

24, 2nd Season
#2: Seeing is Believing
April 14-16, 2007

¹⁹On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” ²⁰After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

²¹Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” ²²And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³If you forgive the sins of anyone, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.” ²⁴Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.” ²⁶A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.” ²⁸Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!” ²⁹Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” *John 20:19-29 TNIV*

Introduction: In the first 24 hours following Jesus’ resurrection, God established a new relationship with humanity. His appearance before his disciples and subsequent visitation of Thomas teach us what that relationship is all about.

- I. Hello/Shalom (vv.19-21)
 - A. On the night of Jesus’ resurrection, Jesus appeared to his fearful disciples suddenly in a locked room, perhaps the very “upper room” where they had shared the Passover feast together three days before. (v.19a)
 - B. Jesus offered twice the traditional Hebrew greeting “Peace be upon you” (Shalom aleichem), to which the disciples would have responded, “Upon you be peace” (Aleichem shalom). (vv.19b, 21a)

- C. Shalom’s triple entendre:
 1. Peace between two parties, especially God and humanity;
 2. True inner peace, or calmness of spirit; and
 3. A heartfelt greeting.
- D. At Jesus’ appearing, the disciples joy was immediately greater than their fear: they were “overjoyed.” (v.20b)
- II. Holy Spirit (vv.21-23)
 - A. Peace was (and is) the very content of Jesus’ presence, and he charged his disciples to carry his peace into the world just as he had brought God’s peace to them: peace with God, inner peace, and heartfelt greeting. (v.21)
 - B. Jesus breathed on the disciples and infused (Greek *emphusao*, as in Genesis 2:7 from the Septuagint) them with the Holy Spirit, telling them to “lay hold of it” (Greek *lambano*). (v.22)
 - C. Jesus gave the disciples a precise mission—forgiveness—noting that a failure to forgive would be consequential (not the same as judgement). (v.23)
- III. Heavenly Sight (vv.24-29)
 - A. Thomas had not been with the others at Jesus’ appearing, and he doubted (i.e., his fear was greater than his joy). (v.24)
 - B. The others had seen the Lord, but Thomas had not, and he wanted to see the marks of Jesus’ crucifixion for himself. (v.25)
 - C. Jesus showed Thomas, as he had the others, telling Thomas to stop doubting and believe. (v.27, v.20a)
 - D. Thomas required nothing that had not been offered to the others, so Jesus words in v.29 are probably intended for the future church. (See 2 Cor. 4:18, 5:7)
 - E. Thomas’ response of faith is ours as well: “My Lord and my God!” (v.28)
 - F. The other side of the bridge: (a) trust, (b) experience, (c) history, (d) necessity.

Conclusion: Like Thomas, we always fear that God might bite off more than we can chew. Yet, our mission is specific, and ours is not to do the work of God, but to trust Him to do His work in and through us. He is our Lord and God!