

The Peace That Produces Joy

Well, we have so much to be thankful for as we gather together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And I love, again, having two services. And I love, again, when we gather together to worship the Lord Jesus Christ. And one of the things I love is that Christians love to gather together to give thanks, to praise, to glorify our great God, and to realize our Jesus is alive forevermore.

And I don't know if there's a more exciting passage of scripture or one that's more uplifting. than John chapter 20, I think, maybe Romans chapter 8. But this chapter is just amazing, isn't it? Because again, we many times call this the resurrection chapter. We realize that there is a contingent that go to the tomb. They see the tomb is empty. They see the grave clothes that happen to be getting laid out.

And we saw, again, it just read that the first one that the Lord Jesus Christ appears to, at least in this gospel, happens to be Mary Magdalene. And she's given a commission, and that commission is to go tell the disciples that I have risen, that I will appear before them.

And it's amazing to look at that message that she was given, that Jesus Christ is risen, because it's repeated. over and over and over. It's incredible, again, to consider how many times that message is repeated in the last 2,000 years. Again, we are here tonight, and we are announcing that message that our Lord Jesus Christ is alive forevermore. You know, the other thing that's absolutely amazing about this is how unbelievable the message is.

You know, there was other resurrections that occurred inside of Scripture. In fact, there's one that happens to be in this Gospel. that's recorded, and that happens to be the resurrection again of Lazarus. But when you look at crucifixion, when you look at the barbarity that the Lord Jesus Christ went through, it seemed that there was no hope whatsoever of any resurrection. Even Peter and John that went to the tomb and saw the grave clothes laid out, they doubted whether Jesus again was truly And the reason why is nobody comes back from crucifixion. Crucifixion, again, happened to be, again, so final. It happened to be, again, so brutal. And it was absolutely hopeless. You know, and all that hopelessness changed. And we see that in verse number 19. Let me just say this about verse number 19. Verse number 19 really changes the course, not only of the disciples, but also the course, again, of all human history.

And look at what it says, 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, peace be with you. And here it is, Sunday evening, that first resurrection Sunday.

And here the disciples are gathered together because they have this great fear of what the Jews might do to them. And that moment, again, really changes in their lives and makes them, again, bold proclaimers of the gospel. And that's how it truly changes all of human history. They go everywhere proclaiming this, that Jesus is alive. And why do they say that? Because Jesus appeared before them. You know, he's flesh and blood. He comes and appears before them. He's not a phantom. He's not a ghost. But he's living.

But I think one of the things we have to do, and I think it's so helpful many times, is to put ourselves in a narrative. I mean, how would we feel if we were there, if we were one of the disciples? Because we can remember, it's just three days earlier, these disciples all denied the Lord Jesus. All of them fled when the soldiers came to arrest him. At his greatest hour of trial, they all forsook the Lord Jesus. And all of a sudden, here he is in all of his glory. Here he is again in all of his transcendent.

And he's before them at this time. What do you think, again? Why is he before them? What's he going to do? And no doubt, they thought, because they could see their sin, they could remember all the words that Jesus had said, all the miracles that he had done, even those words that they're gonna take me, they're gonna crucify me, and three days later I'm gonna rise again, and they didn't believe him. And they must have thought that he was there to punish them.

And really, you're in the face of deity, aren't you? You're in the presence of deity. And we realize there's not a fear of those who can kill our body, but a greater fear of those who can kill the body and the soul in hell for all of eternity. And you can imagine how much they were gripped, again, with fear.

And yet, in the midst of all of this, we read these words. These are the first words that are spoken to these men. Peace be with you. Imagine that, the first word that they hear, again, from our Lord. It's not condemnation. It's not a threat. You know, it's not again you're good for nothings, but it's this word, peace. And I think it's so good for us, isn't it?

You know, you look at, again, our lives, and so often we mess up, so often we go in a false direction, so often, again, we think of ourselves, and we think again, and we're blind to the pride that happens again of our own hearts, and so often we think of all that we know about the Lord.

