

John 20:19-31

Easter 2; April 19, 2020

<sup>19</sup> 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!" <sup>20</sup> After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

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

### Jesus Appears to Thomas

<sup>24</sup> Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> 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."

<sup>26</sup> 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!" <sup>27</sup> 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."

<sup>28</sup> Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

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

### The Purpose of John's Gospel

<sup>30</sup> Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. <sup>31</sup> But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

*There has been a change of plans.* That would be an understatement, wouldn't it? I also have a confession to make. Last Monday, I was a little grumpy at times. It wasn't because we had just celebrated the strangest Easter ever. It wasn't because we weren't able to have Easter Breakfast at church. It wasn't that I missed getting up at 3:30 – 4:00 am on Easter Sunday morning. I was feeling a little sorry for myself because I wasn't supposed to be here on Monday. I was supposed to be on a plane heading to sunny California. We had plans to go and visit our son and his wife. We had plans to do a little camping while we were going to be there. We had plans to get away after a normally busy season of Lent and Holy week and before things are going to pick up for me at church in the upcoming months. *But.... There has been a change of plans.* We didn't go to California. We didn't get away. That's probably why I felt a little sorry for myself this past week. Plans changed.

I'm sure that I am not alone in my thinking. I'm going to bet that many of you had plans changed. There were Easter dinners that were planned, but weren't made. You were looking forward to get together with your families. But with the *Safer at Home* Order by Governor Evers, no one could come over and you couldn't go over there either. Maybe you were planning to go for a hike in a State park, if the weather got nice. Maybe you even had plans to go on vacation this past week as well, but now your plans changed. *There has been a change of plans.*

This morning we begin a new sermon series that takes a look at the question: **What do we do when our plans fall through?** Today we see what happens "**when we're locked in a room.**"

In our Gospel Lesson today, we see Jesus' disciples locked in a room. I can't imagine how afraid they were; how confused they must have felt. They had plans for Jesus. After all, he was supposed to be the one that was going to restore the kingdom to Israel. He was supposed to bring back the *Glory Days*. You know how that feels. That feeling that you have when you might say... *If only things could be like what they used to be like*. They had plans for themselves. They were going to be sitting on his left and his right ruling with Jesus. Then Good Friday happened.

There they sat behind locked doors, afraid and confused. Following the crucifixion of Jesus, the disciples went into a self-preservation mode. For them, a "*Safer at Home*" meant "*Safer at Home with every door locked up tight.*" They were afraid of the Jewish leaders. If they crucified Jesus, what would stop the Jewish leaders from killing them? They were afraid for their lives behind locked doors.

We might not have to worry that we might be crucified like Jesus. But I think we can relate to what it feels like being behind locked doors. This new virus is an enemy that we can't see. There are people, and maybe you are one of them, who are afraid to go outside of your home. People are afraid of unlocking those doors. Think of how many commercials that are on TV that talk about how you can get their product without meeting face to face. You can get everything from a new car to groceries without having direct contact with anyone. There is a reason that they are making those kinds of commercials. They know just how afraid people are today. Perhaps, rightfully so. They know just how much we fear death, and we are willing to try anything to avoid it.

I can't help but wonder if the Jewish leaders were also afraid on that first Easter. They thought that maybe they had finally gotten rid of this Jesus, who threatened everything that they hung on to. Now reports come to them that say that Jesus may not be dead. The guards at the tomb begin to tell what happened at the tomb that morning. That's not what the Jewish leaders wanted to hear. So, they try to cover up the story of the guards by paying them off. Perhaps, they feared – what happens if it is true? What if Jesus is actually alive?

That first Easter didn't just change the plans of the disciples, the guards, and the Jewish leaders. It changed the devil's plan. The plans of Satan were crushed under the heel of Jesus. Jesus' resurrection tells the whole world that Satan's plans were changed. The sins of mankind had been placed on Jesus. There on that cross he made the payment that the Father had demanded. There was no reason for them to be locked behind closed doors. There is no reason for us to live our lives in fear as we live behind locked doors. The empty tomb proves that all of the devil's plans have failed.

That victory of Jesus brings us peace. God did not want fear to drive the hearts of people. Instead of fear, he gives peace. Look at the first words that Jesus spoke to his disciples when he appeared to them as they were in locked doors. "**Peace be with you!**" There were so many things that Jesus could have said to those scared and confused disciples. Jesus would have had every right to have done so. But he stands in front of them and says: "**Peace be with you.**" I can't imagine how those disciples must have felt. There behind those locked doors, we see a Savior who brings peace.

That's what Jesus wants to bring to you – his peace. You might have fear in your hearts because your plans have changed. You may have anger in your hearts because your plans have changed. You may be confused about how things are going for you right now in your life. None of this stuff makes any sense. Yet, Jesus says to you: **Peace!** For the disciples as they sat behind locked doors, it felt like their plans were all falling apart. In reality, they weren't falling apart. They were all coming together. They were all coming together in Jesus.

There are so many plans of ours that have changed from a month ago. As I sit here in front of a camera, there is no one here in front of me. It's the strangest thing. Perhaps, you feel the same as you sit at home on your couch, or in your car, or in your locked house. As you sit there in fear, confusion, and maybe even anger, remember these words of Jesus: "**Peace be with you.**" As we feel like we are sitting there locked in a room, we have a Savior who has set us free.

We'll get away to California later this summer. It might be a little hotter in July rather than April. There will come a time where most people won't have to wear masks in stores. Families will once again be able to have gatherings. Laughter will once again fill our ears. Remember this as, our plans may seem to change, the words of Jesus remain the same: "**Peace be with you!**" Amen.