



Ravensworth

BAPTIST CHURCH

April 24, 2022 | Easter Sunday, Year W

John 20:19-21

We Have Seen the Lord

Rev. Dr. Leah Grundset Davis, preaching

I have to wonder what the disciples were feeling that first night, Easter night, when they huddled in a room. I'm guessing they were scared and full of fear.

There were at least ten disciples present- we read that Thomas was not there and we know that Judas was not there. So, ten disciples and probably others who have been through hell and back are gathered in a small room, huddled in fear.

Were they trying to make a plan of how to move forward with this gospel? Were they telling their favorite "Jesus stories" as we all so often do after someone dear to us dies? We don't know, but what I can imagine is that the air in the room was heavy.

I don't know if they had eaten since Thursday night either when Jesus shared the bread and cup with them. That upper room was probably was wet with tears and sweat and smelled as strong as their grief weighed on their hearts. This is one of the most nitty-gritty passages in all of scripture. The picture that the writer of John gives us is humanity at its most desperate AND we've all been there.

All of a sudden, they look up through tear-filled eyes and Jesus was standing in their midst. They must have rubbed their eyes with some force and shook their heads.

But no, it was Jesus standing there with a scar on his side and wounded hands and feet. His greeting to them must have hung in the thick air of that room. He said, *"Peace be with you."* He knew they were afraid. And he met them with a wish of peace. After he said that, he showed them his hands and his side.

This passage is so... fleshy. It's so...human. Jesus shows up somehow and stands among them. He stands among them--, he doesn't hover or float. He stands in their midst with a wounded side and wounded hands and feet, his full embodiment present.

And again he said, *"Peace be with you."* Then he did something completely human and God-like all at the same time. He breathed on them and they received Holy Spirit. His breath brought new life and comfort to the grieving disciples.

As his breath met the disciples, this became their resurrection calling-- to take the peace of the Risen Christ to the world. His breath met their fear and grief and pierced through them with peace. I don't know where Jesus went after that. And we don't really know what the disciples were up to other than they reunited with the missing disciple, Thomas.

Poor Thomas, or Doubting Thomas as he's known. I wonder if we've named Thomas that because it's what we most fear about ourselves. Thomas was the only one not locked up in the room that first night when Jesus appeared.

Maybe he wasn't full of doubt? Maybe he was out doing work in the community or getting food for the disciples? Maybe he was speaking more to Mary because he wanted to know what happened in the garden that Easter morning. We don't know.

When he did come back, he had quite the shock— Jesus had appeared to them and Thomas missed it! They told him all about it—saying the same thing Mary said. They said, "We have seen the Lord." And they told him about how Jesus had breathed on them, calling them to take peace to the world, a resurrection peace that works for justice.

Thomas replied, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

Perhaps Thomas had just joined them, later that week, when suddenly Jesus appeared again to them. He once again, for the third time said, "*Peace be with you.*" Then turning to Thomas, Jesus looked him right in the eyes and said, "*Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt, but believe.*"

We don't know if Thomas touched him or not even though there are many paintings of Thomas putting his hand in Jesus' side.

As Jesus finished speaking to him, Thomas said, "My Lord and my God."

I don't blame Thomas for wanting to see Jesus in the flesh. He wasn't satisfied just hearing about it.

I will confess that some days, I'm not satisfied with just hearing about the resurrected Lord either. On those days, that is when I turn to another person to

be reminded that we are all in this together. We remind one another of our resurrection callings by pointing one another toward the hope of Easter.

Our resurrection calling is to stand in the midst of chaos and wish people the peace of Christ. This is our commission by Jesus, the one we follow. Plant yourself in the midst of other humans, wish everyone peace and get to the work of Easter.

Jesus' gentle, yet strong blessing of "peace be with you" is one that both brings us comfort and one that sends us out.

Jesus calls us out of the locked rooms, the locked doors of our lives to the world around us that so desperately needs a blessing of peace.

So resurrection people-- Peace be with you, both now and forevermore.

Christ is risen!

Christ is risen, indeed!

Thanks be to God. Amen.