I mean, think of all the years that we followed him. Think of all the sermons we've heard. Think of all the Bible studies we've had. Think of all the Christian conversations that we've had with other people. And we still blow it, don't we? We still blow it, maybe with our spouse, maybe with our children. Maybe we look online at something we ought not to look at, and we wonder, is my Savior done with me after all that I know, all the advantages that happen to be in my life?

What would he say if he was in my presence? And that's the amazing thing. Because what the Lord Jesus Christ would say if he was here tonight would be this, peace. And why is it peace? It's peace based upon what he has done, what he has accomplished, again, in each of our life. And that is, again, full, free salvation. a righteous standing in God.

And this is an amazing thing. And I don't know if we really recognize this. Our Jesus is excited about us. You know, he chose us before the foundation of the world. He knew, again, even of all the mess-ups. And he's an excited bridegroom. He wants his bride. He desires his bride. And that's the amazing thing that happened speaking about that. Now, here's the thing about peace. God wants us not only to know about the peace of Christ, but he wants us to live in light of it. He wants us to be excited about that peace, to be amazed at that peace, to glory in that peace.

And I think, again, so often when we look at our lives, when we look at the tension that happens to begin there and the anxiety we carry, and also all the mess-ups that happen to begin in our life, so often we're looking on a human plane, aren't we? We're comparing ourselves to others. We're comparing ourselves here and there. We're realizing the mess-ups that happen to be in our life.

But true picture change, true peace comes by looking at Jesus Christ. And I wonder again, it's one thing to know about the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ, but are we living in light of it? Are we celebrating that this Jesus forevermore is for me and never will be against me?

You know, this is what it's about here, and I really want us to look at verse number 20. I really want us to see that truth, and I want us to see a couple things. What this peace is based upon, and also the fruit of this peace. And I hope it will be a blessing, cause us to live in light of it. But first of all, we need

to recognize that peace is based, and we all know this, But peace is based upon the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And we'll look at verse number 20 here in our text. He says, when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Now, think about where rest comes. Think about where peace comes. Peace and rest comes from this.

Jesus paid it all. All to him I owe. Sin had left a crimson stain, but guess what he did? He washed it white as snow. And we realize when Jesus Christ cried those words, it is finished. Everything that was ever necessary for any stain that happened to be in my life was dealt with. You know, and we have peace with God forevermore.

But something happens in our hearts, something happens in our lives as believers in the Lord Jesus, because the more that we learn about this God, the more that we learn about His holiness, His righteousness, His goodness, His virtue, again, who He happens to be, the more we see our sin. And the more that we see the weightiness of our sin, and the more we ask the question, was it really enough? You know, when Jesus cried on that cross, it is finished, was it enough to really save me, to really, again, cleanse me, again, of those weighty sins? that happened to begin in our life. And that's where we come to scenes like here, because death could not hold our Savior. And what it proves beyond a shadow of a doubt is that we have this peace with God forevermore.

And so this is an incredible scene. This is a life-altering scene for those who happen to be there. It's a destiny-changing scene. It's a hope-filled scene that these disciples have before the Lord Jesus. Because look at the words of John. And realize, again, they're here by inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God. They're here for our edification.

But look at what it says. When he said these things, when he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. And let me just point out a couple of things. And one is, again, it's really obvious, and that is that Jesus comes and he shows them their hands, he shows them his side, he shows them, again, the marks that happen to be, again, on his feet. You know, he shows these things. And here's the question I want us to ponder. How did the Lord Jesus Christ appear before his disciples? Because again, crucifixion was absolutely a bloody affair. It was an awful, it was a gory affair.

You know, because the victim was taken, he was beaten, he was flogged, and pieces of his beard were plucked out. You know, we realized he was punched, he was kicked, he was slapped. And he was also flogged, and pieces of his back would have been again laid bare, but the chunks of skin would be missing from his back. And let me ask you, did he have all of those again elements, you know, that crown that happened to begin on his brow, you know, were there still the marks that happened to begin right there?

Because we realize that he had the same body that he had before, but it was different. You know, it went from, again, mortality to immortality, it went from corruption to incorruption. It went from weakness to strength. It went from a body of shame to a body of glory. And we realize that this body was different.

