

This recorded sermon was preached at Good Shepherd Baptist Church
On April 19th, 2020
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Scripture: John 20 :19-31

Message: "Jesus Disciples on Lockdown and Self- Quarantine"

The joy of Easter is the victory over death! Light after darkness and hope after hopelessness. It's the first day of the week, after the release of Good News that Christ is risen. But still, Jesus's disciples who were traumatized by the brutal death of their master; were hiding themselves in a house with doors locked, afraid of the Jewish Leaders. They were in a self-quarantine and could not continue with ministry.

By now, all they had was the information that Jesus was risen; they had not seen him yet. The scripture tells us while they were still in that state of fear, doubt, and anxiety, talking in whispers, Jesus Himself appeared to them. And the first thing that Jesus said to them was, "*Peace be with you.*"

Notice, Jesus did not come through the door and say, hey guy! I'm Surprise! Instead, he addressed their most important thing at hand, their fear and their anxiety, by breathing to them the spirit of peace and cheering them up.

Luke 24: 37b tells us that at that moment he asked them, "*Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your minds?*" I believe Jesus did not ask them these questions to discredit what they were going through, but rather he wanted to show them that he understood their situation. And wanted to help them recognize him and believe that he was truly alive. And that the victory was not only for him, but also for them. Knowing that they were mad with system that that did not protect them he giving them power to forgive anyone of his sins, those will include even those who had crucified him and whom they were hiding themselves from.

Notice the phrase "*Peace be with you*" is repeated three times. Theologians will tell us that the phrase means hello or goodbye; but in this case I believe there is more to it. Let me put it this way: Jesus appearing to them with doors closed was a big shock for them. These were troubled souls who could not see the future without their master. Knowing all this, Jesus came to where they were hiding. Meaning that we can hide ourselves from other people and things, but we cannot hide ourselves from God. And no wall that can prevent God from reaching us wherever we are.

Jesus also had two special messages for Thomas, v27, first to "...Stop doubting and believe." Secondly, "blessed are those who have not seen yet have believed.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, due to this coronavirus pandemic, and the lock down, like the disciples, it's easy for people to be discouraged. They can be overwhelmed by fear, doubts and anxiety. And when people give in to discouragement and let fear take over; there is a great danger of falling and becoming weak.

I do believe that this is not God's will for us, for God's desire is that we may always be at peace within ourselves and with others. Peter in his first letter to believers write, "Cast our anxiety on him for cares for you" ...v9b "Stand firm in faith, because you know that your brothers [sisters] throughout the world are going through the same kind of suffering"

(1 Peter 5:7,9b).

Therefore, as believers we must stay positive. Remember, our attitude affects our health; Proverbs 17:22 reminds us that a "cheerful heart does good like medicine, but a

broken spirit makes one sick." So, I'm here to remind us to hold onto our faith in God. And believe He will see us through.

When we give in to faith, God will open our minds, and He will give us hope and let us know that we are not alone. And have confident, that even though we are living under the shadow of fear and doubts; or as my sister said to me like we are imprisoned in our own houses for an unknown period of time, even though we are keeping distance from our own relatives, friends and neighbors; we will not fear. For our God will always protect us.

Therefore, we should not let fear paralyze us; instead let us continue praying and asking God's divine intervention; and remember, "God has not given us the spirit of fear; but power, and of love and of a sound mind."

With that in mind, sisters and brothers in Christ, take care of yourselves, Always remember you are beloved children of God; And like children of a loving father, do something funny that will make you and even others around you laugh out loud.

Also, remember that the one who is in you is greater than the coronavirus. So, as you walk around the block, or go to the grocery store or to the hospital, especially our essential workers, remember to say confidently that even if I walk through the shadow of coronavirus, I shall not fear for God is my protector.

My sisters and brothers in Christ, I pray that you may all stay safe and health as we all await upon God's divine deliverance. Amen.