

Bible reading John 20:19-31

Hymn 710- Singing-The Faith-*Peace Perfect Peace*

John 20:19-31

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

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.”

Jesus Appears to Thomas

²⁴ Now Thomas (also known as Didymus^[a]), 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.”

The Purpose of John’s Gospel

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.

New International Version (NIV)

Reflection

The text for this week will help us to reflect on how it feels to be fearful, to be hurt and to forgive. John's gospel says the disciples were together locked in doors for fear of the Jewish leaders who were persecuting Christians soon after the death of Christ. For a moment I paused. Does this not resonate with the time we are living in- a time of lockdown -stay at home for fear of the invisible force of COVID 19. A time we are struggling and fearing for our lives, questioning our chances of survival against such a powerful force. The disciples were wondering what chance they had against the powerful force of the Jewish leaders who had crucified Christ. Their hope was shattered feeling hopeless and helpless on what would happen next. Do we not feel hopeless and helpless when we hear how NHS is struggling with the situation and the number of people dying daily? Our fear resonates with that of the disciples, but the bible says Christ appeared amidst their fear, hopelessness and helplessness saying "peace be with you". I personally feel Christ died a disappointed man when he was rejected by his disciples especially Peter his beloved disciple. Instead of Christ interrogating his disciples he appears unexpectedly to bless them- that's all they needed instead of questions. Jesus did not ask "Why, why, why" but blessed them despite his disappointment. This is the

power of the Cross. It is about peace and forgiveness, that is all we need at a time as this is to let go and forgive those who wronged us and forgive ourselves from the regrets that we may carry for things that we could have done better. Jesus has blessed us with *Peace perfect peace* hence we must bless others with the same peace. Hallelujah! 🙏🙏

Prayer

Dear God we thank you for the precious gift of your son Jesus Christ, who came to bless this world and not to condemn it. Christ who came to die for our sins yet without sin. Help us God to change our ways and enable us to be channels of your peace and bless others instead of condemning them at a time as this. We continue to pray for all at the front line so that you may continue to cover them with the mask of the Holy Spirit. AMEN 🙏🙏

*Prepared by **Rev Mary Sachikonye Methodist Minister for (Mile Cross, Costessey, Trinity Thorpe Marriott, Hosford and Drayton) for a time as this. We are a church without walls. We should therefore, continue to proclaim the good news. I will be sending **Words of Hope** every week so that we may continue to nourish our spirits and continue to live in HOPE!***