

Easter Sunday Message

SUNDAY, MARCH 31, 2024 - MICHAEL BOWERS



Summary - Easter Sunday Message

Every year, we come to this time to remember the death of Jesus Christ and celebrate his resurrection. The four gospels of the Bible tell the story of these moments from each writer's perspective. Each has a slightly different focus and varying details to give us different angles of the moments we have from Jesus Christ's life. Our future, lives, and hopes rest solely on the facts of these historical moments. By the time we come to John chapter 20, peace would be something that would seem very far away for the disciples. Their world was in political upheaval. Their religious beliefs were not being respected. They were looking for peace, hope, and a conquering king; a king that had just been crucified! There would have been no peace, no calm, no joy—only confusion, doubt, and a range of reactions. It is here in this moment (John 20) where Jesus steps in to remind them all, "Peace be with you." This is the same promise given to us today and we must grab hold of its truth in our own lives as we aim to live for a resurrected Jesus Christ.

Scripture - Read all of John 20:1-31

John 20:19-29 - 19 On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." 20 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. 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." 24 Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe." 26 Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." 28 Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Key Terms - "Peace be with you"

Strong's & Thayer's Definition:

Peace: eirēnē (i-ray'-nay) - a state of national tranquility; exemption from the rage and havoc of war; peace between individuals, i.e. harmony, concord; security, safety, prosperity, felicity, (because peace and harmony make and keep things safe and prosperous); of the Messiah's peace-the way that leads to peace (salvation); of Christianity, the tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from God and content with its earthly lot, of whatsoever sort that is; the blessed state of devout and upright men after death

Key Apps, Websites, and Online Tools for Further Study

- <https://www.blueletterbible.org/>
- <https://www.biblegateway.com/>
- <https://biblehub.com/>
- <https://www.youversion.com/>
- <https://www.bibleref.com/>
- <https://bible.org/>
- <https://netbible.org/>
- <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/>
- <https://www.gty.org/>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/>
- <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/>
- <https://carm.org/>
- <https://dwellapp.io/>

Further Study: Luke 24:36-45; John 11:25-26; John 20; Romans 6:23 & 10:8-10; 1 Corinthians 15:56-57; Colossians 3:15; 2 Thessalonians 3:16

As you study the scripture verses provided for this week, study for right context and right questions...

Right Context:

- The verse itself and key word(s) that stand out in the verse (meanings)
- The verses around the verse, the section of scripture, the chapter, the book, old/new testament, and relation to the rest of scripture
- Author and Date (Who wrote the book and when?)
- Audience (Who is the book written to? Main characters in the story and/or text?)
- Main points and overall purpose of the book
- Historical background, cultural significance, setting, people, rulers, etc.
- Scripture references; let scripture interpret scripture as much as possible

Right Questions:

- What does this passage say?
- What does this passage mean to its original audience?
- What is this passage teaching me about God?
- What does this passage tell us about man?
- What does this passage demand of me? (Is there a command to obey? Is there a promise to claim? Is there a sin to avoid? How is this applicable to me?)
- How does this passage change the way I relate to people? (What actions must I take in response to this passage?)
- What does this passage prompt me to pray? (For God, for others, for my community, for family, etc.)

Key Thoughts - Read John 20 first

If you had lived in John 1-19, in your eyes as a disciple - hope was now dead and gone. After all, he proclaimed on the cross, "It is finished." (John 19:30) But Jesus was not calling an end to the movement. In fact, the opposite was true: Jesus was proclaiming that at this moment, all the wrath and weight of sin had been poured out upon Jesus Christ. It is finished, which means the task was complete. It is finished, to those at the cross, may have felt like defeat, but it is finished was a prelude, an introduction, to the fact that the son of God had become the payment of sins for all mankind.

The resurrection of Jesus delivers joy out of sadness. It isn't coincidental that the first person Jesus spoke to was someone who had a questionable reputation (Mary Magdalene), not because she was a woman, but rather because Jesus had cast demons out of her. She was one of the few who remained faithful as a follower. This moment changed Mary's life—the resurrection changed it all. She went from sadness and loss to hope and promise. The resurrection changed her eternity and her everyday life. (John 20:1-18). PEACE BE WITH YOU does not deliver a false hope in the temporary, but a permanent hope in/through Jesus Christ.

The resurrection of Jesus delivers peace out of worry and in the middle of chaos. The disciples would have been captivated by fear of the unknown, but peace overtakes the tension, and worry is absent. The resurrection delivers peace from worry. This is a divine moment. Supernatural. (John 20:19-23; Colossian 3:15). Peace through the resurrection transforms denial into courageous living.

The resurrection of Jesus delivers belief out of doubt. The best reactions come from the most doubtful. The most extraordinary belief comes when doubt is confronted head-on, and the evidence demands belief. (John 20:24-30)

The resurrection of Jesus delivers life out of death. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23). 55 "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:56-57).

You need to respond to Jesus's resurrection. It promises joy, peace, belief, life, and hope, and it can change your eternity and every day of your life. Repent and turn toward the resurrected Jesus. When we confess our sinfulness and our need for a savior who died, proclaimed it is finished, resurrected, and changed our eternity and our every day, we find peace, joy, comfort, and belief. Then confession leads to change, to action, and to a resurrected life. (Romans 10:8-10)

Reflect & Respond

Growing up, did your family have any special traditions for Easter? What kinds of traditions do you have now? How can you and your family begin to establish traditions that lift Jesus high and glorify Him during this season?

As you read through John 20, what moments stand out to you most? What moments do you most resonate with?

As you think about Mary's story and what this moment of seeing Jesus again would have meant to her (She went from sadness and loss to hope and promise), have you ever experienced something like this where the hope and promise of Jesus moved you out of a moment or season of sadness?

Can you share a time where the peace and hope of Jesus has delivered you out of worry or anxiety, perhaps while even in the middle of chaos?

As we read John 20, we see that Thomas was clearly believing enough to gather with the others and stay in his Christ centered community, yet he still had doubts. Where are you currently doubting the truth of Jesus and His word in your own life?

"Now, may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all." (2 Thessalonians 3:16). What area of your life do you most need peace in today?

Additional Thoughts