

Readings

Scripture

¹⁹On 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." ²⁰When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. ²¹Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." ²²And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."

- John 20:19-23 (English Standard Version)

Reflection

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"—and that he had said these things to her.

- John 20:11-18 (English Standard Version)

To die on the cross means to die despised and rejected of men. Suffering and rejection are laid upon Jesus as a divine necessity, and every attempt to prevent it is the work of the devil, especially when it comes from his own disciples; for it is in fact an attempt to prevent Christ from being Christ. It is Peter, the Rock of the Church, who commits that sin, immediately after he has confessed Jesus as the Messiah and has been appointed to the primacy. That shows how the very notion of a suffering Messiah was a scandal to the Church, even in its earliest days. That is not the kind of Lord it wants, and the Church of Christ does not like to have the law of suffering imposed upon it by its Lord. Peter's protest displays his own unwillingness to suffer, and that means that Satan has gained entry into the Church, and is trying to tear it away from the cross of its Lord.

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (p. 87)

Sermon Outline

Peace Be With You...

John 20:19-23

Not as the World Gives

Brad Anderson

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is good news filled with great joy... (John 20:19-20)

How does Jesus now send his disciples out into the world?

Jesus sends us with peace... (John 20:21)

Jesus sends us with the Holy Spirit... (John 20:22)

Jesus sends us with a message of forgiveness... (John 20:23)

Reflection Questions (taken in part from the Serendipity Study Bible for Groups)

- Have you ever gone into your room and locked the door? Why?
- What would you do if there were "technical difficulties" and you missed the last two minutes of "the big game"?
- Why are the disciples fearful now?
- Of all the things Jesus must have said, why does John record "peace be with you" three times in John 20 (John 20:19, 21, 26)? How does this relate to their fears? To their being sent?
- How does Thomas' personality compare to Mary's (John 20:13)? To the other disciples (John 20:9, 19)? What conversations must have taken place in the week between John 20:23 and John 20:26?
- Read John 20:24-31. How does Jesus deal with Thomas' doubt? What is significant about the way Thomas responds?
- What is the author's purpose for writing this gospel?
- Where do you need to hear Jesus' word of "Peace" or "Shalom" in your life today? In your work? In your home? In some relationship?
- Where are you dealing with doubts about Jesus at the present moment? What have you found helpful about these passages and descriptions?