

19 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" 20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

24 Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"

27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

28 Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

29 Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

30 Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are written that you may believe [\[b\]](#) that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

What are you going to do now?

"You've just won the Super Bowl, what are you going to do now?" That question is followed up by the famous answer, "I'm going to Disneyland." Isn't that ridiculous? Someone who has just reached the peak of performance, their sport, maybe even their life and now the only thing left to do in this world is Disneyland. I guess it really is a small world after all. But then what? What does one do after Disney?

If all we have to look forward to in this life is Disney then I don't have a whole lot of hope for you. But I imagine the disciples had the same question in mind when the reporters rushed them after the resurrection, "You're Master has just risen from the dead, what are you going to do now?" They've reached the peak of Jesus' performance, they've seen him in all of his glory, - so when they are asked, "What are you going to do now?" It

looks like they shrug their shoulders and hide in their hotel room. They look like losers even though Jesus has just won.

To be honest that's often how we feel within the walls of the church. Someone dies. Morale loses ground. Christians face new pressure and maybe persecution and suddenly it's the end of the world. Do you ever feel like the disciples, confused, afraid, and only wanting to return home and hide? How do you feel when the world seems to be falling apart and you can't make sense of life. Or maybe life has gone so well that the only thing left for you to do is go to Disney and be disappointed. What are you going to do now?

We know what the disciples are doing. Even after the women had brought them the news of Jesus rising from the dead. Even after Peter came back telling them all that he had seen. They still didn't understand. The tomb is empty the stone has been rolled away and placed in front of their own door. But, Jesus has a habit of barging in on his people. He comes looking for champagne, a victory celebration, or at the very least cake and ice cream. Instead he finds a pity party and brings peace to pathetic people. Jesus says, *"Peace be with you! As the father sent me so I am sending you."* Jesus calls commissions and equips as he breathes on them and says, "Receive the Holy Spirit." They are given the authority to forgive sin or to withhold forgiveness.

That's great news. Jesus won. They should be celebrating. Think about what that means. They have one on their side that can't be killed. He's raised people from the dead. He's multiplied loaves and fishes. He's rebuked wind and waves. There isn't a single thing that he can't control. It's over. The pressure is off. That question, "What are you going to do now?" Should have been met with the response of, "Take over the world." But One week later they haven't moved, same house, same doors, same situation, nothing changed. It doesn't seem as if they believe at all. In fact it's interesting that in the following verses they go fishing. The same peace and quiet of knowing that the doors are locked and alarm is set. This is world peace. That's not exactly the kind of Peace Jesus had in mind.

The peace he brings is more than just world peace. This idea of peace carries with it completeness like a sponge of contentment being fully saturated. You arrived at the peak of performance there is nothing more to do. There is nothing more you need, nothing more you want, because you are complete. The best.

That's the peace we have. The world's greatest enemy has been defeated. Jesus has risen from the dead. So where is the champagne? Where is the cake and ice cream? And where do we go from here? Here we are one week after Easter and still we are tempted to hide from the world. It's a scary place. Even when we hide behind locked doors and secure

peace for ourselves in this world, even if we go to Disney on a daily basis our bodies break down, our relationships are strained, our homes fall apart, marriages are broken, and our dreams look like failures. Life offers no peace. Hell has broken loose stalking us like a roaring lion. Sin works in us, around us, and through us as we look from the problems of the past, present, and future.

Troubles surround us but if God can't protect us, if God isn't more powerful than they are, if he can't deliver us from them, or use them for our good then we have reason to worry, to lock doors and wait for his return. Like the disciples we too may foolishly forget who is in control, who has won, and what that means for us. But then God has a habit of barging in. He wants to be with us. He wants us to focus on him even in our doubts and unbelief. He comes through the doors we lock. He comes to us and gives us "peace" in the middle of fear, when we don't even deserve it. Then he calls, commissions, and equips each of us to share that peace with others. We provide a loving community of Christians because we want to gather together.

But another week goes by and like the disciples - we may be still afraid. We have not done as we've been told. We have not acted as God intends. What are we going to do now? Jesus barges in again and announces an amazing message. Those very same words, "Peace be with you." Jesus appears to one who doesn't believe.

Jesus doesn't scold Thomas or berate him for not believing. He isn't shaking his finger and shouting, "Shame on you!" But Jesus gives Thomas what he needs. *"Touch the wounds. Put your finger in my side. Stop unbelieving and believe. Let me give you what you've asked for."* Thomas then comes out looking like the hero of the moment as he confesses, *"My Lord and my God!"* Thomas didn't wait around a week behind locked doors depressed after seeing Jesus. He believed. He knew. He confessed.

He had to know that it really was Jesus or else he shouldn't believe. It had to be Jesus or there was no peace, no victory, nothing to celebrate. He wasn't about to fool himself and others into believing a lie.

And then Jesus speaks to us. *"Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."* That's us. We have not had the opportunity to put our fingers in his wounds but we have multiple witnesses, multiple books, and one who would not believe unless he had seen with his own eyes and touched with his own hands. Thank God for Thomas. I have not seen but he did. We stand on what

they saw. They were willing to give up life for one who came back, forgave sin, and brought peace.

At this point we reach the peak of John's Gospel, *"These words are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."*

What's next? John tells us, "Life." Jesus barges in. Jesus shows up when we are hiding behind locked doors. He arrives unexpected, uninvited, and often unwanted and he brings peace. He gives us the Gospel message that the horrible things we've done in fear are forgiven. That it doesn't matter where you've been or what you've done you have peace with God and life in his name.

Jesus calls, equips you with all that you need to open doors and bring life and light to this world. That's the work of the church because you are the church. You are the gathering of believers. You have received the Holy Spirit. You are equipped with the keys of the church. You are able to forgive sin but you are also called to bind sin.

Sometimes the Word hurts. Unfortunately, there are people who do not want to believe they are sinful and need a Savior. To those who stand on their own work, years of service, we must tell them that, in rejecting their Savior, they are rejecting their salvation. Their sins remain. There is no peace. There is no life. But when we speak words of forgiveness the Holy Spirit speaks through us. That is the message you are equipped to proclaim. You can breathe life to those around you by proclaiming peace.

What's next? There is no need for you to lock yourself in a closet and hide in fear. You have life even when life is falling apart. When the reporters rush out you can respond, "I'm going to Disneyland," though the life God gives is much greater than any small world. Jesus won. Jesus has become the World's Redeemer. What are you going to do now?

Life, as we live in peace knowing that our God lives, rules, reigns. Live in the peace of Christ and even if you find yourself in a closet of fear - week after week, Jesus still comes back and points us to his hands and his feet. What's next? Whatever happens I'm going to heaven because of what Jesus has done. Amen