

The risen Lord

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[0 : 00] And it is time to read the gospel according to John in chapter 20, and read from verse 19.

Then the same day of the evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut, the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews.

And Jesus stood in the midst and said unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side.

Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you.

As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. As we come to the concluding service of this communion season, let us remember that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is a means of grace and not an end in itself.

[1 : 23] It is designed of the Lord for the refreshment and for the strengthening of his believing people.

So often there is at the end of the communion season a sense of anti-carnic. We are in time to look back and to think how much we enjoyed the teaching of the word and the fellowship around the Lord's table.

And though it is right that we should look back with thanksgiving, yet our minds must not be taken up altogether with a backward look, but rather with a look back in thanksgiving and a look forward to the future, a sense of the blessing that we have received at the Lord's table, especially.

We know those Christians who have said, Oh, I wish the communion season would continue. But then we have to be careful, lest with that kind of thinking we must need it.

It is a means to an end. It is not an end in itself. It is a special provision that the Lord makes for us, that we must see upon him in a particular way, that we might speak upon him by faith, in order that we might be strengthened to be better Christians by having had fellowship at the Lord's table.

[3 : 08] It is part of the merciful provision that the Lord has made for us, that we can, from time to time, sit together at the Lord's table and protect of these emblems and symbols which stick to us so clearly, confirming what has been done for us and for our salvation.

And it is good for us and for the glory of God that we should be very mindful of that which has been done. But thanks to everyone whom the Lord has said and called unto himself, he has called to serve him.

And we must remember that the Apostle Paul himself gloried in the fact that he had been called into the service of Jesus Christ.

It appears to be that Apostle, in which he took a special delight, called a servant, a bond slave, a servant of Jesus Christ.

And so what this done to, I would like you to consider some scriptures to encourage us in the days that we trust you'll lie ahead of us, in order that we must better see that which we have the privilege and the responsibility of doing in the service of God.

[4 : 41] Luke tells us in his book of the Acts of the Apostles that after his death, the Lord Jesus showed himself to the Apostles by many infallible proofs.

And Paul tells us that there were hundreds, indeed far more than 500 on just one occasion, that there were hundreds who were witnesses to the fact of Jesus Christ alive from the dead.

And as we come to the end of the communion season, it is right for us to be thankful for the death that was died in our faith.

But thanks to death of Jesus Christ is the case of all its meaning, unless it was followed by a glorious resurrection.

And the Apostle tells us, that if Christ be not alive, our faith is vain, our preaching is vain, and we are still in our faith.

[5 : 57] So in our text here, in these three verses in John 20, we are in the time when the disciples were coming new to the experience of the fact that your Lord and the Master was indeed risen from the dead.

And we can see in these verses some of the uplifting effects that the certain knowledge of his resurrection had upon these days who previously were bewildered and baffled by the course of events that had culminated in the death of their Lord.

So I'd like us, please read to see tonight in our Lord's presence, Jesus' presence, with his disciples in verse 90, and we read that Jesus came and stood in the midst.

And then in verse 20 of the peace and the joy of the disciples, and in verse 21 of the commission that Jesus gave unto them.

First of all, then, of the Lord's presence. In the same day, that is, the day of the resurrection, when the disciples were gathered together, Jesus came and stood in the midst.

[7 : 30] of the disciples. Now, we read on various occasions in the gospel accounts of how the Lord Jesus came to his disciples when they were in particular times of distress and hardship, and of how he comforted them in his presence.

We remember the occasion when he was asleep in the ship and the ship was in a storm on the Sea of Galilee and how they arose from and how he comforted them when he rebuked the wind and there was a great calm.

And then you remember on another occasion when he walked on the water toward them and they were terrified, thinking that they seen a spirit and Jesus said to them, be not afraid, it is I.

but we can say that the whole strength of their life as disciples was in the fact that the Lord was with them.

He was the very center of their life. They had given us their various callings in order that they might be with him continuously.

[8 : 51] In other words that we have thought already, they were in many ways inadequate in their understanding. Yes, I'm sure all of them were agreed in this that Jesus himself was at the very purpose, at the very center of their life.

He was at the very purpose, he was the very purpose of their life. And then here he is in a way in a way which none of them expected.

He is restored to them back from the dead. And though it must be very difficult for us to grasp the impact that his appearance had upon us, they had heard that he was risen from the dead.

