

Text: John 20: 19-31

Theme: Who is Jesus? He is our Lord and God

Sermon delivered by Dele Agbelusi during Holy Communion Service on 16/04/2017 at 10.30am

In the first part of this chapter, we are told that Jesus had risen from the dead; the tomb was empty and the stone had been rolled away. Jesus had revealed himself to Mary. But on that same day in the evening, this is where our text for this morning starts from. Jesus reveals himself to his disciples.

Verse 19

On 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!"

It was good that the disciples stayed together. Events of the previous days were sufficient to scatter them but they hearkened to the instruction Jesus had given them earlier. However, they were still afraid of the powers which had crucified their Jesus that they met behind closed and secure doors.

Those shut and locked doors also shut out Jesus. Thankfully, Jesus was greater than the shut and locked doors, and made His way in despite them. Still, it's better to unlock and open the door for Jesus. This strange and miraculous appearance of Jesus apparently was to demonstrate that resurrection bodies are not subject to the same limitations as our present bodies. The way resurrection bodies interact with material world is different from the way material bodies interact with material world. Since we will be raised in the same manner as Jesus, I look forward to the time when this decaying body will be changed.

The first word that Jesus spoke to his disciples was Shalom - Peace. "Peace to you," is an assurance that there is no cause to fear, and that all is well: (Luke 24:36). How they needed to hear this. After their shameful performance at his resurrection, what they deserved was rebuke...but Jesus instead gave them assurance of His presence and love.

We can observe 5 things that Jesus did for his disciples in verses 20-23:

1. He gave them assurance.
2. He gave them His peace.
3. He gave them a commission.
4. He gave them His Holy Spirit.
5. He gave them authority to forgive sins.

Verses 20-23

20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

1. **He gave them assurance.** He showed them His hands and His side: Jesus assured them He was actually Jesus of Nazareth and that He was really raised from the dead. Luke mentioned this gathering as including not only the disciples but also those who were gathered together with them (Luke 24:33).

"Jesus did not come into their midst to show them a new thought... or even a deep doctrine, or a profound mystery, or indeed anything but himself. He was a sacred egoist that day, for

what he spoke of was himself; and what he revealed was himself.” (Spurgeon). That is what we need-JESUS

2. He gave them his peace.

The repetition of this promise makes this gift of peace much larger and more significant. The resurrected Jesus brings peace. Instead of rebuke, or accusation, or blame, Jesus blessed them. So, what is this peace from Jesus:

- When my sins are forgiven, that is peace
- When my Saviour takes my fears and cares that is peace
- When my life is settled for eternity that is peace

Jesus came not only to give them assurance but also his peace.

3. He gave them a Commission. (v.21) As the Father has sent me, I am sending you We think of how Jesus was sent by the Father and connect it with the truth of how he is sending his disciples.

- Jesus was not sent as a philosopher, nor an economist nor a politician.
- Jesus was sent to teach
- Jesus was sent to live among us
- Jesus was sent to suffer for truth and righteousness
- Jesus was sent to rescue men from their sin and reconcile them to God.

4. He gave them His Holy Spirit. (V.22) “... he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit ...

Jesus gave His disciples the Holy Spirit, bringing new life and the ability to carry out their mission. It seems John noted a deliberate connection between this breathing on the disciples and when at creation God breathed life into man. This was a work of re-creation, even as God breathed life into the first man. You can say this is where the disciples were born again.

You can recall the encounter of Ezekiel with the Lord in the vision of the Dry Bones ‘Ezekiel 37:9... ‘breathe into these slain and they shall live’ (the vision of the Dry Bones).” (Trench).

“At an earlier stage in Jesus’ ministry the evangelist had said, ‘the Spirit was not yet present, because Jesus had not yet been glorified’ (John 7:3)

Now the time for imparting the Spirit has come. They received the same Holy Spirit that was in Jesus; the same Spirit that empowered and enabled all His words and works. “The breathing upon them was meant to convey the impression that His very own Spirit was imparted to them.” (Dod)

5.The authority to forgive sins. (V.23) “If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

Jesus gave His disciples authority to announce forgiveness and to warn of guilt, as authorized by the Holy Spirit. We can say that Peter’s preaching on Pentecost (Acts 2:38) was an exercise of this promised power to announce forgiveness of sins.

