**The Peace that Leads to Life** John E Brown

John 20:1-31 January 6, 2019

* The story of the resurrection of Jesus is an interesting back drop for the beginning of a New Year. The disciples and followers of Jesus were living in an environment that was filled with mockery and hostility towards their faith and they were confused and filled with misunderstanding about His death. They felt alone, afraid, and unsure about the future. Sound familiar?
  + “Now on the first *day* of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone *already* taken away from the tomb. So she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.” So Peter and the other disciple went forth, and they were going to the tomb. The two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead faster than Peter and came to the tomb first; and stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings lying *there*; but he did not go in. And so Simon Peter also came, following him, and entered the tomb; and he saw the linen wrappings lying *there*, and the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself. So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb then also entered, and he saw and believed.For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. So the disciples went away again to their own homes.But Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping; and so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb;and she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying. And they said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.”When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing *there*, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said to Him, “Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away.”Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, “Rabboni!” (which means, Teacher).Jesus said to her, “Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.’” Mary Magdalene came, announcing to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord,” and *that* He had said these things to her.” **John 20:1-18 NASB**
    - Look at verse 8-9… What did John ‘believe’?
      * What effects was their misunderstanding of the scripture having on the disciples? (See Psalm 16:10)
      * Jesus speaks her name… He simple says ‘Mary’! (His sheep hear His voice… He calls them by name and leads them… see John 10:2-4)
      * This is a great way to pray for people who don’t know Jesus.
      * Jesus had not yet ascended (but He was about to) so He told Mary not to ‘cling’ to Him but to go tell the others what she had seen and heard.
* The disciples had just seen the empty tomb and learned that Jesus was alive but they were still ‘stunned’, frightened and in hiding.
  + “So when it was evening on that day, the first *day* of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, “Peace *be* with you.” **John 20:19 NASB**
    - They were ‘locked’ in for fear of the Jews and Jesus ‘invades their space’ and says “Peace be with you.”
    - This is a perfect way to walk into a New Year…
    - Receive Jesus into the fearful and hidden places in your heart and life and let Him impart His peace to you.
    - What doors has fear closed in your life?
    - What passages or portals have you ‘locked in’ and others locked out?
    - Even when the disciples had gone home and locked the doors, Jesus came and stood among them, speaking peace to them.
    - His love was greater than their fear!
    - Perfect love drives out fear.
      * “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.” **John 14:27 NASB**
      * “These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.” **John 16:33 NASB**
    - Their fears and misunderstanding drew them closely together but it blocked their capacity to live in peace.
    - He speaks 4 words… Peace be with you. (See Luke 2:14)
  + “So Jesus said to them again, “Peace *be* with 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, *their sins* have been forgiven them; if you retain the *sins*of any, they have been retained.” **John 20:21-23 NASB**
* He showed the disciples His hands and His side… and they rejoiced, knowing it was really Him
  + “… He presents Himself alive… by many convincing proofs…” (Acts 1:3)
  + He proclaims peace to them again and He ‘commissions them.’
  + After speaking His peace to them a second time… They each have an encounter with the Holy Spirit.
  + The peace of God opens the way for the power of God to come to us.
  + He breathes on them and gave them a ‘commanded gift’ – Receive the Holy Spirit!
* “But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.So the other disciples were saying to him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.” **John 20:24-25 NASB**
  + Thomas misses the meeting… Really! He refuses to believe unless he can see and touch the hands and side of Jesus. So he spends the next 8 days in unbelief.
* “After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, “Peace *be* with you.”Then He said to Thomas, “Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing.” Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed *are* they who did not see, and *yet* believed.” **John 20:26-29 NASB**
  + All the doors are closed and locked again and Jesus appears with another declaration of ‘Peace be with you’. (Verse 26)
  + Thomas has a show and tell experience with Jesus. (I don’t know if he was in ‘kindergarten’ or was the 1st Missourian!)
  + Seeing may be believing but believing is undoubtedly seeing.
* “Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.” **John 20:30-31 NASB**
  + Jesus performed many other signs that are not in this book, but there is a reason for including these incidents.
    - “But these are written (recorded) in order that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ (the Anointed One), the Son of God, and that through believing *and* cleaving to *and* trusting *and* relying upon Him you may have life through (in) His name [through Who He is].” **John 20:31 AMPC**
  + He wants us to believe in Him so that we can have new life in His name… New life through who He is. Whether that is for the first time or just the first time this year. He wants to bring peace to our hearts so we can experience new levels of life in Him.
  + He speaks peace to us to open abundant life to us.
* Happy New Year!