

John 20:19-31 – April 15, 2012
Resurrection Peace

Introduction: The words "Oh, I'm really not sure..." can get us out of just about anything. When we inject some uncertainty instead of committing to something, we think we're letting others down peacefully instead of turning them down outright. We find uncertainty and doubt in our Gospel reading for today.

I. Doubts at _____

- a. Mary Magdalene encountered doubt early, on that first Easter morning.
- b. Speaking to whom she mistook for the gardener, she instead saw Jesus.

"Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away" (John 20:15).

- c. Her doubts were removed as He called her by name and told her what would soon take place. She left to announce this good news to the disciples.

II. Doubts in _____

- a. Jesus then appeared to the disciples in the midst of their fear and doubt.
- b. He enters the room even though it was locked, and He brings them peace.

"Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so, I am sending you" (John 20:21).

- c. Thomas was not around to witness this amazing event, and instead of our standard "Oh, I'm really not sure..." he announced his doubt boldly.

"Unless I see in His hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into His side, I will never believe" (John 20:25b).

III. Doubts at _____

- a. As sinners living in a sinful world, there are many attacks that we fall victim to and they bring doubt into our hearts and minds.
- b. While we often side-step the issue when we want to get out of something with another person, we are often incredibly bold in our doubt and sins against the God who created us and loves us.
- c. By Word and sacrament, God calls us by name, removes our doubts, and makes us His forgiven and believing children. This promise does not depend on us, but rather on God's work alone!

Conclusion: As we share the resurrection peace of Christ, as we interact with the people around us, may we stay away from a wishy-washy, doubt-laced "Oh, I'm really not sure..." attitude and instead confess boldly with Thomas and the other disciples that Jesus Christ is "[our] Lord and [our] God."

GOING DEEPER

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OPEN: How do you respond when someone wants a definitive answer from you? Do you use doubt and uncertainty in your interactions with others, in the hopes of avoiding conflict?

DIG:

1. Review John 20:19-31
 - A. Why is there a need for peace in the locked room before Jesus appears?
 - B. What peace do you see after Jesus appears?
 - C. How does Jesus' entry into this room weigh in on the situation?
 - D. What are Jesus' closing words to the disciples (vv. 22-23)? What does this have to do with the peace He brings them? What does this have to do with us today?

2. Examine how Mary Magdalene responds at the empty tomb (v. 11) and how Thomas responds to the news of Jesus' appearance, from his fellow disciples (v. 25).
 - A. What do you think of Mary's response?
 - B. What do you think of Thomas's response?
 - C. Have you ever had doubts as strong as these? What was the situation?
 - D. Note how boldly Thomas expresses his doubt. What do you think contributed to this?

3. Examine how Jesus confronts Thomas's doubts (vv. 26-27).
 - A. What are the first words Jesus speaks to Thomas?
 - B. What does Jesus' response show about who He is?
 - C. In what way does Jesus shoot down the notion of "seeing is believing" here?
 - D. How does John's conclusion to this account help us understand Jesus further?

REFLECT:

1. In what areas of your life do you need the peace Jesus brings?
2. What doubts or questions are you facing right now?
3. What certainties can you cling to as you continue to live in an evidence demanding, doubt-filled culture?

Questions or comments?

Please contact Pastor Jack at

814-4252 x 213 or jgilbert@carmellutheran.org