

John 20 v -18 Sunday 19th April 2020 – Online Church

So, it was a difficult and confusing few weeks. There you are stuck in a room with a few others isolated and alone –the news is frightening. The more news you hear, the more you panic.

The people you are isolated with, have conflicting opinions – “should we go out there – is it safe? or we should we stay in here safe?”

Several guys in the room are very negative – they haven’t seen or heard anything to make them feel content with the situation. Some however are more positive, and some are very positive -they seem to know something you don’t. Their optimism in the face of adversity is very galling and upsets you even more. They say they have seen the answer – they say the miracle has happened.

One man in the room is very down and upset - nothing can persuade him otherwise. Unless I see it for myself, unless I can talk to the man with the answers, I don’t believe the miracle is out there.

Then Jesus steps into the room. His first words are a greeting “Peace be with you.” ...

So hopefully you may have picked up where I was coming from. If not, I hope the penny has now dropped. I wasn’t talking about Covid19 - I was talking about the disciples in their first few days after Jesus’ death and the first few appearances of Jesus after his resurrection. And the soldiers looking for the disciples so they were locked away in a room.

Although 2000 years apart, their isolation thing is very similar circumstances to ours today. A lot of opinions flying around, a lot of trust and mistrust. A lot of news and false news. People guessing and speculating what’s next. The air full of the smallest story exaggerated and reworked several times.

I believe Jesus laid these words on my heart a few weeks ago when Linda first taught us to sign ...**Peace be with you.** I had forgotten which passage it had come from until I read it over Easter. The story of Jesus meeting the disciples in the upper room – and then meeting Thomas – the doubter.

I believe God is saying these words over us, to you and me in your homes, your work, your furlough, in your families and with your friends in isolation.. he is saying “**Peace be with you**”.

How do we know? how can we trust him?

Well Jesus shows you his hands and his side. The marks on his body that tells everyone that he knows. He knows our confusion and he knows suffering, pain or separation and loss and he knows us...and he still says these words

“Peace be with you. Peace be with you.”

The sacrifice of taking our sin on his body on the cross meant separation from His Father, then conquering death means that we have a new full hope in what is to come – although things may hurt now – we may know salvation today, his loving hands holding us for tomorrow and a hope in heaven for the future – as the song says “because he lives I can face tomorrow.”

He doesn't come into the room and say you have to do this, or you have to do that –To those who are bereft, to those who don't believe, to those who have been adding fuel to the fire for the last few days, adding their opinion and doubts about safety, PPE, Care Homes, coping and what the government should or shouldn't so– he says “Calm down, stop jumping to conclusions, **stop winding people up – allow peace into the situation. Trust God – trust in me”** .

Jesus this morning wants to say– I know the solution; my peace is the solution. Take your head out of the television, the radio, off the internet and listen – **my peace is here for you.**

We can be content with Jesus. - we can lean on him; we can trust in him and we can have hope in him.

So how does Jesus example show us how to live? How can we apply this to our lives?

Do we spend out time at home, in the chat room, on social media stirring up confusion, gossiping, making things worse, do we live adding fuel to the fire or do we speak peace into the confusion and difficult situation?

My mum, bless her, is doing very well at being isolated but occasionally insecurities catch up with her. Her dementia really doesn't help. The other day she couldn't find her handbag. When I spoke to her she thought it was somewhere in the house- I said we would pop around later thinking in the meantime she would find it – in the next hour or so obviously she had gotten more and more upset and uptight with the situation and eventually she pressed her Alarm button – so we ended up getting a call and going to her flat much earlier than intended – so Linda being the “isolated one” did a fantastic job.

Entered the room, calmed mum down, found the handbag and breathed peace into someone's life.

Another example this week – we had a difficult situation to deal with this week and tensions were really high. Sorry I can't tell you the detail - The more we spoke about it, the more our hackles went up, the atmosphere was thick with rage and discontent then someone, after the meeting, wrote an email – he was basically speaking those words – “Peace be in the situation”. – thank you for your email. You know who you are...

Thomas was so confused he had heard Jesus was alive but couldn't believe it, was someone pulling his leg, a big wind up- but then again Jesus did say he would come backJesus knew Thomas - his confusion and pain and all he said was “ be at Peace Thomas..”

In our situations at home, at work, and with friends are we making the situation worse, firing up discontent and misunderstanding – or we can be Jesus' voice, the voice of truth and calm, the voice to quell the panic and mistrust today.

I am sure we could all be ready to help with a errand without fuss, without wanting credit, without needing praise – Just a calm focus and a contentment that because Jesus is alive we can face this hurting world because of our everlasting hope – because of what Jesus did on that first Easter Sunday.

What I think I heard God saying today for the people of **St Georges Church** –
“Lead the way - Stay calm, stay assured, speak and act to bring peace.”

And may the God of peace be with you all and may you bring peace, joy & calm to your friends and families. Amen.