They found it very difficult to believe though they had heard it from the women. And yet here comes Jesus. He, in a marvelous way, of course, he was restricted as he was with him.

And while the doors were shut because they were terrified of what might happen to them, Jesus suddenly appeared in their midst. And surely we can say that the fear that they had entertained previously, you can see as we read here that the doors were shut out of fear of what might happen to them.

[10 : 29] But when the Lord Jesus was restored to them again, their fear would have been lessened and perhaps altogether conquered.

His purpose should have given them a senseless purpose which, of course, had been shattered when he was taken from them in a manner which they did not expect at all.

In fact, is it not the supreme, we might dare to say, blessing of the Lord's people to know that in every circumstance he is with us.

And how many of the saints of God going through the ages of the church have been able to testify to the fact that they have had some terrible experiences through which they have gone and their experiences have been sanctified by the consciousness of the Lord's heaven's goodness.

I expect most of you will know something of the life of John patient who went to the Pacific Island and how that man did not be near long he had to dig the grave of his wife and his baby.

[12 : 00] And it was his own testimony he said I would have gone mad but for the presence that the Lord does face unto me beside that lonely grave.

He knew the presence of the Lord in the depths of his sorrow. A presence that suspended.

remember how roses when he was going to take the children of Israel up from Egypt into the land that had been promised.

And at what stage he said the Lord said I go not with me take me not. The man who would not dare to go except he could be assured of the Lord's presence with him.

The sufferings of the saints of God have been manifold don't through the years. But how wonderful it is that the Lord by his gracious presence is able to sanctify suffering through his glory and even to the blessing of the sufferer.

his disciples who thought that they had lost their Lord permanently. There's not one of them who had anticipated his return.

[13 : 42] None of them had fully believed what he had said that he was to suffer and to die and to rise again the third day. None was unexpected and none having heard that he was written he only was in their midst and have he read that he gave to Thomas the evidence that he had professed that he needed before he would be convinced of the master's resurrection.

his presence had been for a time long and now he saw if they had valued the presence of the Lord before his suffering and death how much more would they have valued it now when he was back to death back with them from the death.

Remember the promise that he had given as John tells us earlier in his gospel account the promise was I will not leave you often I will come to you.

Those words of course were written with particular regard to the promise of the Holy Spirit but Jesus knew that he was going away and that he would be restored to them and then finally the other comforter would come to take his place but here is part of the promise he had not left them death as often he had come back to them and we can imagine in some little way that the disciples now though they had been a fearful band shut together in the room afraid of what was going to happen to them would have been wonderfully strengthened by having their Lord and Master with them again but then we also read of the peace and the joy that his presence afforded them what a blessing it was to the disciples when Jesus said unto them peace be unto you peace be unto you peace can we imagine that people and the rest would have had something of a disturbed conscience with the remembrance of how they had all forsaken him and fled in the time of his need how they all had very worthy to him and now instead of coming to them with stern rebuke peace he comes to them with a message of peace peace be unto you the

Lord Jesus knew their hearts this of course was the Hebrew greeting but he meant in this instance it would have a deep significant for them when the master came to them not made rebuke peace but were the last of your peace they had fear of their enemy they must have had some disturbing anticipation of how the master would deal with them when they heard that he was alive again and Jesus comes to be unto you he says peace and again here we see something of the fulfillment of the promise that he had given himself he said my peace I give unto you this was his divine legacy to them he had nothing in terms of material benefits that he might leave with them but his legacy was a legacy of peace and the peace that was enriched for them in a knowledge of the fact that killed their

[18 : 20] Lord and master as they began to understand that it was peace with God which their saviour had purchased as he had died was just for the unjust of Peter's earth in order to bring them and all his people in every age unto himself how the disciple past should have been warned with the message of peace as their saviour returns to them but at the end of verse 20 we also read after seeing the evidence in the master of his crucifixion then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord with a vast sincerity the apostle John speaks of these things no doubt it would have been exuberant joy such joy as they had never known in their lives before their master back from the dead and was not this again a promise that he had made unto them that his joy the joy that he had in being the master's will that his joy might remain in them and that their joy might be sold and sometimes is it not true that the under escalated joyful element that is in the gospel and here we read that the disciples were glad and could there be any greater reason for their gladness of this day that they were utterly convinced that in large indeed their very

