

May 6, 07 Communion John 20:19,20 #3

### Because He Lives We Have Peace

One day Jesus was with his disciples on the sea and a horrific storm came up that scared the daylight out of these experienced fishermen. The water from the waves overtook the boat and began to fill it. Besides the water, the howling wind kept them off balance, and was blowing the ship in various directions and almost blew them overboard into the sea. The disciples became pretty upset and were exhausted trying to keep up with the water in the boat, and the wind that whipped their faces. Meanwhile, much to their dismay, Jesus slept. While the disciples worked to stay afloat, Jesus slept. The storm didn't faze him. In fact, it never did wake him. There could have been thunder. There could have been lightening. But none of these woke a sleeping, peaceful Jesus. So what did these tired disciples decide to do? They decided they better wake Jesus. "Jesus, don't you care that we might drown from this storm? The boat is filling with water and we just can't keep up with it. The storm doesn't seem to be letting up and we are afraid. Jesus, can you lend us a hand? Can't you do something?" Now that Jesus was awake, he looked at his disciples and said, "What seems to be the problem? Why are you afraid? Aren't I with you? And while I am with you, you need never to fear. Stop your doubting and believe." And then he

amazed his disciples when he stood up and faced the storm and said to the storm, “Be at peace.” And with that, the storm quieted, the wind stopped and the sea became calm. And the disciples? They were aghast at what to say or believe. This man, this wonderful, amazing man had power over storms. And now they were at peace. A lesson they should have remembered always....with Jesus near, there is always peace.

My friends, we love peace rather than chaos. We love it when our lives are at peace rather than in turmoil. We can rest easier when things are going well. When you read the 23 Psalm you realize that when the sheep were fed and cared for, when they had inner peace, they were able to rest beside the still waters. You see, they knew, while they rested the shepherd was on guard and they need not be afraid.

My friends, Because Jesus lives we do have peace. Hear God’s word to those this morning that might be facing tough times in your lives. Hear Jesus’ calming words to the disciples after the resurrection found in John 20:19,20 and claim them for yourself. **READ**

What does that say to us this morning? I believe it says to all of us not to panic, not to be afraid for **Jesus calms the storms in our lives.** We all know that from time to time things don’t go smoothly and we will meet many challenges along the way even if we are Christians. In fact, maybe more since that crafty, sinister, slimy,

sneaky, snake, Satan tries to deck Christians. There are times that we have to make tough decisions. God never said things would be easy. He never promised his Son salvation would be easy. It took a cross. He never told Jesus his life on this earth would be a piece of cake. He faced many obstacles. But God the Father, never had forsaken Jesus, even when Jesus thought he had. He was always just a prayer away.

Even today, though we face our own struggles no matter what they are, Jesus promises to ride out the storms with us. He tells us to hang on. He tells us to grab hold while he stills the tumultuous sea.

This morning we return to the disciples who are in the Upper Room with their lives in confusion. Things had not gone as they had planned. When they had entered the city of Jerusalem that Sunday before they never expected it to end like it did when that Friday came. They had been with Jesus long enough to know that trials would come. They saw it in Jesus' own life. They saw the rejections. They saw how the religious leaders treated him and tried to trick him. They rejected the healings of the people. They said Jesus was doing the work of the devil. So these 3 years they saw instability in the world. They saw it in the people Jesus touched. They saw it in their own lives as they often doubted him themselves. Had they forgotten what their own eyes had seen, what

their own ears had heard? Had they forgotten how he stilled the storm? Had they forgotten how Jesus slept while they panicked during the storm?

That's why when Jesus appeared to them that day the first thing he said to them was, "Peace be with you."

He wanted to calm their fears.

What was he saying to them? He was saying, 'stop fearing the things you don't understand. Stop worrying about the future but be at peace because you are not alone for I, the risen Lord, am with you forever from this day forward. Don't let the turmoil in your lives destroy you. Believe in God. Believe also in me. Know I will never let you go.'

