

Daily Discipleship

Second Sunday of Easter (B) – John 20:19-31

The Path of Discipleship: *Filled with Peace*

Focus Question: *How might God's peace bless you on your path this week?*

word of life

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

John 20:21 (NRSV)

Read John 20:19-31

What a day! Early in the morning, Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene after he had risen from the dead. Mary shares that incredulous news with the disciples, proclaiming to them, "I have seen the Lord." (John 20:1-18 NRSV) What a glorious day!

That evening, the disciples meet behind locked doors. They are afraid. Their world has been turned upside down, again and again. No wonder they are afraid. To their amazement, Jesus comes, stands with them in the midst of their fear, and declares, "Peace be with you." (Luke 20:19 NRSV)

1. *Describe the range of emotions experienced by the disciples on this single day.*
2. *What might the disciples have said to Jesus at this moment?*

Jesus shows them his hands and side, casting away any doubts. A second time Jesus declares peace to the disciples. This time he adds a commission. "Jesus says to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.'" (John 20:21 NRSV) But Jesus is not done. There is more. Jesus breathes on them. Like the breath given to Adam by God at the time of creation, the breath of Jesus brings new life. Along with the breath comes the Holy Spirit.

3. *What is the role of peace in the lives of the disciples as they are sent?*
4. *Why might Jesus have greeted them twice with "Peace be with you"?*
5. *Describe what the disciples might have felt as they received the Holy Spirit.*

Jesus teaches forgiveness by forgiving people. Even as Jesus dies on the cross and faces the worst of humanity, he forgives. He also gives these believers the power to forgive or retain sins. Not everyone is comfortable with being able to retain the sins of others. Is this not the role of God?

6. *How do you connect peace with forgiveness of sins?*
7. *When might a community of faith choose to retain sins?*
8. *How does someone make the decision to forgive or retain sins?*

Thomas—often referred to as "doubting Thomas"—is not with the other disciples when Jesus appears to them, and he is unable to believe. He needs proof. A week later, Thomas is with the disciples in the house with the doors shut. Again, Jesus comes and stands with them. Again, Jesus greets them with, "Peace be with you." This is not a casual greeting like, "Hello, how ya' doing?" Instead, Jesus offers the gift of peace.

This time, Thomas is allowed to touch Jesus and feel the wounds. Finally, Thomas is convinced, confessing, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus realizes not all will have the same chance as Thomas to be persuaded. Thus Jesus offers this blessing, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

9. *How do you relate to Thomas?*
10. *As one who has not seen Jesus in person, how do you experience this blessing by Jesus?*

word among us

Alexander is 80. It doesn't take long in any conversation for Alexander to start his complaining. He complains about the weather, politicians, sports, and the list goes on. Alexander really gets on a roll when he starts complaining about his good-for-nothing daughter. He complains he has no peace – no peace at all.

1. *If Alexander is genuine about desiring peace, what would you suggest?*

Liza works at a fast-moving company, but she has begun to notice her bosses consistently overlook the talented Hispanic employees for well-deserved promotions. At a meeting last week, her bosses made several jokes about Hispanics. She was deeply offended, but doesn't want to stir things up at her workplace. She really likes her job, but she is losing sleep over the matter. She just wants to be at peace, but she doesn't feel the same about her bosses.

2. *As a friend, what would you advise Liza?*
3. *How might a person be at peace, but stir things up for the sake of justice?*

On the evening of his resurrection from the dead, Jesus appears to his disciples and gives them the gift of the peace as well as the promised Holy Spirit. These two are intricately connected. Peace is a gift from God alone. We have no true peace without God.

4. *When have you experienced this peace of God? Everyday? Every moment?*
5. *When we do not experience peace? What (if anything) might we do?*

God's peace is more than being without conflict. Obviously, Jesus is a man of peace, but he is crucified by his enemies. Yet he has peace in his spirit and freely gives up his life so we might experience God's incredible peace and presence. He confronts his enemies time and time again. He breaks through traditional boundaries as he invites children to come to him, teaches women, heals on the Sabbath, and eats meals with sinners. Jesus strives to bring peace to all humanity.

6. *Describe a time when you had peace, but spoke out for justice or on behalf of someone else. What were the consequences of your actions?*

When Jesus visits the disciples on the night of his resurrection, he gives them peace and commissions them. They are sent in his name. Peace is to be their companion. He breathes on them and gives them the new life of the Holy Spirit. They are not to journey alone, but the Spirit is to be their companion filling them with peace.

7. *As you think about your coming week, how might you live each day in peace?*
8. *Imagine Jesus breathing on you and giving you new life. Describe what that might mean for you.*
9. *What is Jesus sending you to do this week?*

Prayer

O God, giver of peace, give us peace for the journey and most certainly for the day. Amen

Dig Deeper

Psalm 46

last word

Take time to be still
and wait upon the Lord for peace.



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