

Sunday Sermon: April 15, 2018

Sermon Text: Luke 24:36-39

Sermon Theme: Jesus Brings:
1. Peace
2. Proof
3. Power

³⁶ While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."

³⁷ 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.

⁴⁴ He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

What kind of Savior is Jesus? What kind of gifts and blessings does he bring to his followers and believers here on earth? These are very important questions because the answers to these questions will shape the God and Savior we worship. The answers to these questions will be what we expect to receive from our Savior.

Some say that Jesus is a Savior from disease, illness, personal problems and financial difficulties. They say that Jesus is a Savior who doesn't want us to have any earthly problems. They say if you believe in Jesus enough and have enough faith, we will be healthy, happy, well fed and well blessed. Is that the kind of Savior Jesus is? Is he here to bring us only earthly blessings like money, health and happiness?

Others say that Jesus is a Savior because he was a great teacher. He taught us right and wrong and how to please God by following God's rules. He is a great teacher, not because he has saved us himself, instead he shows us the way to be saved. If we follow those rules and laws, then we will be saved. Is this the kind of Savior Jesus is? A Savior who brings us gifts of rules, lessons, morals and ethics?

What kind of Savior do we have and what kind of blessings does he bring? Jesus shows us what kind of Savior he is and what his gifts are during this appearance to the disciples. As we look at what Jesus gives to them, we will also see what he brings to us. We will see that Jesus brings the gifts of peace, proof and power.

The followers of Jesus had had a bad weekend. They had deserted Jesus on Thursday, they had watched helplessly as he was tried, convicted and put to death on Friday, mourned him on Saturday, and then had been upset by the strange news that the tomb was empty. As they hide in the locked room this news of the empty tomb was really the most disturbing news they had heard. It filled them with fear

The women had come to them and told them the tomb was empty and that Jesus had appeared to them very much alive. Peter and John had run to the tomb and had returned with the news that the tomb was empty, Jesus was not there, just as they said.

As the day wore on their heads were spinning with this news. You can imagine their conversations went from one extreme to another. They went from joy and gladness the tomb is empty he must be risen, to the depths of despair, he not there, where did he go?

Sometime during that day, Jesus had appeared to Peter adding to their amazement, wonder and fear. What could this mean for them? Are these people mad with grief and what if it is true? Where is Jesus right now?

Then as evening falls, Cleopas and his friend knock excitedly at the door. They have seen Jesus too as they walked home to Emmaus. They had come back to Jerusalem to tell the disciples what they have seen and how they now understood all that had happened, because Jesus had explained it to them.

There was no peace in this room. There was turmoil. Turmoil of minds that were trying to understand the facts that were before them. Turmoil with hearts that were trying to grasp not only the answers to the questions that were before them, but also the questions themselves.

It is in the midst of this frazzle, confusion and frustration that Jesus appears and says, "Peace be with you."

Their reaction to Jesus' appearance is the opposite peace. The level of stress and anxiety goes even higher. There is no peace that the Savior is standing there they fear it is a ghost that has appeared to them.

The disciples had a lack of faith and trust in the promises that Jesus had made before he suffered and died. They had trouble understanding Jesus' words that all these things MUST happen so that he could save the world. Then after they do, after he is handed over to the chief priests, after he suffers and dies, he will rise again as the Savior and Messiah.

Jesus didn't want his disciples to be afraid, to have this confusion and anxiety. Jesus wanted their hearts to be filled with peace that came from faith and trust in him. He brings them the peace they are lacking.

What peace are you lacking? What troubles your heart? What promises of Jesus do you have a hard time hearing and believing? Maybe you lack peace because you don't see the Lord's hand of blessing can and does extend to all the days of our life, even the latter days as we get older. Maybe you lack peace because you are troubled by fears surrounding income. Maybe you lack peace because there is another ache or pain. Maybe you lack peace because when you pray it doesn't seem like God is listening or answering that prayer. Maybe you lack peace because your life has more emphasis on you than on God. Maybe you lack peace because there is sin that troubles your conscience and your mind.

