

Jesus had paid the penalty for the sin of mankind, conquered death, and rose to physical life again for our justification. (Romans 4:25) That physical resurrection after three days of what should have been irreversible decomposition tells us that God accepted the sacrificial work of Jesus on the cross. (1Corinthians 15:17) That means we can be assured that we are right with God. (1John 3:14) That sounds like a foreign language in today's world, so let me put it in terms we can easily understand. We were on our way to an eternal prison camp where we would suffer forever. Why? It's because God is just. We have rebelled against His goodness. He should judge us and justly sentence every one of us to that Satan run gulag forever.

You might say, "What did I do to deserve that?" When we stand before the righteous judge, every selfish thought, every idle word, every time we looked at a person as an object to satisfy us, and even every God given opportunity to do good that we selfishly shunned will be brought to light. But worse than all that, the way we rejected the invitation of the Spirit of God will be judged. Every time He came to us in love and we ignored Him and went on our own selfish way will be made known. Do you still think you are innocent? (Romans 3:10-12) The more righteous and holy the judge, the more severe the penalty, and the only wise God of all is holy. (Habakkuk 1:13)

Therefore, the fact that God physically resurrected the body of Jesus is a sign that should cause all who accept Him as the solution to our sin dilemma to breathe a big sigh of relief! (Romans 3:22) It should overwhelm us with wonder and gratitude. It also invites us to participate in the power that raised Jesus from the dead. If our sins were dealt with on the cross, we should not hesitate to apply the power of resurrection to our own lives. (Ephesians 1:18-20) There is so much to say about that, but I'll save it for another time. One major element of the physical resurrection of Jesus is that it guarantees our own. (1Corinthians 6:14)

The disciples didn't understand all of these wonderful truths, and it will be some time before they even begin to contemplate them. They were still trying to figure out what was really happening. The body was gone. One woman talked of seeing Jesus. The others told of angels and the angelic announcement that He had risen. The two from the road to Emmaus said He met them in disguise and then revealed Himself when He broke bread. (Luke 24:31-32) All that in one day! They were trying to take it all in and figure out just what was happening and struggling to believe that Jesus' words had actually come to pass.

*19 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"* If anyone ever had sensory overload, it was the ten disciples that witnessed that moment. I wonder what the conversation was about at the moment before He appeared. Perhaps they didn't write it down, because it was too embarrassing. I know what I would have probably been saying. It would have been something like, "I want to believe Mary and Cleopas, but I saw His body. No one comes back from that condition. Who would want to? The Sanhedrin is probably

**Commented [notes1]:** 25 He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.  
Romans 4:25 (NIV)

**Commented [notes2]:** 17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.  
1 Cor 15:17 (NIV)

**Commented [notes3]:** 14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death.  
1 John 3:14 (NIV)

**Commented [notes4]:** 10 As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one;  
11 there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.  
12 All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."  
Romans 3:10-12 (NIV)

**Commented [notes5]:** Habakkuk 1:13 (NIV)  
13 Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong. Why then do you tolerate the treacherous? Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves?

**Commented [notes6]:** 22 This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference,  
Romans 3:22 (NIV)

**Commented [notes7]:** 18 I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,  
19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength,  
20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,  
Eph 1:18-20 (NIV)

**Commented [notes8]:** 14 By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also.  
1 Cor 6:14 (NIV)

**Commented [notes9]:** 30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them.  
31 Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight.  
Luke 24:30-31 (NIV)

coming for us too. I think Mary and Cleopas saw what they wanted to see. I want to see Him too, but..." Suddenly there He was. "Peace be with you!" He said.

Freeze frame that scene, eyes as big as saucers, mouths hanging open, and not a soul moving. How did He get in there? The door is still locked! "Shalom!" How do you have shalom when you are staring at a murder victim that just came out of a grave? And slowly you start to accept the reality of what you are witnessing.

That scene reminds me of some testimonies of salvation. Suddenly, a soul encounters Jesus, like Paul will on the road to Damascus. (Acts 9:3-4) Jesus can do it in many different ways, but every way is just as shocking. Suddenly, we must face the truth that we have refused to believe. (Isaiah 1:18) It becomes undeniable and we must set aside our false perceptions and accept reality. That is when we see how depraved we are and how holy God is. We come to God for mercy and for the first time in our life find shalom, peace with God. The guilt is gone. We have been made right with God. Peace at last. (Romans 5:1)

**20a** After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. It was those marks that gained our peace with God, for the wrath of God upon our sins fell on Him so that we could be free. I've always looked at this display as not only the proof that He was indeed Jesus of Nazareth risen from the dead, but the eager display of His love for them. It was like saying, "Look! See how much I love you! This is the price I paid so that we could be together forever." Fellow believer, when Satan tempts you to doubt God's love, run to the wounds. Look at His hands and His side and be reassured. He loves you that much. (Romans 8:32)

You do realize that those wounds don't go away don't you? When the same John that wrote this Gospel saw Jesus before the throne of God decades later, he still saw the marks that caused His death. (Revelation 5:6)

Seeing the wounds helped the disciples with the doubts that would naturally have risen in their minds. He is not an apparition or a non-physical entity. (Luke 24:39-43) There was no doubt now, for the ten in that room. **20b** The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Their friend was back! They weren't leaderless. Hope returned. The real reason to be overjoyed would take some time for them to understand. When we first "see" the Lord, we are overjoyed too. We don't understand it all either, but we know He is with us and that we are loved, and for that transformational moment, that is enough.

