

***“Jesus’ Words Speak To Us Today”***

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:12-19; Matthew 6: 25 – 34; **John 20:1-29**

When Jesus was arrested His disciples deserted Him.

After Jesus’ crucifixion all of Jesus’ disciples were disappointed, lost, and were paralyzed with fear.

None of Jesus’ disciples understood what was happening and none of Jesus’ disciples knew what the future held for them.

But Jesus’ resurrection on that first Easter morning changed all of those things.

After His resurrection, Jesus came to His disciples.

Jesus proved that He had risen from the tomb and that He was alive.

Jesus’ words to His disciples encouraged them and Jesus reassured them that all was going according to God’s plan.

Jesus’ words gave all of His disciples hope and the power to face tomorrow.

In some ways the disciples’ feelings are like our feelings today.

The corona virus has shocked the world. Millions of people are afraid and none of us know what tomorrow brings.

Deuteronomy 8 tells us that God uses disruptions and hardships in our lives to remind us that we are totally dependent upon Him.

The corona virus may have shocked the world but it did not shock our God because our God is in total control of everything and everything is going according to His Divine plan.

Jesus’ words to His disciples on that first Easter are exactly what we need to hear today because Jesus’ words on that first Easter are encouraging, reassuring, and life changing.

In verse 2 of our lesson from John we read that Mary ran to Peter and John and said, ***“They have taken The Lord out of the tomb and we do not know where they have put Him.”***

Today when people ask or say things like; *“where is The Lord”* and /or *“How can a loving God allow all of this misery to take place”* we as Christians have an excellent opportunity to tell them the good news of Jesus’ resurrection.

Not only have we been given an excellent opportunity to share our faith, Jesus has given every Christian the command to be His witness. (Acts 1:8)

Jesus has chosen all of us to be His ambassadors. (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:20)

Jesus has opened our spiritual eyes so we can see Him at work in our lives and so that we can boldly proclaim like Mary did; ***“I have seen The Lord!”*** (John 20:18)

Mary stayed at the tomb after Peter and John left.

Mary just wanted to be where Jesus was and Jesus rewarded Mary by appearing to her first.

That is significant since the central event of history was first revealed to a woman.

Remember in Jesus' day society treated women as insignificant and unimportant.

Today we need to remember that God created all people in His image and everybody is valuable and important.

Jesus died for all people.

As Christians we need to follow Jesus' example and work to change cultural customs which deny Biblical truth.

Galatians 3.28 says ***"in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, we are all one in Christ."***

In verse 15 Jesus asked Mary ***"woman why are you crying?"***

Jesus asked Mary this question because Jesus was alive and Jesus was right there beside Mary.

It is ironic that Mary did not recognize the person she came looking for.

Mary came to the tomb looking for a corpse to anoint and she met The Living Lord Jesus.

Today we often find life in the midst of what we thought was death because The Living Lord Jesus is there with us.

Jesus does not always take our tears away but Jesus is always the answer to the reason for our tears.

Remember Jesus promise in Revelation 21:4 ***"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed."***

Perhaps the reason Mary did not recognize Jesus was because of her tears or perhaps it was because she was so focused on her circumstances.

But I believe Mary did not recognize Jesus because she did not expect to see Jesus.

Many times, we fail to see Jesus in the mist of our troubles because we do not expect to see Jesus in our troubles.

We should not be worrying about not having enough food or the ability to pay our bills during this time of the corona virus.

We need to remember Jesus told us not to worry about these things, we are to remember Jesus is right here with us, and Jesus promised; ***“I will never leave you or forsake you.”*** (Hebrews 13:5)

In verse 16 we read that Jesus called Mary by her name.

We are not numbers; we are special individuals that were created by God and designed by God for a specific purpose.

In John 10:3 Jesus said ***“I call my own sheep by name”*** and in verse 14 Jesus said ***“I know my sheep and my sheep know me.”***

When Jesus called Mary by her name Mary turned towards Jesus and cried out ***“Rabboni”*** which means teacher.

In John 10:27 Jesus said ***“my sheep know my voice, they listen to me, and they follow me.”***

This morning we all need to ask ourselves; *“do I know Jesus’ voice. “do I expect Jesus to speak to me?” Do I listen to Jesus? Do I obey Jesus and following Jesus teachings?”*

Mary’s response was to hold on to Jesus because Mary did not want Jesus to leave her. Jesus said, ***“do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to The Father.”*** (John 20:17)

Jesus was telling Mary and us that after His resurrection our relationship with Jesus will be spiritual relationship not a physical relationship.

Jesus was telling us that He will no longer be known by sight or touch but we will know Jesus by faith.

In Ephesians 1:18 The Apostle Paul prayed that God would open the eyes of Ephesians believers’ hearts and that should be our prayer every day.

In verse 17 we read that Jesus told Mary ***“go to my brothers and tell them I am returning to my Father and to your Father, to my God and to your God.”***

Jesus gave Mary a message to deliver to His disciples.

