

PEACE BE WITH YOU

By John Richardson

SCRIPTURE

John 20:19–21

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.”

OBSERVATION

Today we may feel like the disciples, behind locked doors, in fear (not of the Jews but of disease). All gatherings of the church have been brought to zero, in a time where fear is cascading down on the world. Many questions are being asked, “How long will we be here,” and “Will the people that I love be ok?” Fear and uncertainty are crippling, moving valiant men and women behind locked doors. Our text today speaks boldly into our lives, when we will see Jesus provide comfort and purpose.

- The disciples lost their leader and now gathered behind closed doors, unsure about what to do next. Jesus arrived by some unknown path and stood among them. John does not tell us how Jesus came in or why Jesus came then. The readers of the text are left to wonder about many things, but one key point can be seen: Jesus met them in their fear (v. 19).
- Jesus’ words to the fearful disciples bring peace. “Peace be with you” is a common greeting in their time, but one that is pressed with the fear in the disciples’ hearts. The first words spoken to the disciples by the risen Savior still echoes in the heart of John as he quotes them. John is afraid with his brothers/sisters, and Jesus’ words speak right into the depths of their fear. The disciples’ fear is real; will the Jews come and take their lives like they took Jesus’ life? Peace is the greeting Jesus places in the hearts of the fearful disciples (v. 19).
- Peace is paired with Jesus showing His scars to the disciples. The disciples not only received proof that it was Jesus, but they first saw proof of the resurrection. Jesus was not performing a magic trick—scars and death were evident—but He was alive. The disciples needed more than words of peace; they needed to understand that life existed beyond death. Since Jesus had overcome death, they too would be overcomers of death (v. 20).
- When the disciples heard the greeting of Jesus (peace) and the reality of the resurrection, their fear turned to joy. Nothing about the angry Jews outside of their

home changed, but everything about their future changed. Could the Jews still come and take their lives? No matter. Could they be on the run for the rest of their existence? No matter. Was their future going to go back to normal? No matter. What does matter for the disciples is that they will live as Jesus lives today (v. 20).

- Again, “Peace be with you” is spoken over the disciples, oddly because they are not crippled by fear. But this peace is spoken for purpose. The first greeting brought friends back together; this peace was to move the disciples out to face their fears, the Jews. The disciples were now pressed to move out of the house and face the potential for death, because they were guaranteed life forever with Christ (v. 21).

OBEDIENCE

Now more than ever before fear is a common place in the minds of the church. Self-preservation meets mission. Jesus speaks peace over the lives of believers to move them to the mission in the face of fear. How will Harmony Hill respond to fear and continue to the mission of God?

- Who around you needs to have the peace of God? Salvation can move out into the world through the lives of those transformed by Christ.
- How will you engage fears each day, looking not to manage risk but instead be obedient to Christ? Today someone needs to see the person of Jesus in your life/actions.
- How will you commit to see Jesus each day in the Word? With all of the time that many of us have currently, we can redeem time to meet with Christ.
- Don’t stay locked in your home, crippled by fear; embrace the mission with the peace of God and knowledge that you have already died to Christ and now live for Christ.

PRAYER

Pray for strength and peace to overcome fear. Commit to the Lord the time that He has given to seek Him in the Word and lead those around you in worship. Pray for those who are without the peace of God, and seek ways to share the hope of the gospel.