**21a** Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! Maybe it was because they were too shocked to hear it the first time. Or maybe it was because He had just presented the evidence for the reason we should have peace, His wounds. Or perhaps Jesus said it twice because that normal greeting was doubly significant that Sunday evening. It is still the common greeting in Israel, but the double peace is for those who know what those wounds can mean to them.

When Charles Cowman announced his first evangelistic meeting in Japan, he went through the streets with a megaphone and shouted, "Anyone desiring peace come

**Commented [notes10]:** 3 As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.  
4 He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" Acts 9:3-4 (NIV)

**Commented [notes11]:** 18 "Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. Isaiah 1:18 (NIV)

**Commented [notes12]:** 1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, Romans 5:1 (NIV)

**Commented [notes13]:** 32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Romans 8:32 (NIV)

**Commented [notes14]:** 6 Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. Rev 5:6 (NIV)

**Commented [notes15]:** 39 Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."  
40 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet.  
41 And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?"  
42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish,  
43 and he took it and ate it in their presence. Luke 24:39-43 (NIV)

and hear about the true God." One older Japanese couple were sitting on their balcony and heard the announcement. They had spent a great deal of their life searching for peace. The husband said to his wife, "Can it be possible that, after all our weary years of searching, at last we shall find peace?" (*Charles Cowman, The Oriental Mission Society, pgs 128-129*) That night his first two converts came forward and prayed to know the Prince of Peace, Christ Jesus. They found the peace for which they had longed. Have you?

**21b** "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." This is the disciples' commission. It is ours as well. How did the Father send Jesus? We could take the whole day to elaborate on this one verse, but let me summarize it briefly. We've seen over and over again that Jesus was totally dependent on God's direction. (John 5:19) We've seen that He only did and said what He saw and heard from the Father. (John 12:49) He was sent as a light in the darkness. He was humble and meek but firm and clear. He trained others, gave witness to the truth and laid down His life for His sheep. (John 15:13) That's a tall order, but remember it was preceded by shalom. When you are in God's will, you walk into life's situations with the amazing peace of God. That gets attention and influences lives! Will you receive your commissioning? **21b** "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." This is not just an assignment but also a way of life. Not my will but yours!

**22** And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. This was a powerfully symbolic and prophetic act. The first time that God breathed into man, he became a living soul. (Genesis 2:7) More than mere animal, man had the awareness of self, the ability to be creative, and a will that could decide things other than mere survival. That life of the first Adam has come down through the generations to these disciples, to you and me, but this soul life that we have received is corrupted with the fallen and sinful nature of Adam. (Romans 5:17)

Jesus breathed on the disciples and invited them to receive the Holy Spirit. This is more than the breath of life. This is the very life of God in us. This is rebirth, a restoring of the image of God in the soul. It is the spiritual birth Jesus described to Nicodemus. (John 3:3) The first breath of God gave us physical (soul) life. The second breath of God gives us spiritual life.

The disciples would not actually receive the Holy Spirit until Pentecost. Jesus will tell them to wait in Jerusalem until this second breath fills them. (Luke 24:29) He describes it as the power to be a witness to the world. (Acts 1:8) That is just what He has asked them to do, to be sent out by God as He was sent into the world. Jesus insisted the Holy Spirit was the power needed to fulfill this commission, and yet many attempt to be a witness in their own power. It is obeying Jesus as the Pharisees obeyed the Law, out of wrote compulsory obedience without the life of God. Our witness must be led and empowered by the Holy Spirit if it is to bear fruit that remains.

I've passed out more tracts than I can count. It was a duty, an obligation, a fulfilling of the law, but I never saw any fruit that remained. (John 15:16) I'm not saying God can't use tracts or literature. I've heard many testimonies of people saved by those

**Commented [notes16]:** 19 Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. John 5:19 (NIV)

**Commented [notes17]:** 49 For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. John 12:49 (NIV)

**Commented [notes18]:** 13 Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. John 15:13 (NIV)

**Commented [notes19]:** the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. Gen 2:7 (NIV)

**Commented [notes20]:** 17 For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. Romans 5:17 (NIV)

**Commented [notes21]:** 3 In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." John 3:3 (NIV)

**Commented [notes22]:** 49 I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." Luke 24:49 (NIV)

**Commented [notes23]:** 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8 (NIV)

**Commented [notes24]:** 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit-fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. John 15:16 (NIV)

very means. I'm saying that I was not led by the Spirit to do so. But when the Holy Spirit led me to put up the sermons on the sidewalk here, we've seen fruit that remained. When the Holy Spirit led a conversation to take a spiritual direction, I've seen fruit that remained. As the Father sent me, Jesus said, so send I you. That is to be in constant communion with the Father, seeking His leading, not compulsory performance. (1Thessalonians 5:17)