And here's my answer to what he looked like. And it's basically this. I really don't know. But there's one thing I do know. He did carry the marks of crucifixion. And the marks of crucifixion prove beyond any doubt that this is the Lord. This is the same one. This is the one who hung on the cross. In fact, there's a fuller description of this whole scene over in the gospel of Luke.

In fact, again, we even read it this morning, but in the beginning of verse number 36, it says, and as they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, Peace to you. But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. And he said to them, why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your heart?

See my hands and feet that it is I myself. Touch me and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have. And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. So he shows them the hands and feet and his validation. You know, this is not a spirit, this is not an apparition, this is not a ghost, but this is none other than the Lord of glory. This is none other than our Jesus.

And it was validation. He even sat down and had a meal with him that happened to be right there. And listen to what George Sinclair writes about this. He says, there are, not counting Paul, 11 recorded times that Jesus appeared to people proving that he was resurrected. These appearances were to men and women, individuals, couples, groups, and at least one crowd. The appearances were inside and outside in different locations at different times of the day. He was physically touched, audibly heard, visually seen, and he ate food in the presence of witnesses. None of these witnesses believed that Jesus would rise from the dead before he rose from the dead. All of them knew him before his death. So they knew he was the same Jesus who had died on the cross.

It's incredible, isn't it? So you have all of these resurrection appearances that happen to begin in the Word of God. And what do they do? Why are they there? They're there to validate that this one has risen. He is alive. In this passage right here, this verse, again, that we're reading here, validates to the disciples, again, that Jesus is alive.

And it changes their whole life, doesn't it? It changes their whole disposition. It changes, again, what they fear and what they reverence most. I mean, they become bold proclaimers of the gospel, and they go everywhere announcing, Jesus is alive. There's life found in him. And here's the thing you have to realize.

The disciples would not go through what they went through to protect a lie, to protect some sort of myth that they knew was a lie. None of them would go through things that they went through. But they realized, even in martyrdom, that nothing was in jeopardy. Guess why? Jesus is alive. Jesus has risen. And it's amazing there. So this was to validate that fact that Jesus was alive. But not only to validate Jesus was alive, but look at the verse again. Because again, the verse starts off this.

When he said this, So it's given a time indicator, it says when he said this, and what did he say? And basically he said this, right? Peace I bring to you, I bring my peace. And that's what he's talking about, this peace of Christ. So here he comes and he shows again his side, he shows his hands, he shows his feet to them, and why? Because you have to be convinced that I am your peace. It's safe to come to me. Right here he's showing them the evidence of what?

His substitutionary death on the cross for sinners like them. He has paid the penalty, again, for their sins. Look at my hands, look at my side, see the price has been paid and I am yours and you are mine forevermore. So think of it. Again, when you look at this passage of scripture, we see the validation that he's alive. We see the cost. The cost has been paid. But this is what we also see because Jesus is alive. That we're accepted forevermore in the presence again of the Father. The Father raises Jesus. Why? It is enough. Everything that is necessary to be done. was done in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And we have peace with Jesus, we have peace with Father, we have peace again

forevermore. It's like 1 Corinthians chapter 15 and verse number 17 says, if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. And oh, we struggle with assurance so often. We struggle with security that happens to begin in the Lord Jesus Christ. And we're looking at so many other things.

And what we're told to do is look at Christ, look at the resurrected one, look at what he has done. The penalty has been paid. He is alive forevermore. And can you imagine the relief? Can you imagine the sense that I am accepted towards and even invited in the presence of this one that I call Jesus? No matter what's in my life, no matter what I've done, no matter three days early that I ran for my life. And I departed out of the presence of Christ. It doesn't matter what I do. It doesn't matter what I've done.

And there's really an irony here. Because I believe beyond any doubt that the more that we look at the Lord Jesus Christ, something happens over us. The more that we look and we struggle with sin, we struggle with sin, we struggle with our passions, we struggle over here, we struggle over there. And then we start to look at Christ and something unique happens. It's not again all of a sudden we make light of our sin. In fact, we see our sin even more. We see it so much more clearer. We see it so much more acutely. We see more sin than we've ever seen in our life, the more that we look at the Lord Jesus Christ.