And we know what happened. They were filled with joy. Their fears left them. They didn't have to be afraid because Jesus was alive.

My friends that is the way we need to be. You see the gift of peace was won for us on the cross. When Jesus was getting ready to go to the cross he told the disciples not to let their hearts be troubled but to believe in God, to believe in him.

That advice is for us today as well. Like the disciples we don't know what is down the road for us. We wish we had a magic wand or a crystal ball to see the future. We'd like to know what we are going to face. But God knows better. All these physics' seem to think they can tell you about the future but it doesn't always come out as they say. They can read the palm of your hand, or the tea leaves, or even if you listen to WFMD and physic Susan, they can try and tell you vague things, but they really don't know what the future holds. After all, they are not God. If God wanted you to know what lies ahead in your lives he would have given our parents a detailed roadmap for each of us to follow. However, God is wiser than that. He gave us his word. For he knew if we knew everything about our future we would not have to trust him at all. We wouldn't even need Jesus. So the future we have is trusting in our God who knows our future. We trust he will reveal that which we need to know, when we need to know it. So we can have peace because Jesus lives today and still is in charge, and we don't have to worry about the future.

**Because Jesus is alive he calms our souls.**

In his letter to the Galatians Paul writes the fruit of the Spirit is “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control.”

You see, because He lives we can have this wonderful peace. It's really a gift that is given to us.

Paul used the word "peace" to wish someone well. In fact, "Peace be with you" is an Eastern greetings which actually means, "May God give you every good thing."

Even today in many churches as part of the worship service they have what they call "passing the peace of Christ" as people shake hands and tell someone, "may the peace of God be with you." What they are saying, whether they realize it or not, is that old Eastern greeting, "May God give you every good thing." Now that's a great blessing.

Yes, because Jesus lives he calms our souls. He takes away our fears. He takes away our worries. When we are going through tough times he comes to us and says "Peace be with you."

And finally, **Because Jesus is alive he calms our fears.** When the disciples saw Jesus it changed their lives. Man, they found that they had peace now. Here it is over 2,000 years later and we know Jesus calms our fears. Many times he told the disciples not to fear but trust in him. "Fear not, for it is I" Jesus told them another time when there was a storm and he came walking to them on the water. It was Peter who asked Jesus to let him come to him on that water and we know everything was okay as long as he kept his eyes on Jesus. But once he

took his eyes off Jesus, once the storm got his attention, his fears came back and the wind and the rain became fierce, so he began to sink. What did he do? He yelled out to Jesus to save him. And Jesus came and took his hand and brought him to safety. You see, because Jesus was there, he really didn't have to fear at all. Jesus would never let him go. He would take care of Peter and the disciples.

I know we have our fears. I know we have to learn how to deal with them. I know also that when we focus on those fears, we begin to doubt, and when we begin to doubt we fail to trust.

Max Lucado writes, “ Our faith is not in religion, our faith is in God. A hardy, daring faith that believes God will do what is right, every time. And that God will do what it takes- whatever it takes- to bring his children home. He is the shepherd in search of his lamb. His legs are scratched, his feet are sore and his eyes are burning. He scales the cliffs and traverses the fields. He explores the caves. He cups his hands to his mouth and calls into the canyon. And the name he calls is yours. He is the housewife in search of the lost coin. No matter that he has nine others, he won't rest until he has found the tenth. He searches the house. He moves furniture....All other tasks can wait. Only one thing matters. The coin is of great value to him. He owns it. He will not stop until he finds it. The coin he seeks is you.”

This morning Communion reminds us that Jesus is present with us. Communion reminds us not only that Jesus died to set us free, but that he rose again and because he is alive we can have inner peace. So this morning at this altar receive the gift of peace. Not because of anything I've said, but because of what Jesus says. *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you."*

When you go from this place, take in your heart the words of God's blessings that say, "May God give you every good thing." Let the people of God say "Amen!"