

Finding Peace in a crazy world

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4-7-24

John 20:19-29 (NLT) That Sunday evening the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them! "Peace be with you," he said. ²⁰ As he spoke, he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord! ²¹ Again he said, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you." ²² Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

Introduction: In one short weekend, everything had changed for the people sitting in this room. Their world had gone from one full of hope and excitement to one full of disappointment and confusion.

On Friday, their religious leaders tried and sentenced Jesus to death and used the Romans as a proxy to have him executed. Their hearts were broken by the betrayal of Judas and the execution of the one they were convinced was the Son of God.

Saturday must have been a difficult day for them. Because it was the Sabbath, they couldn't do any work to keep busy and get their minds off of the craziness that had transpired in their lives. It was supposed to be a day of rest, but I can only image how overwhelmed their thoughts are with the scenes of all the cruelty they saw and experienced, which are playing out like a horror movie in their heads over and over.

Then came Sunday morning. They are locked up in a room for fear of their lives when suddenly some of the women from their group, who had gone to the tomb, burst in, announcing with great excitement that Jesus was alive. Not only was he alive, but he told them to relay a message that he would meet them in Galilee.

Just when they thought things couldn't get any worse, Now the women were speaking craziness.

Luke 24:11-12 (NLT) The story sounded like nonsense to the men, so they didn't believe it. ¹² However, Peter jumped up and ran to the tomb to look. Stooping, he peered in and saw the empty linen wrappings; then he went home again, wondering what had happened.

The day was going by quickly, and now, according to John, they were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. All the key players are there, except for Thomas. For some reason, he was either running an errand or simply overtaken with sorrow that he wanted to be by himself.

Jesus knew ahead of time that all of this would play out. Little did they realize that, although the world had gone crazy and their inner world was in chaos, they would soon experience a peace that was beyond themselves. Peace that surpasses understanding and outward circumstances. Jesus had already spoken them about this peace the day before their world was turned upside down.

John 16:32-33 (NLT) But the time is coming indeed it's here now when you will be scattered, each one going his own way, leaving me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me.

³³ I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.

Jesus was preparing them for the darkest hour of their lives. The peace they had experienced while Jesus was with them was based on His physical presence, but the peace that they were going to experience would go beyond outward circumstances. It would be an inner peace whose source was the prince of peace himself.

The decree of the Prince of Peace

John 20:19b (NLT) Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them! "Peace be with you," he said.

Jesus' appearance among them brought more than mere words; it carried the authority of peace. His greeting wasn't a wish but a decree, infusing them with a profound sense of calm, courage, and joy—a peace beyond understanding.

When Christ comes into our lives, there is a peace that transcends our understanding and fills our soul with a calm sense of hope, courage, and joy to face the craziness around us.

This peace is not like the peace the world gives that is based on outward circumstances; it is a peace that surpasses all human reasoning.

Remember that peace isn't the absence of chaos; it's the presence of God in the midst of it.

The World's Empty Promises

John 14:27 (CEV) I give you peace, the kind of peace that only I can give. It isn't like the peace that this world can give. So don't be worried or afraid.

The world is powerless to give peace. Political promises and worldly solutions cannot deliver true peace. But God offers a peace that transcends all human reasoning—a peace rooted in faith, not sight.

Philippians 4:8 (AMP) And the peace of God [that peace which reassures the heart, that peace] which transcends all understanding, [that peace which] stands guard over your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus [is yours].

God's peace is not dependent on sight, but rather on faith in the one who consistently keeps his word and promises to be with us even in the midst of chaos.

This is what Thomas would learn.

The Peace in Believing

John 20:24-26a (NLT) One of the twelve disciples, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin), was not with the others when Jesus came. ²⁵ They told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he replied, "I won't believe it unless I see the nail wounds in his hands, put my fingers into them, and place my hand into the wound in his side." ²⁶ Eight days later the disciples were together again, and this time Thomas was with them.

I can only guess what thoughts went through Thomas' mind when He was told by his fellow disciples that Jesus had appeared to them and he was not there.

"Why did I have to be late to the meeting?" "If it's true, why didn't Jesus wait till I got there?" "Why hasn't he made any effort to show himself to me?". "Maybe he sees something broken in me." "Maybe I am not worthy of His love or time."

It had been eight days since everyone claimed to have seen Jesus. Everyone else, except for him, seemed to be happy and at peace.

Then Jesus shows up.

John 20:26b-29 (NLT) The doors were locked; but suddenly, as before, Jesus was standing among them. "Peace be with you," he said. ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don't be faithless any longer. Believe!" ²⁸ "My Lord and my God!" Thomas exclaimed. ²⁹ Then Jesus told him, "You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me."

Jesus once again greets the disciples with "peace be with you." But in this second meeting, he is focused on Thomas.

God is always present, even when we don't see Him. Although Thomas wasn't aware of it, eight days earlier, Jesus had heard his words. Now he grants Thomas' demand, "*Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don't be faithless any longer. Believe!*"

Jesus makes it clear that the peace He gives goes beyond outward circumstances.

(AMP Classic Version) Jesus said to him, because you have seen Me, *Thomas*, do you now believe (trust, have faith)? Blessed *and* happy *and* to be envied are those who have never seen Me and yet have believed *and* adhered to *and* trusted *and* relied on Me.

Thomas's doubts mirror our own struggles with faith. Jesus' gentle rebuke and invitation to believe resonate with us today. Blessed are those who find peace, joy, and blessing in believing, even without seeing.

Just as Jesus met the disciples in their fear and doubt, He meets us in our chaos and uncertainty. His peace surpasses all understanding, guarding our hearts and minds. May we embrace this peace, trusting in His character, even in the midst of life's craziness.

