

I do not know about you, but I do not like this feeling of uncertainty. There are so many things now which are out of our control, and because of that, what happens to us may be dependent on the actions of others. So we begin to worry. The coronavirus is an invisible enemy, so we begin to look at everyone else with suspicion — could they infect us with this disease. We are being asked to remain at home, and we are getting frustrated with how long this is going to last. On the other hand, we will probably be somewhat afraid to go in public once we are again allowed to because we do not know if the virus will again begin to spread. With so many people out of work and without income, we wonder how are we going to be able to get things back to normal again. We know that we are living in rather tumultuous times, with much uncertainty about what is going to happen next.

On this second Sunday of Easter, we are going to take a little closer look at that first Easter evening when Jesus suddenly appeared with His disciples in the locked upper room. Those disciples had just had their whole world turned upside down with the events of the previous days. They were filled with uncertainty about what their future held. The words which Jesus spoke to them at that time were so very appropriate, not only for those disciples, but also for us today. JESUS BRINGS US TRUE PEACE. 1) Life may be in turmoil, but 2) Jesus is able to remove our greatest turmoil.

Stop for a moment to consider the turmoil which the disciples were feeling that first Easter. They were in a locked upper room for fear of the Jews. One week before this, they witnessed the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. How excited they must have been to see the crowds singing Jesus' praise as the One Who had come in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies.

But then Jesus was arrested. They were terrified, so they left Him and fled for their lives. Jesus was tried and crucified to put an end to Him and His teachings. So they were afraid that the Jews might be coming for them next. That is why they were in a locked room — to try to keep a low profile and out of sight from Jesus' enemies.

What may have even been worse for them was wondering what they might do next. They probably felt like those disciples on the way to Emmaus who exclaimed that they had thought that Jesus was going to be the One Who was going to redeem Israel. They had left everything to follow Him — now what? It all must have seemed so futile for them now. How could they continue now that Jesus was gone? Did that mean that everything He had taught them was also gone? They were probably questioning everything.

To add to all of this, they were being told that Jesus' body was no longer in the grave. The women even claimed to have seen Jesus Himself. There was no way that they could process all of this information, so they doubted that it was true. Certainly their lives were in great turmoil that first Easter evening.

We pretty much understand what they were feeling because right now we feel much the same way. The coronavirus leaves us wondering what is going on around us and how much worse things could get, and how soon things might return to some normalcy. Even worse, Satan torments our conscience with the guilt of the sins which we know full well that we have committed. By keeping our own sinfulness in front of our eyes, Satan tries to fill us with the fear of losing God's love. He wants us to doubt the forgiveness which is announced to us. He wants us to doubt whether we will actually make it to heaven with our Savior. He uses the turmoil in this life to try to get us to doubt those precious truths which Jesus gives us in His promises.

This is why Easter is so important to us. The fact that Jesus lives brings us comfort in the midst of turmoil in our lives. While His disciples were in that locked room for fear of the Jews, Jesus suddenly appeared in their midst. The first words which He spoke to them are very significant. **“Peace be with you!”** (v19) If He were speaking Hebrew when He said this, He would have said, “Shalom!” That is the common greeting, which means, “Peace.” But coming from Jesus' mouth on this occasion, it means so

much more than just that casual, common greeting. It was not just a pious wish on Jesus' part for His disciples.

As a common greeting, those words has no power to make any change in the person's life. When we hear someone sneeze, we may say something like, "Bless you," or "Gesundheit." It is a fine sentiment, but does nothing to affect that person's health. The common greeting of "Peace" falls into that same category. It really does nothing for the other person.

But Jesus' greeting to His disciples on this occasion was much more than just the common greeting. It had the power to bring exactly what He was saying, "Peace be with you!" Jesus appeared to them to bring that very peace to their hearts and lives. The world in which they lived was still going to be in turmoil because the leaders of the people were still intent on wiping out Jesus' teaching. But the fact that Jesus was alive and standing before them was meant to bring them true peace.

Again, we need to look to what Jesus did with the two disciples on the way to Emmaus to understand this better. Jesus went back to all of the Old Testament prophecies about Himself to show that He had to suffer and die, but then rise again from the dead — even as He had tried to tell them before it all happened. Not only was He not dead and gone, as they feared, but He also accomplished all He had set out to do for them.

He was bringing them true peace for their souls. What He proclaimed on the cross, that His work of salvation was finished, was now being announced to them. He was bringing them lasting peace through the announcement of forgiveness and eternal life which He had won. While they had given up everything in this life to follow Him, they would receive all of the blessing which He had always promised to them. They were to be filled with peace for their souls, even if there were still turmoil in the world around them.

This Easter season, that same message resounds with us. Easter does not change the uncertainties which we must face in the world. But what peace fills our souls! "Peace be with you!" The empty tomb fills our hearts with the joy of knowing that God accepted the payment Jesus made for our sins on the cross. Our sins are all forgiven! Satan can no longer throw them in our face, or get us to believe that God still holds them against us. We dare never say that God is punishing us for being bad in this life. He has already punished Jesus for every one of those sins. Paul reminded us in his letter to the Romans, "*Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.*" (Romans 8:33–34) So we have peace of conscience, knowing that our sins are all forgiven.

That gives us the assurance that we have life with our Savior in heaven. The peace of our Savior's love and forgiveness gives us the peace of knowing that one day we shall live eternally with Him in the mansions of heaven.

Jesus repeated this same message of peace, and then sent His disciples to share this message of peace of peace with others. Paul refers to this commission as carrying the gospel of peace to the world. Isn't that a beautiful way of describing the message of the Bible? Jesus invites all to come to Him for peace in their troubled souls — peace that is ours now and lasts through eternity. And He sends us out with this message so that all others may share in this wonderful peace which He has won for all.

Jesus knows us very well, how we do not like uncertainty. So we need to listen carefully to the greeting which He had for His disciples that first Easter evening. "Peace be with you!" True, lasting peace which He won for all on the cross, and which His empty tomb assures us of. May our hearts be filled with the peace which only He can give to us.