John 20.19-end

The Gospel is taken from **John Chapter 20 beginning at verse 19** so hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to **John**.

Response: "**Glory to you O Lord"**.

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

19 When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' **20** After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. **21** Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' **22** When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. **23** If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'

Jesus and Thomas

24 But Thomas (who was called the Twin[c]), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. **25** So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.'

26 A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ **27** Then he said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.’ **28** Thomas answered him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ **29** Jesus said to him, ‘Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.’

The Purpose of This Book

30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. **31** But these are written so that you may come to believe[d] that Jesus is the Messiah,[e] the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

This is the Gospel of the Lord. Response: Praise to You O Christ.

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of all our hearts be acceptable in your sight,
O Lord, our strength and our redeemer. **Amen.**

Please be seated. **(Pause)**

Good morning Church and those on Zoom.

I hope you are all well today 😊

There are moments in life when the doors of our hearts and minds slowly swing shut.

Sometimes fear closes them. Sometimes grief, disappointment, or exhaustion does. Sometimes the sheer weight of life causes us to withdraw—to retreat to a place where we hope nothing else can reach us.

That is where we find the disciples in John 20.

The first Easter day has come, but the disciples are not celebrating; they are hiding.

John tells us they are behind locked doors “for fear.”

They are afraid of what has happened, afraid of what might happen, and perhaps most of all, afraid that their hopes in Jesus have collapsed.

And into that place of fear, Jesus comes.

He doesn’t knock. He doesn’t wait for them to pull themselves together.

He simply appears among them, and His first words are:
“Peace be with you.”

These simple words carry enormous grace.

Jesus does not enter the room with a lecture.

He does not remind them how they fled in His time of need.

He does not point out their failures or their doubts.

Instead, He brings peace—a peace strong enough to unlock fear, steady trembling hearts, and breathe hope into weary souls.

I just love that so let me repeat it, “He brings peace—a peace strong enough to unlock fear, steady trembling hearts, and breathe hope into weary souls.”

I hope that gives us a gentle reminder to treat each other with grace when we think things aren’t going our way and maybe we are weary thinking we fought the fight.

1. **Jesus Meets Us Where We Are—Not Where We Think We Ought to Be**

One of the most comforting truths in this passage is that Jesus steps right into the disciples' fear.

The doors are locked, but that does not keep Him out.

The disciples are hiding, but He still finds them.

Their faith is fragile, but His love is not.

And that is exactly how Jesus comes to us.

He comes into hospital rooms, into sleepless nights, into anxious thoughts and lonely prayers.

He comes when we are unsure of the next step, or when life feels too heavy to carry alone.

He comes not because we have earned it, but because He loves us.

If your heart feels locked today—if there are places in your life you have quietly closed off—know this: Jesus is not kept out by locked doors.

He gently steps into the spaces we guard the most and speaks peace where we need it most.

2. **Jesus Shows His Wounds to a Wounded People**

After speaking peace, Jesus shows the disciples His hands and His side.

It is a tender moment.

He does not hide the marks of suffering; He reveals them.

But why? **(Pause)**
Because His wounds are now signs of healing, not defeat.

They tell the story of a God who has entered the depths of human pain—and overcome it.

They remind us that nothing we carry is foreign to Him: not heartbreak, not betrayal, not fear, not death itself.

When the disciples see His wounds, they rejoice.

In His scars, they see love strong enough to save them.

And the same is true for us.

The risen Jesus does not turn away from our wounds—whether emotional, physical, or spiritual.

He meets us in them with compassion, understanding, and hope. The places we feel most fragile are often the very places His grace arrives most powerfully.

3. **Jesus Breathes His Spirit Into Our Weakness**

Jesus then says something extraordinary:
"As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

At first glance, it feels overwhelming.

These are the same disciples who ran away, who doubted, who hid behind locked doors.

And yet Jesus entrusts His mission to them.

He entrusts it to people who are still learning, still hurting, still growing.

But before He sends them, He breathes on them:
"Receive the Holy Spirit."

This is such a gentle act.

Jesus does not push them out the door. He does not demand strength they do not have. He breathes life into them. He fills the space of their weakness with His Spirit.

He equips them for what He asks of them.

In the same way, Jesus never calls us to anything without giving us the grace to live it out.

He breathes courage into fear, strength into weakness, comfort into sorrow, and hope into uncertainty.

We are not sent alone.

We are sent with His Spirit alive in us.

4. **Jesus Is Tender With Thomas—and Tender With Our Doubt**

Then we come to Thomas.

Thomas misses the first appearance of Jesus, and when the others tell him the news, he cannot bring himself to believe.

He is honest about his doubts. He wants to see Jesus for himself. And many of us can understand that longing.

A week later, Jesus appears again—not just for the group, but for Thomas.

He speaks peace again. And then, with incredible gentleness, He invites Thomas to touch the wounds, to see for himself, to bring his questions right to the heart of Christ.

Jesus does not shame him. He does not scold him. He meets him with compassion.

Thomas responds with one of the clearest confessions of faith in all Scripture:

"**My Lord and my God**!"

This is the beauty of Jesus: He welcomes honest doubts and uses them as stepping stones to deeper faith.

He holds our questions, our uncertainties, and our struggles with tenderness.

If you have ever felt like Thomas—longing for assurance or clarity—know that Jesus meets such hearts with kindness, not condemnation.

5**. Jesus Blesses Those Who Walk by Faith Today**

Jesus then speaks a blessing that reaches across the centuries to us: "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

That blessing is for you. For your faith journey. For the days when believing feels easy and the days when it feels like a quiet, trembling choice. Jesus sees your faith. He honours it. He blesses it.

John finishes the chapter by telling us why he wrote these words: "…so that you may believe…and that by believing you may have life in His name."

Life—deep, abundant, peace-giving life—is the gift of the risen Christ.

Conclusion: The Risen Jesus Still Stands Among Us

John 20 is not just a story about what happened long ago. It is a story about what Jesus still does today.

He steps into fear and speaks peace.
He shows His wounds to our wounds.
He breathes His Spirit into our weakness.
He meets our doubts with gentleness.
He blesses our trust, however small it may feel.

Wherever you find yourself today—joyful, anxious, weary, hopeful—the risen Jesus comes to stand with you.

His peace is for you.

His Spirit is for you.

His blessing is for you.
And His presence is with you, even behind closed doors.

Peace be with you and as we close, I encourage you to close your eyes for a few moments and think about a part of your life or a relationship with someone that needs peace and just bring it to God.
(Pause)

I repeat this beautiful line that has spoken so deeply to me this morning, "**He brings peace—a peace strong enough to unlock fear, steady trembling hearts, and breathe hope into weary souls**."

- His peace is for you.
- His Spirit is for you.
- His blessing is for you.
- And His presence is with you, even behind closed doors where no one else sees our hurt and pain.

In the name of Jesus. **Amen**.

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