But the more that we look at Christ, the more that we recognize, right here, He has done it all. There really is peace with this Lord Jesus Christ. Doesn't matter the mess-ups, doesn't matter again what we've done. He has done it all. And here's the irony in all that. The more that I see myself, the more that I see my Jesus.

The more I'm changed from one degree of glory to another, the more, again, I experience, not only know about this peace, but live in light of this peace with this great Lord, with this great Savior that happens to begin above. And so when we look at this, we have to realize what the foundation, again, of the peace is. It's not your stellar life. It's not my stellar life. It's not my obedience to some sort of a law that happened to begin out there.

My acceptance, my peace before a holy God is based upon this, the forever finished work of Jesus Christ. How do I know the penalty has been paid? It's because he showed the signs and he is alive forevermore. What a great gospel. You know, and I just want to take a few moments, and I really want us to look at the outcome of that piece. And that outcome of that piece, when we live in light of that piece, is what we call joy. In other words, that's the fruit of it, isn't it? And you see that here again in verse number 20, because look at what it says. When he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So think about it, because we often ask this question.

I mean, all of life, I think, is a quest for satisfaction, to find meaning, to find hope, to find rest, to find some sort of inner joy, regardless of our circumstances that happen to be around us. And let me ask you, where do you find your joy? Where do you find your satisfaction? Where do you find your inner rest that happens to be in your life?

And I think it's really easy, you know, when we're in a Christian context, when we're in a Christian service, to happen to be like this and say, it's Jesus. You know, He is my everything. He is my rest. He is my peace. He is my joy. But let me ask you, is He really?

Because so often we chase the things that happen to be again around us. You know, so often again we think, if I just had more sex, if I just had more money, if I just had this certain relationship, then I could be satisfied, then I could have joy. And here's the amazing thing about all of that. So many people have gone down

that avenue, gone down that road. They've gotten that relationship. They've gotten, again, that physical sensation. They've gotten, again, the things that happen at the beginning of the world. And this is what they found. They found that they've been empty.

They found there was a momentary thrill, a momentary satisfaction, but in the end, They were empty, and you know why they were empty? We were never meant to find our joy. We were never meant to find our satisfaction. We were never meant to find our rest in the things of this world. in creation itself. It's found in Jesus Christ. It's found, again, in Him and in Him alone.

You know, we are so easily trying to be satisfied by the things that happen at the beginning of the world, and there's this extreme, glorious, growing satisfaction and joy

in what Jesus has done for people like us. And I wonder, do we know that? Because this is how he's glorified. When we enter in on that peace, when we not only know that peace, but really live in light of it and enter into that peace that happens to begin of Christ. Because look at the end of the verse. It's all about this. And the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Now think about it, because they used to have a dread fear right here. You know, is he a spirit? Is he an apparition? Has he come back to punish us? Has he come back to banish us in hell?

And there's a dread fear that happened to be there. All of a sudden there's this worship fear. But the reason why there's a worship fear, and I want you to see it's two things. I'm going to repeat this over and over until the end of the sermon. It's because of two things.

One is his presence. His presence is with them. And the other thing is the message he brings. Right? Both of those. Both of those again are necessary because you'll realize before his death, before his crucifixion, he had given them a message. But now he's gone out of their presence and that message is not radiating in their heart. We realize when we get to the end time, here Jesus Christ comes back and here are individuals that are not hearing, not accepting that message, and they're gonna ask the rocks and hills to fall upon them, to hide them from the face, from the wrath of the Lamb. It's both of those things. And so we have to realize that it's both His presence. and both his words, both his promises that have been brought to us. And it's incredible, isn't it? Because again, that proves that there's peace between us and God.

And nothing, think about his presence. There is nothing that will ever separate me from the love of God in Christ Jesus, no matter, again, what I've done, no matter what comes into my life. So think about it. You know, where did the joy come from in the disciples? And I'm going to tell you where it didn't come from, first of all. And I hope this is helpful.