*23 If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.* (Matthew 16:19) This is a difficult passage because other Scripture indicates that only God can forgive sin. (Mark 2:7; Daniel 9:9) We can't forgive people for sins against God, but we can forgive those who sin against us. God grants us the power to forgive. (Matthew 6:14) The world doesn't seem to be able to truly do that, as it is a work of the Holy Spirit. I think Jesus is saying that in the case of believers, the sins of those who sin against us will not be held to their account if we forgive them. That doesn't mean that the sins against God will be forgiven. How important it is for us to be like Jesus and forgive!

Another interpretation of this passage is that *the idea is not that individual Christians or churches have authority on their own to forgive or not forgive people, but rather that as the church proclaims the gospel message of forgiveness of sins in the power of the Holy Spirit it proclaims that those who believe in Jesus have their sins forgiven, and that those who do not believe in him do not have their sins forgiven—which simply reflects what God in heaven has already done.* ESV Study Bible, The English Standard Version. This would seem to fit the context and even the commission, as the Father has sent me, so send I you. Jesus said that He judges justly because He bases His judgment on what pleases the Father. (John 5:30) We are to do the same.

*24 Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25a So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"* Now the disciples get to see in Thomas what they were like to Mary and Cleopas. It is not unusual for God to turn the tables on us to show us what we are like to Him. I believe it was Oswald Chambers who said that God brings people into our lives whose actions toward us reveal what we are like to God. What we hate in them is what we subconsciously hate about our own heart.

Just as Mary and Cleopas had tried to convince the doubting disciples, so the disciples now try to convince Thomas, *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 it."* Thomas would have liked Missouri, the "show me" state. He had to see it for himself. Now we know that faith pleases God (Hebrews 11:6), but that doesn't mean that God will not answer the sincere heart that needs to see to believe.

*26 A 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!"* Jesus came again, with the same greeting. More than just the custom,

**Commented [notes25]:** 17 pray continually; 1 Thess 5:17 (NIV)

**Commented [notes26]:** 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." Matt 16:19 (NIV)

**Commented [notes27]:** 7 "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" Mark 2:7 (NIV)

**Commented [notes28]:** 9 The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him; Dan 9:9 (NIV)

**Commented [notes29]:** 14 For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. Matt 6:14 (NIV)

**Commented [notes30]:** 30 By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me. John 5:30 (NIV)

**Commented [notes31]:** 6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. Heb 11:6 (NIV)

I believe Jesus is really trying to drive home the peace that we should have because of the resurrection.

*27 Then 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." How did Jesus know? Well, He has reclaimed what He set aside to be a man. He knows everything. He knows your doubt and He knows mine and He can meet us in unique ways and convince us so that we can say with Thomas, (*28 Thomas said to him,*) "My Lord and my God!"*

What a command, *Stop doubting and believe!* I believe every life hears this command in their heart at some time. Perhaps for someone here it is a word to you this morning. Once Thomas was convinced of resurrection, Thomas took it step further and believed that Jesus is God. This is the first straightforward declaration by a disciple that Jesus is God. John declared the same in the prologue to this Gospel when he wrote that *the word was with God and the word was God.* (John 1:1)

*29 Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." As much as we would like to think so, we are no worse off for living in this age when we cannot see the physical presence of Jesus. Jesus says we receive a greater blessing. (1Peter 1:8; 2Corinthians 5:7) Faith pleases God. God will meet us in just as real a way to convince us, but usually in a non-visible way. God wants us to have a greater heavenly reward, so He stretches our faith.*

*30 Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. We set out studying this Gospel showing you that John intentionally told us what the other Gospel writers left out. But in planning the book, he realized he could only hit the highlights. I'm sorry, but you'll have to wait for heaven for the unedited version. We do know that what we need to know was faithfully recorded. We know because we know the love and faithfulness of God would see that it was so.*

*31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. John intentionally selected the stories in his gospel that would bring you to belief. He didn't just set out to tell the story as the other Gospel writers did. He set out to tell of the stories that would help you believe and that by believing you would have life in Jesus' name. Do you believe? Are you experiencing resurrection life in the authority of Jesus, the Creator of all things?*

Maybe this morning you are here but you have never believed, never met the risen Lord Jesus. You can have that peace today. (Matthew 11:28-30) Maybe you are a Christian, but you have been neglecting the power of resurrection life, still a slave to your sinful nature. This morning you can come to the One whose scars remain to give you peace and know His resurrection life is at work in you.

**Commented [notes32]:** 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.  
John 1:1 (NIV)

**Commented [notes33]:** 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,  
1 Peter 1:8 (NIV)

**Commented [notes34]:** 7 We live by faith, not by sight.  
2 Cor 5:7 (NIV)

**Commented [notes35]:** 28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.  
29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.  
30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."  
Matt 11:28-30 (NIV)