

'THE HAPPIEST LORD'S DAY!'

(2020 Resurrection Day Series)

John 20

The Hiding Place

(Later Resurrection Day in the Upper Room with Jesus)

The other day Jesus and the disciples had come to town for a week of festivities: *Passover, Unleavened Bread, and 1st Fruits*. Fellowship with friends in Bethany each night and awesome *Triumphal Entry* trips to town by day. But in less than a week, Jesus had been hunted down, beaten, and killed; one traitorous disciple had hanged himself and all but one of the others ran away quivering in fear and confusion. Things change so quickly under the sun in this sin-cursed world.

A few weeks ago we went to work and church as usual. We looked forward to birthdays, anniversaries, church fellowships, and a special Resurrection Day service. But all of a sudden, a vicious killer virus shut down the world. Now, living like *untouchables*, everything has changed-- plans made in the past, all present activities, and all future aspirations all are now so ambiguous. Things are changing so quickly now that daily life is a blur. We Christians have always looked forward to the Lord's return, but we didn't know that it would feel like this – we've always known it would get worse (*much worse!*) before it got better, but I don't think we expected to feel so detached from this world and one another prior to our imminent evacuation and journey to heaven (*John 14:1-3, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18*).

The disciples must have felt this sort of *soul sickness* that original Resurrection Day – their sense of loss of Jesus, loss of direction and purpose, conflicting reports about seeing Jesus alive by a few and now being hunted by authorities for grave-robbing His corpse (*Matthew 28:11-15*); Passover AD 30 had become a nightmare. What else could go wrong?! All they could do was get together in that last place where things had been good – the Upper Room – to share, pray and plan, in their spiritual *hiding place*. What happens now?!? *The eleven* came but one of them (*Thomas*) became so upset and depressed by the conflicting reports, he left the fellowship prematurely. Returning later, he found out that forsaking the brethren was a huge mistake that only made a very, very bad day worse-- much, much worse!

Just before Christ returns in the clouds to gather us to Himself, the escalating troubles in this world have collateral damage-- *social distancing* believers from one another and curtailing our lifestyle of collective fellowship, worship, and service together. We are finding alternative ways of doing some of what is biblical and dear to us, but there is a sort of *soul sickness* of separation that will only find healing when we are together again, '*here, there, or in the air*'. To mitigate *soul sickness*, we all need a *hiding place* to go to where only family or we alone can experience Christ's Spirit coming through the walls of separation and the darkness of these times. When He comes to us through the fears, ambiguity, and gloom right now, He will command '*Peace*' to our mind that brings gladness to our soul (*20:19-20*).

Wherever your private *hiding place* may be, His Word of *peace*, the Bible, will breathe new Spirit-filled life into our hearts and give a new vision of His ministry purpose for your life when these trials *pass over* and a new, better *life as usual* comes (*20:21-23*). The *hiding place* where these things happen isn't necessarily a place – David composed a song given from God-- please note the *hiding place* is the presence of the Person in there with you: "*You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah*" (*Psalms 32:7*) May your *hiding place* during these dark days become your favorite place to meet with the risen Savior. *PtL*

The 12 Physical Appearances of Our Risen Savior:

- To Mary Magdalene at the garden tomb (*John 20:14-16, Mark 16:9*)
- To the other women returning to Bethany (*Matthew 28:9-10*)
- To Peter after the women's report & re-exam of the tomb(?) (*Luke 24:8-12, 33; 1 Corinthians 15:5*)
- To 2 disciples going to Emmaus (late Sunday afternoon) (*Mark 16:12-13, Luke 24:13-33*)
- To 10 disciples Sunday evening / Upper Room (*John 20:19-23, Mark 16:14-18, Luke 24:36-43*)
- To 11 disciples – Thomas present (Jesus appears / the next Sunday evening) (*John 20:24-29*)
- To 7 disciples at Sea of Galilee (week later / after 'Unleavened Bread') (*John 21*)
- To all 11 disciples somewhere in Galilee (*Matthew 28:16-20*)
- To over 500 people in Galilee (*1 Corinthians 15:6*) (*other appearances 'the 40 days' / Acts 1:3*)
- To James (*the Lord Jesus' younger brother / Jerusalem(?) 1 Corinthians 15:7*)
- To all apostles (near Mount of Olives / Jerusalem) (*Mark 16:19-20, Luke 24:44-53, Acts 1:4-11*)
- To Apostle Paul (*Acts 9 / converted to Christ; Galatians 1:11-17 / learn Christ's theology in Arabia*)

‘Happy Resurrection Dusk!’

(The Disciples and Jesus in The Upper Room – End of Resurrection Day)

John 20:19-23

Passage introduction: Because the Apostle John’s gospel was written 30-40 years after the other Gospel writers (*Matthew & Mark wrote around AD 50; Luke around AD 60*), his Spirit-inspired record is supplemental to the synoptics, focusing primarily on information crucial to the reader’s belief in Jesus as the Son of God (*John 20:30-31, 21:24-25*). This explains John’s omission of all details of **Resurrection Day** between Jesus’ appearance to Mary Magdalene (*20:18*) and the first appearance to the disciples later that day (*20:19*). That interlude included doubt by the eleven and departing from Jerusalem by two disciples (*Luke 24*) / facts unhelpful to belief for John’s readers.

Resurrection Day afternoon-- Between John 20:18 & 20:19: Enlightenment of disciples throughout that Sunday afternoon was being done by appearances of Jesus and reports of those appearances to the disciples in Bethany (see *Appearances Chart*). At day’s end, the disciples assemble in the Upper Room to compare reports and probably discuss Jesus’ command for them to meet Him in Galilee (*Matthew 28:7, Mark 16:7*). It was only a few days until the end of the *Feast of Unleavened Bread* (*the week-long part of Passover starting on the previous Thursday*) when they would be able to leave for their homes in Galilee. The meeting was probably to discuss the trip and ‘*what now?*’ All eleven disciples arrive (*Luke 24:33-34*) and begin to share their testimonies of the day’s events.

Apparently annoyed at all the appearances to so many non-apostles (*except Peter, who had been such a failure all weekend*), Thomas slinks out to wander and ponder in the dark streets. Upon his leaving, Jesus appeared to the ‘10’ disciples (*Luke 24:36-43, John 20:24*)....

‘Peace’ from Him Being with Us

(Dispelling Fear with Faith)

“Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, “Peace be with you.” When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.”

20:19-20

- What do you do when fears fill your heart and mind? Do you have somewhere to go where you can shut the doors and turn off the noise and let Christ’s presence fill you with *His peace*? (*Philippians 4:6-9*) Have you been meeting with the Lord there during these fearful times of the coronavirus?
- The disciples were glad when they confirmed that Jesus was with them. In what ways does the Lord confirm His presence to you in your *hiding place*? Does it make you glad despite problems as you meditate on His presence (*John 16:30-33, 2 Timothy 1:7*)?
- What did Thomas miss by not having a *hiding place* experience that night?

‘Peace’ from His Word Spoken to Us

(Dispersing fruit and forgiveness)

“So Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.””

20:21-23

- Meditating on the Lord’s presence does bring personal peace, but His Word brings a different kind of Spirit-filled peace about His will and plans for us. (*Isaiah 26:3*)
- How important is ‘Spirit-filled’ peace (*Galatians 5:22*) to ‘being sent’ out with the ‘ministry of reconciliation’ (helping others experience forgiveness from God or in reconciling with one another)? (*James 3:18*)
- Is it a good idea to spend a little time in your *hiding place* prior to any ministry endeavor you are called to do? (Discuss how time spent there might help)