The joy of the Lord, this peace that passes understanding, living in light, again, that we have peace with God that happens to begin in our life, does not come, does not come from our circumstances. It doesn't come from our relationships. It doesn't come from anything that happens to be external.

Because think of it, the disciples' circumstances haven't changed. They're still in Jerusalem. Here are the religious leaders, and they still hate Jesus. They hate any faith in Jesus. They hate any talk of Jesus. They're still a threat. Nothing has changed. And not only that, this hasn't changed. Their standing in Jesus Christ has not changed. You know, the whole meaning that my God will never leave me has not changed. What has changed? The realization of his presence, the realization again of his words. You know, his promises that are given to him.

Again, over in Luke chapter 24, beginning of verse number 41, it says, and while

they were still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, have you anything to eat? They gave him a piece of broiled fish. And he took it and ate it before them.

That's amazing, isn't it? You can imagine. We should try and imagine. Here we are before the Lord. Here we saw and we knew the brutality, again, of his murder, the brutality, again, of crucifixion. And all of a sudden, again, he's before us. We see the marks that happen to begin right there. And we're trying to make sense of all of this. We're trying to make sense of the message, again, of peace. But the more that we think about it, all of a sudden, the fog starts to clear. And we recognize that this Jesus is for us. And what bursts forth is a greater and greater and greater and greater joy. And for those, again, who love four-course meals, I'm going to tell you something. We have taste buds in heaven.

Isn't that amazing? He sits down and eats with them, but even eating with them speaks of this peace, speaks of this fellowship, speaks of this oneness, speaks of this acceptance that we have towards this great God. You know, isn't that amazing? John Piper's famous statement, in fact, he preached the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, I think 30 or 40 years, based upon this truth, and it's this right here. God is most glorified in us. Guess what? We're most satisfied in him. Isn't it amazing?

I don't need these things of the world. I don't need these relationships. I don't need these things that happen to be right there. And why? Because I have Christ! And think about it, that's how he's most glorified, isn't it? Not because, again, I've put my hope, not because I've put my longing and other things. I put it in Jesus, and Jesus is more than enough for my heart. You know, and we realize that, and we revel in that. So think about it, what makes the disciples fearful? And it happened to be the threat of the Jews. You know, they looked at their life, they looked at their circumstances, and the only thing that would bring us peace, the only thing that would bring us joy, the only thing that would bring us rest, if our circumstances changed and happened to begin around us. And how many times do we believe that? You know, how many times do we believe that lie?

You know, I need my spouse to change. I need my work life to change. I need my physical health to change. I need this to change. I need that to change. I need all these things to change in my life. I can't have the rest. I can't have the peace that happens at the beginning of our life. So what do we do? We choose again. Where can I find rest? Well, let's go to the, what do you call it, the mall. Let's go in the mall, and I'll buy myself a sweater. I'll buy myself again a pair of pants. I'll buy myself a high-top from Runners or whatever it happened to be.

And for that moment, I feel better. You know, it's almost like an electric charge. I get to wake up Autumn for the first time, praise the Lord. And it's almost like a charge that happens inside of us. But we know this. Right after that charge, here it is, our satisfaction and joy start to go down. Or all of a sudden, we'll look online and we'll see again things that we ought not to see. And all of a sudden, we'll walk away. And we've had that moment of satisfaction. We had that moment where we escaped our lives and escaped again all of our problems. But we're right back there. But the only thing now is we have all this guilt and shame.

You know, and think about it, because the disciples' circumstances didn't change. You know what changed? Jesus. He's here. He's for us and not against us forevermore. And it changed and revolutionized their life. It changed the whole direction. You know, it replaced that dread fear with absolute worship fear.

Look at my Jesus. Look at who he is. So much so that they were willing to risk their lives in the preaching of this gospel of Jesus Christ. You can kill me, but you can't keep me there. And you know what? My Jesus is alive. And it changed their

whole lives. And the question we should ask, you know, that happened to begin of our lives is, you know, how do we live in that life-altering joy, that life-altering peace that the disciples had in their life? And I'm going to get back to both points again.

