesus is well able to prove Himself to you, and remember His beatitude here: "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed." "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believed." Do not be unbelieving but rejoice at the power of our Christ. He will prove himself to every sincere seeker, and every doubting saint.

