

April 7, 2024

Scripture Reading: John 20: 19-31

Theme: “Peace Be with You”

Introduction

The ability to translate into another world has been part of Christian belief marking the beginning of another life. One such experience is when Jesus translated from the physical world into the invisible world through death. For some reason, we may have experienced this ability in our dreams. In a dream, some people experience a new life while some experience a scare leaving a trail of devastation and emotional harm. Friends, did the disciples dream when Jesus appeared through the walls?

Exegesis and Application

Today is the second Sunday of Easter when Christendom continues to reflect on the events leading to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and the events after the resurrection. John brings the narrative about Jesus encountering his disciples after the resurrection. At this point, the disciples feared hostile treatment from the Jews. So, they decided to lock themselves in a secure room, wondering and scared for their lives. Friends, sometimes we experience similar situations when we are either confident or afraid because we are not aware of what is coming ahead.

In those moments of uncertainty, Jesus suddenly appeared before his disciples with the calming message: “Peace be with you.” Jesus understood the condition in which he left his disciples and how they would keep up with all that happened. Seeing Jesus smitten and crucified was a traumatizing experience for them. These

and others were enough to create a traumatic experience that caused fear in them. Jesus saw the anxiety and uncertainty that was going on in their lives. The room was tense and full of hopelessness and sorrow with some disciples like Thomas already for a moment missing in action.

Jesus appeared before the disciples to calm down the spirits and to bring hope again. The disciples needed someone to encourage them to stick in as Jesus promised. Like each one of us, a word from a friend, a relative, or even our pastor can be soothing to bring about healing when things go wrong. Indeed, like the disciples of Jesus, we too need each other to be reassured that things will be back on track again.

The disciples faced a paradox of the theology of discipleship; to keep a balance between holding on to the teaching of Jesus Christ and, at the same time to listen to their individual feelings and how they watched things happen. Friends, this is a test of being a disciple when Christianity is found in the position of advantage, yet we are to remain humble and faithful to the cause of humanity. In the spirit of humility, Jesus is present with us, speaking and praying for us. In everyday life experiences, we need the presence of Jesus to appear and to hold us through the path of the way. The good news of Easter is about the message of resurrection that brings with it the presence of Christ to the tables in our homes.

Thomas approached the resurrection message with skepticism rather than being instantaneously naive. Like Thomas, we are encouraged to come to Jesus with doubt to be exchanged with proven faith for peace to reign in our lives. Jesus encourages us to believe even when we have not seen it yet and does not push

anyone who shows dissatisfaction and doubt. Like Thomas, doubt is not unbelief but a process to reorient ourselves to what lies before us.

Thomas may at this time have intercepted classified information about people planning to stage fraud on the resurrection of Christ. Perhaps he was more cautious not to fall to the spiritual scammers, especially when Jesus appeared unusually through the walls into the room. At this point, Thomas's skepticism may have eased the sense of doubt and dissatisfaction with the other disciples too. Friends, Jesus appeared a second time and repeated, "Peace be with you" to calm down the undercurrent that might be boiling among the disciples.

Conclusion

We too may be experiencing the boiling undercurrent that Jesus needs to calm down today. The boiling current of being rejected by people, trouble from ill health, self-pity, and guilt. Friends, no matter the matter, Jesus Christ says peace be with you. Amen.

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