

The Light Reveals the Truth

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John 20:19-31 ¹⁹ Then, the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled¹, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace *be* with you." ²⁰ When He had said this, He showed them *His* hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. ²¹ So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." ²² And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they are retained." ²⁴ Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." ²⁶ And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" ²⁷ Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand *here*, and put *it* into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." ²⁸ And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹ Jesus said to him, "Thomas¹, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed *are* those who have not seen and *yet* have believed." ³⁰ And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

Last week we heard how the women come to the tomb early in the darkness. They leave in the glorious light of his resurrection. They come bearing the accoutrements of death. They leave with the promises of life. Similarly in our text today the disciples begin hiding in fear but in the end, leave filled with power and life.

The story of easter is the story of Jesus taking all this useless baggage that we bring with us and replacing it with forgiveness, life, and power.

The rising sun reveals the salvation of God.

The women come to the tomb expecting death, but at the raising of the morning sun they find that Jesus has risen from the dead.

One biblical commentator Joel Marcus points out that the dawn is often the time of God's salvation. At the dawn King Darius rushes to the tomb and finds Daniel alive despite the roaring lions. At the dawn King Hezekiah and his people leave Jerusalem and find the Assyrians dead and the city delivered. At the dawn and the women go to the tomb and find the stone rolled away.

Another biblical commentator named Voelz however is correct in pointing out that the dawn does not bring the salvation but only reveals the salvation which was already there. Daniel was safe from the lions

the moment he was placed in the pit, but King Darius does not know that until he goes at the rising of the sun to see what God had done. The Assyrians were slaughtered during the night, but God's victory is seen in the morning.

Jesus was already risen from the dead. Indeed, his victory over death and sin was accomplished from the moment Jesus proclaimed, "It is finished." His soul was not taken from him, but he gave up to God the father.

Jesus was already risen. But the women did not know that until they came to the tomb in the early morning and the truth was revealed to them.

The darkness hides the truth of God's salvation, but the rising sun reveals it.

John 20:19 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."

In the darkness we cannot see God's salvation

It follows from this that we are often hindered from seeing God's salvation by darkness. What we ought to understand is that the darkness of night is not the true hinderance, rather the darkness which we ourselves create is.

True darkness is not the absence of the sun, rather true darkness are those things by which we obscure from our eyes the truth of Jesus' resurrection, our doubt, fear, anger, bitterness, and pride. Even after the sun was well risen Mary remained in darkness until the Lord spoke to her. Even after they heard that Jesus was risen, we hear in our text how the disciples are hidden in fear because of their unbelief. For a full week Thomas in his pride refused to believe that Jesus was risen and he remained in fear, doubt and darkness for a whole week until finally he saw the risen Lord.

It is for this reason that Jesus says, "**Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.**"

Not because the other apostles were better than Thomas, but because if Thomas had believed the word of the others, he would not have needed to spend a week in doubt and fear.

Darius through his lack of faith paced back and forth all night, until he finally spoke to Daniel in the morning. I like to think that Daniel sat down on the bottom of that pit and slept peacefully that night confident in God's protecting hand. Those who believe the word even before the sun rises and reveals God's salvation do not need to spend the night in fear and doubt but are able rather to lie down amid the Lions and go to sleep.

In the same way the prophet David speaks about sitting to eat a meal amid his enemies.

"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies." Psalm 23:5

Those who believe can sit and eat amid their enemies.

Every Sunday we hear, "**Blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep (or treasure) it.**"

Those who believe the word do not need to wait for the dawn. True darkness is caused by those things with which we block from our own eyes the truth of God's salvation.

So it is that the disciples through doubt and unbelief are huddled in fear, locked in the upper room, until Jesus appears removes their fear and gives them both peace and power.

John 20:21-22 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.

The women come to the tomb carrying the spices necessary to bury the dead. They believe that what they are doing is good and right. The disciples lock the door. They think this is necessary. Thomas insists on seeing the Lord for himself. He thinks himself wise.

Each one of them believes they are doing the right thing, but all they are really doing is obscuring from their own eyes the truth of God's salvation.

But Jesus spoke to Mary, and he talk to the Emmaus disciples, and he stood in the midst of the disciples, and he breathed on them. With his words Jesus removed not the darkness of the night but the darkness in the minds so that they could see him and know his resurrection.

Every Sunday we come to Jesus with all this baggage. We come with all these attitudes and feelings and thoughts and actions that we think are necessary and justified, but which are darkness hiding the from our own eyes the truth of Jesus resurrection.

Thoughts of anger, thoughts of resentment, thoughts of self-justification, thoughts of fear and worry and unbelief. We create the darkness. We hide from the world.

Jesus stands in our midst, and he breathes upon us. Just as he breathed on the earth and gave it life, so he breathes on us and gives to us the spirit of life.

That which we bring to God is not nearly so important as what Jesus brings to us. Yeah, we are pretty good at creating darkness in our lives, but Jesus is even better at bringing light.

Jesus is the rising sun. God's word is the dawn. His power removes the darkness we create. His power opens our eyes to see his salvation. Amen.