

February 15

John 20:19-21 (NIV) ¹⁹On 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. ²¹Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”

I had made it through most of my life without having an operation other than having my tonsils taken out when I was very small. All of that faded away when I learned I had rheumatoid arthritis. The arthritis had caused tissue growth on both wrists that could cause permanent damage to the nerves. My doctor, Dr. Unsell, said surgery was the only option left. I was “going under the knife.” We arrived early to fill out paperwork. I was nervous, and I knew Carol was praying for me. The nurse finally came to prepare for the surgery. After I was prepped, they let Carol in for one last visit. She prayed for me, and they began to roll me into surgery. On the way, the most amazing thing happened. A peace came over me that relaxed me and took away all worry.

Over the years, I have come to believe that one of the most powerful indications of the Lord’s presence is His peace, a peace the disciples lost after His death. They saw their world crumble when the man they had followed for three years was arrested, tortured, and crucified. Yet, He was more than a man; He was the Christ, the Son of the Living God, and they watched Him die. Fearing the authorities, they locked themselves in a room. We can only imagine what concerns dominated their conversations. What are we going to do now? Are they coming after us next? Everyone knows who we are, so how can we simply go home? Did He not tell us to follow Him? Does that mean we have to follow Him to the cross? Add to that the truth that they all ran away when He needed them the most. Their emotions, fears, concerns, recriminations, and doubts must have filled that room. In the midst of that storm, Jesus appears. He was dead, but now He lives? Jesus’ first words to these men, men whom He loves and who will carry His truth to the world, are fascinating. He says to them, “Peace be with you.” I believe that is so much more than a greeting. The peace that Jesus brings is the same peace He brought when He calmed the storm. With this greeting, Jesus sent His peace into their hearts and minds. The emotional and physical turmoil stopped. Their doubts, feelings of failure, and fears were calmed. That was what they needed. It is what we need, and it is what He offers to each one of us. That peace will never be taken from us because He will never leave or forsake us.