This lays down the duty of the church to proclaim forgiveness to the repentant believer, and the duty of the church to warn the unbeliever that they are in danger of forfeiting the mercy of God. We don’t create the forgiveness or deny it; we announce it according to God’s word and the wisdom of the Spirit. “The Church collectively declares the conditions on which sins are

remitted, and with the plenary powers of an ambassador pronounces their remission or their retention.” (Trench)

Verses 24-25

We now have an encounter with someone who shares the same DNA with many people today. THOMAS.

24 Now Thomas (also known as Didymus[a]), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

We are not told why Thomas was not with them and Thomas was not criticized for his absence. The other disciples told him, we have seen the Lord...

Thomas is often known as Doubting Thomas, a title that misstates his error and ignores what became of him. Here we could say that Thomas didn't doubt; he plainly and strongly refused to believe. Thomas refused to believe the testimony of many witnesses and reliable witnesses. Thomas made an extreme demand for evidence; evidence of not only sight but of touch, and to repeatedly touch the multiple wounds of Jesus.

But there was something good about Thomas. It was good that he refused to pretend to believe when he did not believe. Thomas steadfastly refused to believe unless these conditions were met (I will not believe).

But this is not the end of the story.

Verses 26-27

One week later, Jesus speaks to the sceptic Thomas.

A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though 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; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.” 28 Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

Jesus entered the room in the same mysterious and remarkable way (the doors being shut, and stood in the midst). Jesus also gave the same greeting (Peace to you!).

The locked doors of their meeting room show that though they believed Jesus to be raised from the dead, that truth had not yet started to work its meaning and significance into every area of their thinking and actions.

Jesus now confronted Thomas: (v.27) **Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.**

Jesus granted Thomas the evidence he demanded. We suppose that Jesus was not obligated to do this; He could have rightly demanded faith from Thomas based on the reliable evidence from others. Yet in mercy and kindness, Jesus gave Thomas what he asked for. It must have been a surprise to Thomas that Jesus repeated back to him just what he had said to the other disciples (John 20:25).

Jesus said, stop doubting and believe.

There is a clear lesson: When you want assurance, look to the wounds of Jesus. They are evidence of His love, of His sacrifice, of His victory, of His resurrection.

Jesus clearly commanded Thomas to stop his unbelief and to start believing.

Is God telling you to stop your doubts and start believing today?

Often God does not condemn our doubt and He also often reveals and does remarkable things to speak to our doubt and unbelief. But doubt and unbelief are not desired conditions for the disciple of Jesus. If they are checkpoints along a path leading to faith they should be dealt with; but doubt and unbelief should never be thought of as destinations for the disciple.

Verses 28-29

Thomas responds in faith.

28 Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

Thomas made an immediate transition from declared unbelief to radical belief. He addressed Jesus with titles of deity, calling Him Lord and God. It is also significant that Jesus accepted these titles, and did not tell Thomas, "Don't call Me that."

Thomas was honest enough to say when he didn't believe (John 20:25) but also honest enough to follow the evidence to its full meaning. Thomas wasn't given to half-unbelief or half-faith. His declaration indicates a complete change of mind

- It was an enthusiastic profession of allegiance to Christ
- It was a distinct and direct act of adoration, worship

To believe in the Lord Jesus Christ is simple as ABC

A- Accept

B- Believe on HIM

C- Commit yourself in total surrender.

The faith of Thomas becomes the climax of the book. Throughout the Gospel of John Jesus has triumphed over sickness, sin, evil men, death and sorrow. Now with Thomas, Jesus conquered unbelief.

And this leads us to the purpose of John's Gospel in verses 30-31.

*30 Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 **But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.***

Though there were many other signs, John selected the signs presented in His Gospel to explain Jesus and bring readers to faith in Jesus as Messiah and God. This really isn't a book about signs – it is a book about Jesus. The signs are helpful as they reveal Jesus.