Lord and master with all the marks of the crucifixion upon him restored to them for we must say that we narrative here is just a wonderful understatement they were joyful with joy unspeakable because you see their joy came from the facts of redemption and we know that the two on the Emmaus road they were so sorrowful and they were so depressed because they did not know the facts they did not know that the master was risen from the dead they still rested they know that he was the very one that was speaking to them they were cast because they did not know the facts and here were the disciples who were exhibibly joyful because they were convinced that indeed their Lord and

master who had died was this very safe person who was restored to them and this is surely one of the glories of the gospel that the

Christian's joy is based solidly upon fact not upon airy fairy make-belief that's what the world's joy if we dare call it the joy that the world has that's what the world's pleasure is based on it has no solid foundation at all but the Christian's joy is based upon the facts of redemption that God in Christ Jesus has satisfied divine justice he has reconciled us to God he has given us a title to glory he has destroyed death and overcome Satan and all the power of death and so the disciples of Moses they came into the the full understanding of what had happened they were joyful when they saw indeed that the fulfillment of redemption so the disciples were glad when they saw the

Lord but then as a consequence of this he said that Jesus also said unto them as my father hath sent me even so I send you and here the master is giving his disciples his servants their commission his own divine commission honor has been completed he has fulfilled everything that was written of him he has paid the penalty of sin in his death he's living again for our justification and now he is commissioning his disciples he says my father has sent me and now I am sending you we can imagine that the disciples themselves would have preferred had it been possible for them to remain with the

Lord may remember Mary as we read she desired to stay with him but he again gave her a commission he told he commanded and commissioned her to go and tell his disciples what she had seen go and tell my friends Aunt Peter gets a special mention go and tell them she wanted like the disciples she wanted to stay with the Lord she had lost him and here he was restored to her and she wanted to stay with him and she is commissioned to go and tell what she knows and we can imagine that if the disciples had it within their house they would have preferred to stay with the Lord the risen Lord as long as it was possible for them but Jesus has known

[25 : 08] I am sending you to do your work now so is it not all too easy for us to forget the fact that indeed every one of us who names the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity is a servant of the living God and our lives are to be given in service to him there is not one that the Lord saves but he saves in order that he might serve and the disciples here receive the near commission as my father sends me I am sending you they have work to do but with this blessing attached to it that he would never leave them nor forsake them that his presence was to go with them as he had warned them previously that in this world that they would have tribulation our

Lord never gave them an anticipation that their future life would be a plain and easy one he said that they will put you out of the synagogue that those who would desire to kill you will think they're doing God's service but he assured them that he would never leave them nor forsake them that he would be with them now if we apply these what we have read here particularly to ourselves let's remember first of all that the sacraments of the Lord's Supper is a spiritual feast in which we might be nourished and strengthened in our love to the Saviour in our faith in him and in our zeal for his cause and kingdom we must not think we have come to the end of the communion season and it was very lovely while it lasted since it is given of the Lord in order that sitting at his table we may be the better equipped to serve him if we who have been privileged to sit at the

Lord's table many times or even a few times if we are not better Christians because we have been there then there is something seriously wrong so we must not look back merely but we must look back with thanksgiving and seek to go forward having been strengthened and refreshed by the fellowship that we have enjoyed at the Lord's table now let's remember too the peace and the joy which the apostle had because of the presence of the Lord and because of what he said to them and let's remember that though they had a very particular joy in that they had his physical presence with them that it is a part of the inheritance of all the people of God peace and joy and that these things are to be shown for not only in our fellowship with one another not only in our worship but in our daily life and activities we know painfully well that around us is a world that is ignorant of the blessings of salvation a world that is inclined to believe that it has all the pleasure and that Christians are those who upon whom the burden of religion lies very heavily and it is indeed one of the devils lies to persuade men and women that the Christian life is a joyless one and are we not guilty hence so often of allowing the world to think that about us because our joy in the things of the Lord so often is very poor if not altogether invisible have we not infinitely greater reason to be joyful and to have peace of mind and heart than anyone in the world who bases his pleasure merely on the passing things of the world

Lord is there anything that we can imagine that should give us greater joy than the knowledge of eternal life in Jesus Christ but hence do we in our daily living endeavours are the grace of God to manifest unto others the joy and the peace that we have when we hear people bemoaning the national situation their personal situation the price of goods in the shops the weather and all these things do we just join in with that thinking or do we show some Christian goodness by a gentle review I remember a few years ago an elder in the Towsdale congregation he went into the local post office one day and there was the man in the post office was lamenting a good many things and the dear old elder he's in drawing now he just gently intruded and said this is the day the Lord has made let us rejoice and be glad in it

