

SERMON TEXT: John 20:19-23 (Mark 16:9-18; Luke 24:36-49)

Vs. 19 - On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “**Peace be with you!**”

Vs. 20 - After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

Vs. 21 - Again Jesus said, “**Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.**”

Vs. 22 - And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.

Vs. 23 - If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

GREETING: Jesus says: “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” (John 14:27 – NIV)

Do you know anyone, that after you see that person and you greet them, you then ask them:

“How Is Life? How are you doing?”

And they say – **Fine. I am doing great! With a smile on their face.** But as you heard this reply, you know that this individual, whether it be a male or female, whether the individual is a longtime friend or a recent acquaintance – you know that their life is a mess.

You know that they are a nervous wreck, and their life is a train wreck. The person struggles with paying the bills. The individual is recently divorced - the kids despise them because their kids blame them for the divorce, the individual works at a job that she or he actually hates, there is a list of things that need to be repaired at home, the car is junk, and so this individual is fearful, lonely, ashamed, feeling guilty, and in reality, has NO peace even though they said with a smile on their face. “*I am fine! I am doing great!*”

The only thing that this person thinks about is running away from it all, hiding from the world and everyone in it, and starting over and REALLY LIVING their Life!

-Maybe you are not this person, but instead you are getting on in years, Your health is failing, and you want to REALLY LIVE LIFE!

- Or perhaps you are in a mid-life crisis, and despite some successes, you want to REALLY LIVE LIFE!

- Or maybe you are just getting started in life after graduating from High school or college and now you are going to REALLY LIVE LIFE!

Regardless of where you are in life, are there ever any times when you feel fearful or uncertain or like life is at a dead end?

In our Sermon text for today, Resurrection Sunday, we see the disciples of Jesus fearful. **Vs. 19 - On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews,**

It was the first day of the week – Sunday.

The disciples of Jesus were afraid of the Jews, and so they locked themselves in a house (John 20:26).

They had spent three years watching and listening to Jesus as Jesus traveled throughout the land of Israel, and the disciples saw Jesus perform miracles and they heard Him preach some really moving and dynamic sermons. Jesus spoke and preached like no one else. Jesus spoke with authority (Mk. 1:22, Matt. 7:28).

Then despite the incredible miracles that Jesus performed, the disciples – Peter – James & John saw Jesus being arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, and led away like a common criminal, and then Jesus was crucified, dead and buried.

The death of Jesus was what the Jewish Religious leaders wanted (Lk. 22:2), and they succeeded!

As the disciples were behind locked doors they were in the midst of grieving the death of a loved one.

Have you ever grieved the death of a loved one? Perhaps you still are grieving?

The disciples were afraid. The disciples were acting like Jesus was dead, because that is what they thought.

The disciples had seen the empty tomb, they had heard the reports of the women who had seen Jesus, yet they were struggling emotionally and spiritually, and they were afraid of the Jewish Religious leaders who had manipulated things to have Jesus crucified. (Of course, remember that Jesus being crucified was all part of God's plan of salvation for mankind.)

It is during this time of fear, that the Lord Jesus appears to His disciples behind the locked doors and greets them with words of comfort: PEACE BE WITH YOU!

In the Gospel of Luke we learn that:

Luke:24:37-43 - They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. 38 He said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? 39 Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.”

40 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. 41 And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate it in their presence.”

After Jesus demonstrates that He is Alive and well, Jesus then gives the disciples their marching orders. Jesus gives them direction and purpose for their lives which they thought were over. Jesus says:

Vs. 21 - Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”

Vs. 22 - And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.

Vs. 23 - If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

Go and preach the Word. Spread the message that Jesus is Risen from the Dead!
Tell people, "Their sins are forgiven!"
Tell people that they have Eternal Life in Heaven because Jesus is Risen Indeed!

Those of you who are here today and those who are listening to this sermon on the website, I ask you:

Are you living your life as though Jesus is DEAD? Are you living life only for the here and now?

Are you trapped in a life that seems like it is a dead end, with its mounting aches and pains, with deteriorating bodies and failing memories, with savings accounts that are never sufficient, with relationships that are not what you would like?

Jesus basically says: GET GOING!

Embrace the work that Jesus has given to His disciples and that He has passed on to you.

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Proclaim the forgiveness of sins and Life Everlasting in Heaven which is yours in Christ Jesus.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is what REALLY makes Life Living here and now, and forever in heaven. AMEN

THEME: Life Giving Hands – (Peace Be With You.)