

Text: John 20:19-31

Outline

1. Peace be with you! Peace given how?
 - a. Jesus death gives us forgiveness of all of our sins. Sacrifice acceptable to the Father because He raised Jesus from the dead.
2. Still today Peace is given in His Word and His Sacraments
 - a. Absolution, how can Pastor forgive sins? By Christ's Authority!
 - b. Assured because of His Word, do not have to look anywhere else for assurance!

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

My dear beloved flock, the text for our meditation today is the Holy Gospel according to Saint John the Twentieth chapter verses nineteen through thirty-one, focusing on verses twenty one through twenty three. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." ²² And 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 withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."

Boys and girls, I pray that you are doing well today as we continue to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord. Today's Gospel has an interesting note, it says that Jesus says "Peace be with You" and then He breathed on the disciples. I am sure that you have taken a breath. You breath a lot throughout the day. But have you ever breathed on someone? I do not think that you have. Why does Jesus breath on the disciples? How does the message that they proclaim give us a peace which surpasses all understanding? Ponder these questions as you hear the rest of the sermon. You may go back to your seats and those who love you.

1.

Jesus breathed on the disciples similar to how the Spirit of God breathed on the Prophets in the Old Testament. The prophets had their authority given to them by God to proclaim His message of Law and Gospel to the people of Israel and Judah. In a similar way the disciples are commissioned to spread Jesus' message. What is His message? That there is Peace given to the nations by His dying and rising again from the dead.

The world would say that there are other ways to get peace. That you would get peace by doing good works, by feeling at peace with life, by working hard. Yet, all of these things do not give us a lasting peace. Our work eventually fades away, our feelings do not always feel how we really are.

There is only one way to peace. That way is through the cross. There, Jesus has paid the price for every single person across all

of time and space. He took the sins of the world upon Himself. He shed His precious and innocent blood on the cross. We know that His perfect sacrifice was acceptable in the eyes of the Father because He raised Jesus from the dead. Because of Jesus, we are reconciled to God and once again have peace with Him. This is the Gospel that the disciples proclaimed and by that proclamation, we have the forgiveness of our sins.

2.

Notice the compassion of our Lord. Does He say ‘Hey, what are you guys doing? You ran away and now you are super afraid?’ No, instead He gives them peace and gives them the power of the forgiveness of sins. How can this be? How can they forgive sins? A correct understanding of the Greek text helps us here. The eminent Greek scholar Dr. Julius R. Mantey (now deceased) commented on this verse, as well as in Matthew 16:19 and the translation should be: “Whosoever sins you remit [forgive] shall have already been forgiven them, and whosoever sins you retain [do not forgive] shall have already not been forgiven them.” In other words, the disciples did not provide forgiveness; they proclaimed forgiveness on the basis of the message of the Gospel. Another Greek scholar, Dr. Kenneth Wuest, translates it “they have been previously forgiven them.” As the early believers went forth into the world, they announced the good news of salvation. If sinners would repent and believe on Jesus Christ, their sins would be forgiven them! “Who can forgive sins but God only?” (Mark 2:7) All that the Christian can do is announce the message of forgiveness; God performs the miracle of forgiveness. If sinners will believe on Jesus Christ, we can authoritatively

declare to them that their sins have been forgiven; but we are not the ones who provide the forgiveness.¹

2a.

The peace of our Lord is given even still today to His people. The Lord gives His peace freely and abundantly in His Word and in His Sacraments. You have the forgiveness of sins because of the working of God. Just look at the blessed words of Absolution. Many people would state how can a Pastor forgive sins? They would balk that a mere man claims such authority for himself. Yet, Pastors do forgive sins. They do so, not by their own authority but by the authority of Christ. They proclaim what God has already done, that for the sake of Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection, your sins are forgiven. As we confess in the Small Catechism, “How should we regard the Absolution spoken by the Pastor? “Our people are taught that they should highly prize the Absolution as being God’s voice and pronounced by God’s command” When the Pastor absolves us- that is, says, “I forgive you all your sins” he speaks with Christ’s authority and on His behalf. Therefore we can firmly believe that God Himself has completely forgiven our sins.

How do we respond to this forgiveness? We have only two options, as illustrated by our Lord’s interaction with Thomas, believe what God has done for us based on the proclamation of others, or reject it and thereby our sins and guilt remain. How many people today doubt the message of forgiveness that is proclaimed? They act akin to Thomas, hearing the message of the other ten apostles that Jesus had risen from the dead for a whole week. Yet, he doubted until Jesus appeared to them the next week and told him to thrust his hand in his hands and side. Many people

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [The Bible exposition commentary](#) (Vol. 1, p. 393). Victor Books.

still do likewise today simply because their emotions betray them. They do not feel any different so therefore they must not be forgiven. They still wrestle with the same sin time and time again, so is it really forgiven? Other times, they fall for the Devil's temptation that they have been too great of a sinner to get forgiveness. They have done too many bad things for God to ever forgive them. Other times they want physical proof rather than mere words, even those of God. Therefore, to the one who says, "I don't feel forgiven," it is our responsibility to say, "According to the Word of God, if you believe in Jesus Christ and believe in His work on the Cross, your sin is gone." Conversely, to the one who says, "I don't need Jesus Christ. I'm into meditation,"—it is our responsibility to say, "Your sin remains because only the blood of Jesus can wash it away."²

Thanks be to God that our Lord has washed our sins away by His blood. We do not have to look to our feelings, emotions, or good works for peace with God. We have Peace with God, given and proclaimed by His Pastors still today, purely by the grace of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Because of His blood shed on the cross and His glorious resurrection from the dead. Because Jesus is alive forever, we have peace with God forever and ever, our sins have been forgiven and Peace is ours because

Alleluia Christ is Risen!

He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!

² Courson, J. (2003). [*Jon Courson's Application Commentary*](#) (p. 596). Thomas Nelson.