[31 : 45] I feel that well that we ought to be prepared to show the world that the knowledge of Jesus Christ and salvation is a matter of joy and though the world is seeking its pleasure but it's seeking it in the wrong place for the unbeliever there is no first thing of solid joy and lasting pleasure and since this is this is what the Lord Jesus Christ himself has purchased for us that we have peace with God in Jesus Christ God is reconciled unto us and we are adopted into his family and we are assured by the apostles that none of the circumstances in the world and none of the powers in the in the in the in the in powers of darkness can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ but in whatever situation we are we are secure as the children of God is there anything conceivable that ought to bring us greater joy and peace from that but is that is that the witness that we bear before the world or are we not so often compromised by the world thinking and find ourselves agreeing with the world in its unbelief and allowing the world to think that we have nothing which it needs and that our life is very little different from the life of those in the world except that we go to church and they don't the joy and the peace that Jesus Christ gave unto his disciples in this situation is that which we all ought to be manifesting in our daily living and friends you know that for all the endeavors of unbelieving men around us to derive some some pleasure and some satisfaction from life you know that there are so many broken homes there's so much depression there's so much of moral chaos around us that we ought to our testimony to the joy and peace which is in Jesus Christ ought to come as a benediction to those amongst whom we move but in what measure does it

I fear that in so often in many ways the world does not recognize that we have anything more than it has itself no the commission to the disciples that the Lord Jesus gave here was that he was sending them no the as we read as we can read in the early part of the Acts of the Apostles when the Lord Jesus was just about to take his farewell to his disciples he said that they would be witnesses unto him in Jerusalem the Jerusalem that had the blood of the prophets on its hands the Jerusalem that had crucified the Lord himself he said you'll be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem in Judea

Samaria where there was such opposition to the Jews from the Samaritans and the other was possibly and then we who name the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity we are those who want to be bearing a witness to Jesus Christ wherever in the providence of God he places us in order that we might live lives that shall be to his glory and the means of bringing others unto a knowledge of Christ themselves I believe that one of our great shortcomings as Christians in the world is this that we are often so dumb about the things that we hold most dear and the things that we know that the world around needs or the unbelieving will perish forever can we with a good conscience before God behold from those who are around us the knowledge of Jesus Christ have we so little love for the

Saviour have we so little compassion for the souls of men that we can treat them with indifference knowing that they are on the broad way that leads to destruction when we have professed we have professed here these last few days professed a knowledge of eternal life in Jesus Christ professed that he indeed is the way of salvation and to neglect and to reject him is to bring upon oneself eternal condemnation can we be silent the Lord Jesus himself spoke the truth in spite of all the opposition that that brought upon him and what kind of persecution will we receive if we speak the truth just perhaps an indignant silence from our neighbours or perhaps who won't speak to us again is that all the sacrifice you'll have to make if we testify to Jesus Christ if we seek to bring joy and peace into the hearts of those around us is that all we have to suffer dare we think of what many in totalitarian states are now enduring for the cause of Christ and are we prepared to do so little well friends we have sat around the Lord's table in order to feed on the

Lord Jesus Christ to testify that he is our eternal life may the Lord give us grace to serve him with all our faculties with all our opportunities in the power of the Holy Spirit that we may be the means of

bringing glory to his name and other souls into the knowledge of salvation amen let us pray oh Lord we have to confess that we have been immeasurably blessed by thyself in things spiritual and in things temporal but if thou wert to measure our thanksgiving by that which is seen in our daily living and our daily witness we would have

[39 : 29] I would have to conclude that our thanksgiving unto thee is just a matter of worth and no more oh Lord we confess how poverty stricken is our service how poor is our love how weak is our zeal for thy cause and kingdom oh Lord we have much to be forgiven but we pray that through the ministry of word and sacrament in these past few days that these may remain as a blessing to us strengthening us for doing battle with the pulse of darkness strengthening us that we might have a more Christ-like compassion for the souls of men that we might have a greater love for the saviour that we might have a greater love for one another so keep us in the truth oh Lord may thy presence be with us may it be manifest in all in every aspect of our activity in order that we might live to the praise and the glory of thy name and all we ask for

Jesus sake amen