Mary faithfully delivered the message and the disciples faithfully passed the message on to the world.

Today each one of us have a message to deliver to the unbelieving people around us.

The message is that God loves everyone and that God through Jesus Christ has provided a way for sinful people to be with our Holy God both now and forever more.

Jesus voluntarily died on the cross to pay the price of our sins.

Jesus broke the power of death by rising from the grave.

The message is that if we believe in Jesus and ask Jesus to save us, we will have life beyond the grave.

Because of Jesus' resurrection all believers will be resurrected to eternal life in heaven with our Lord Jesus Christ. (1st Thessalonians 4:13 - 18)  
As Christians we have the message of the cross and Jesus resurrection gives us the power to deliver it.

The question is; *are we going to be obedient disciples and tell Jesus' message to the unsaved people God has put in our life.*

Remember Jesus command is crystal clear; ***“you shall be my witnesses.”*** (Acts 1:8)

In verses 19 – 21 we read what our risen savior said to His disciples; ***“Peace be with you.”***

Jesus' disciples had abandoned Jesus when He was arrested.

Peter had denied Jesus and Judas had betrayed Jesus but Jesus first words to His disciples were ***“peace be with you.”***

Jesus did not rebuke or condemn His disciples.

Jesus offers us that same peace even though all of us have disobeyed Jesus and many times we have left Jesus out of our daily activities.

Sin and the consequences of sin take away our peace.

The world offers hatred, fear, violence, troubles, and war, but no peace.

But the good news is Jesus The Prince of Peace offers us peace with God and the peace of God.

Jesus The Prince of Peace offers us His peace not guilt, blame, or commendation.

Jesus said; ***“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”*** (John 14:27)

In verses 21b and 22 Jesus said; ***“as The Father has sent me, I am sending you” -- receive The Holy Spirit.***

This is our call to service.

Jesus gave every Christian the power to deliver His message of love and forgiveness to the unsaved people around us when He gave us The Indwelling Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:7)

As Christians we all have the responsibility of spreading the word that Jesus offers forgiveness, companionship, hope, peace, and joy to everyone who believes in Him and seeks Him with their whole heart.

Everything is going according to God's Devine plan today just like everything went according to God's Devine plan 2000 years ago.

That is the reason Jesus leaves us here on earth instead of taking us home to heaven immediately after we are saved.

2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 3:9 tells us; ***“The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you not wanting any to perish but wanting everyone to come to repentance.”***

Notice this verse says; Jesus is patient with us, His disciples.

The reason Christians are not making a big difference in our world today is because the world has not seen a big difference in our lives.

Verse 24 tells us that Thomas was not with the other disciples on that first Easter evening and Thomas missed the blessing of seeing and being with our risen Lord Jesus.

The same thing is true for us today.

When you skip church, you miss out on a blessing.

Then in verse 27 Jesus told Thomas ***“put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Stop doubting and believe.”***

The Bible says the person who has received the truth and refuses to believe is foolish.

However, to the person who is honestly searching for the truth Jesus says; ***“Stop doubting and believe.”***

The Bible does not say that Thomas put his hand in Jesus side.

Rather The Bible says when Thomas saw Jesus Thomas said; ***“My Lord and my God.”***

Our resurrection is guaranteed because of Christ’s resurrection. Our resurrection will be a transformation, not a restoration.

Christ’s resurrection was not simply coming back from the dead.

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15: 51 – 53 tells us ***“Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.***

Our resurrection will be the final stage of our salvation.

Our job while we are physically alive is to pass on the good news that ***Jesus Is Alive*** and that Jesus offers forgiveness of our sins and eternal life in heaven to all that believe in Him. (John 3:16)

And while we are physically alive Jesus wants to be a part of our daily life.

Jesus promises to transform us, to bless us, to provide for us, to protect us, and to give us the power to live the abundant victorious life. (John 10:10)

But if we want Jesus in our daily life we must invite Jesus into our life each day.

Jesus said; ***“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.”*** (Revelation 3:20)

The world wide spread of the corona virus is just one more example of The Lord trying to get our attention; for us to turn to Him in faith and to remind us of our job to tell the unsaved people God has put in our life about the love of God and the forgiveness and the salvation that Jesus offers.

The increasing number of natural disasters, violence, and hatred, along with this world wide pandemic, tell us that the return of Jesus to establish His eternal kingdom is one day closer than it was yesterday.

This morning I want to assure you on the authority from God’s Word; Jesus is alive!

Jesus is here with us (Matthew 18:20) and Jesus is calling your name.

So, if you have not totally committed your life to Jesus, I beg you you do that this morning.

Will you respond to Jesus’ call like Mary and Thomas did.

Mary fell at Jesus’ feet in humble adoration and Thomas said; ***“My Lord and my God.”*** (John 20:28)

**AMEN**