Jesus comes and brings peace. When you are ready to give up because it doesn't seem like your life is going in the direction that you want, Jesus comes and says, "Peace be with you." When you are worn out by the frustrations and anxieties of life, Jesus comes and says, "Peace be with you." When you are upset because the answers you are looking for just don't seem to be there, Jesus comes to us and says, "Peace be with you." When we have a sin that we continue to struggle with, or that continues to bother us, Jesus comes and says, "Peace be with you."

Jesus didn't come to the disciples with a peace that they could find inside themselves. Jesus came and brought them peace. This peace of heart, mind and soul comes from faith which trusts in him. Jesus came to give them peace and he did this by giving them proof of his resurrection.

It was convincing proof, wasn't it? He not invites them to look at him and touch him to make sure he is real. When that doesn't even convince them, Jesus does something that no ghost would do. He asks them for something to eat and he eats the fish that they bring to him.

The proof of their peace was the resurrection of Jesus. There peace was not a message sent from heaven by an angel, a sign in the stars, or a new tablet unearthed in the desert. Jesus showed them they could have peace of heart and strength of faith in him because he was risen, the proof was standing right in front of them

When we lack faith and the peace that comes from faith, Jesus makes us an invitation too. He invites us to come to him for proof of his promises of body and soul. He invites us to come to him when our hearts are troubled, when our lives are out of control, or when we have turned our backs on him. He invites us to come to meet him in his Word and to experience his grace and mercy through his acts of love to sinners like us, to experience his promise and preservation shown through his miracles in the Old and New Testament, and to experience the peace of forgiveness which he won for us through his suffering and death.

Our Savior invites us to built up in faith as we sit in his house and hear the Gospel in the Word. He invites to experience the Gospel in a real and personal way as we come to his table to partake of his body and blood for our forgiveness and as we see sins forgiven through the waters Baptism.

Jesus came to the disciples and brought peace to their confused minds. He brought that peace through the proof of his resurrected body. Once their faith had been restored, he also blessed them with power through the Holy Spirit.

The peace and proof of Jesus overcame their fears, but there was more to learn. Up to now, the faith of the disciples had been somewhat incomplete. They trusted in Jesus very much as a Master and Teacher, but

their faith was not nearly as strong in Jesus as their Savior from sin, death and devil. They had all of these pieces of the plan of salvation. They had all the prophecies of the Old Testament, they had the teachings of Jesus, they had seen Jesus' miracles, the Last Supper, the suffering, death and resurrection, but they didn't know how they all fit together or what kind of picture they were supposed to make?

Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus opens their minds so that they understand the promise of the Messiah and how he had fulfilled all of the Old Testament Laws, prophecies and promises. They are given the gift of power by the Holy Spirit so that they can understand. They now understand how all the pieces of the plan of salvation fit together into the picture of God's grace and mercy for sinful people. They now see how Jesus is the Messiah, the Savior, who takes away the sins of the world and brings eternal life to all who believe.

Jesus comes to them and brings them the gifts of peace, proof and power in order to build in them a faith with not only trusted, but also clung to him for forgiveness and eternal life.

This is also what Jesus does for us. He promises that as we hear his Gospel, the Holy Spirit will work through it. The Gospel is powerful and will not go away empty, we will be built up in faith. We will also have that power through the Holy Spirit to understand what Jesus has done for us. Through faith, Jesus gives us the powerful gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation that he won.

Jesus came to the disciples to give them some special gifts. He brought them peace, he brought them proof and he gave them power. He does the same for us in his Word. May we always stand firm in faith with the peace of Jesus calming our hearts and minds. May we cling to the proof of our salvation in the resurrection of Christ and may we trust in the power of God through the Holy Spirit which works faith in our hearts and grants eternal life to us now and forever. Amen