One is to preach the gospel to yourself. One is to hear the message that Jesus Christ proclaimed that happened to be there. There's always going to be other messages coming to you, other messages that come to you, other messages that say you're not accepted, you're a failure. Either that or your acceptance is based upon what you have and what you've done. And there's all these false messages that confuse our hearts, that bring, again, burdens upon our soul. But when we preach the gospel to ourself, it's so liberating. Jesus truly has done it all for a sinner like me. And here's the second truth.

Jesus is always with us. We realize that as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, through the presence of the Holy Spirit of God, he's always with us. Isn't he? There's never a place that we can go. We realize he ascended to the Father, and he's at the right hand of the Father. And this is an amazing thing.

Right now, the Father, whatever you're going through, whatever trials, whatever difficulties you're going through, right now, the Son is at the right hand of the Father at hand. And you know what he's doing? Because he loves you, because he cares about you, because nothing can separate you from this Jesus, he's making intercession for you. You know, nothing can separate you from him.

So my question again is, do you have that joy? Do you have that rest in Jesus Christ based upon all that he has accomplished, knowing that he's for me and not against me? Remember the words of Piper. The words of Piper is, God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Jesus. Oh, look at my Jesus. You know, take the world, but give me Jesus. Look at him.

Do you believe that? Do you believe that beyond any doubt? Or do you say, there's no way that I can have joy, there's no way that I can have security, there's no way that I can have rest, there's no way that I can enjoy peace unless these circumstances change, unless this relationship change, unless these problems and difficulties and anxieties are suddenly altered or taken out of my life.

You know the amazing thing that happens to begin about the Word of God is God, the God of the Word, commands us to rejoice. And the moment he commands us to rejoice, guess what he's saying? It's not based upon your circumstances. You know, we read this in Philippians chapter four, beginning at verse number four. He says, rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I will say rejoice, let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand. And you might say, how can I rejoice?

And it's right there in the text. You know why? There it is right there. The Lord is at hand. That's why. He'll never leave us. He'll never forsake us. You know, He's excited about you. He's excited about me. His love will never dissipate for you. Incredible, isn't it?

Even when we mess up, His love never changes for us. His commitment to us, again, never wavers that happen to begin in our lives. He has purchased our redemption, and now He promises, now He promises that He'll never leave us. He'll never forsake us.

And when you fill your mind all of a sudden with these truths of the Lord Jesus Christ, when you fill your mind knowing that He's present with you, it's incredible because there is this peace, this inner peace that based upon the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ that comes to dominate our hearts. And what comes out of us, regardless of the circumstances, regardless of the trials, regardless again of the

people that happen to begin in our life, what comes out of us is what we call the joy of the Lord.

Look at my God. This God is so satisfying. This Christ is so good. So you know what we need to do? We need to rejoice and rejoice in Him. Let's bow our hearts for a moment of prayer. Father, what an amazing text. What a glorious text. So often we get it wrong. So often we think, Lord, that our acceptance is based upon how we've done. Lord, you've done your part. Now it's up to us to do our part.

And so often we base whether you're for us or against us is by what kind of day we had, what kind of mess-ups or non-mess-ups happen to be in our life. And Lord, we realize that we never live a day that is so holy that we are not in need of your grace. We never live a day where we've dug a hole that's so deep that your grace, that your acceptance, that your peace, that your love, that your mercy is not greater.

Lord, what a truth. Lord, help us to live in light of that. We know the irony in all of that. Not only do we see more and more of sin that happens to be in our heart, but Lord, we see Christ. We see His mercy. We experience that mercy, that love, that forgiveness that happens to be in our life. And we realize the corollary of that, Lord, that we become merciful people. We become gracious people. We become forgiving people because of His forgiveness.

Oh, Lord. May we see this peace. May we recognize this peace. May we experience this peace. May we live in light of the peace that we have through the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank you so much, Lord, for your patience with us. Just be with us as we go to our song service now. We ask these things in Christ's name. Amen.