**“Peace”**

Acts 5:12-20

Revelation 1:4-18

John 20:19-31

Easter 2, April 24, 2022

“On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.”

**He is risen!** He **is risen, indeed! Alleluia!**

**Bridge**

As our text shows us today, I was, last weekend, harder on the surprised and afraid disciples than what Jesus clearly was. So I may be, on disciples of today, harder than He probably is **this side of the judgement**. Yet (in light of Easter) fears and uncertainties and any kind of unbelief ought really to (all of them) go away, with gladness and faithfulness and boldness being the **resurrection norm**.

And it’s been, also, about 100,000 weeks since the death then resurrection of Christ, so I can’t judge their **sentiments** **and pressures** (those close to it on that first night and week). Jewish leaders might have wanted to **fully** “clean house” and Roman soldiers were always ready to kill more people, and **the Messiah had been killed and buried and, then, (as the witness were saying) rose from the grave (the grave empty and some had seen even Him alive and well)**. **Fear with dismay and even unbelief** had the group hiding behind **locked** **doors**, but an **almost-excited** war zone experience it probably was with **wonder about Good News** probably as much as **uncertainty** **and terror** **about the uncertain**. People stayed closely huddled together in light of that event … they didn’t much move about outside. Then Jesus (“through locked doors” the text says) “**came**” **that night and the weekend thereafter it and stood among them**” **saying** “**’Peace be with you**.’ And when He had said this, He **showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad** **when they saw the Lord**.”

We have **hindsight** in that, and that hindsight ought to make our reaction **different** to those “first week” disciples. But we need, also, what Jesus came to them to give. The outcome of His death and rising is (for us) history that’s long past, and its **effect more than its newness** **is what** **influences us or not**, yet “Peace” from the risen Lord is, in us as well as with them, **welcome or yawned at … and, so, we consider which, and what He brings raised**.

**Text**

**Which is the** **reason** why both **Acts and Revelation** have been coupled to this event recorded in John’s Gospel. Acts (or The Acts of the Apostles) is as history **still being documented (our history along with the disciples, followers, and apostles back then being documented and chronicled, and still being in Heaven)**. And, then, **Revelation showing everybody the bigger picture of that resurrection … “peace” in the midst of stuff (back in time and now and into everyone’s tomorrows)**. Documented, 11 disciples and women **then** reacted to the “peace” of a raised Christ (dead, buried, then risen from the dead). We, now, react to that in our time, and both get **met by Christ alive (that’s the point of the account shared with us)**. People **then** (in the rest of the world outside of the locked room on that first Easter evening and weekend after it) were **exposed differently** to God’s “peace” than those in the room. And today, believers gathered under the anticipation and news of Christ risen get **exposed to it differently** than others not gathered or un-believing. “**Peace**”, though, **has always been available to all since the resurrection, but bestowed relative to Christ** and not to, just, thoughts about it apart from Him, but **gifted BY Him ,,, and OF Him**.

And **this text** is what **gives** **me my** **fullest visual of it** … and **(with that) my, also,** **clearest visual of a first moment in Heaven and (no less)** **enhanced eyesight for this time on earth until then**. I pray that the gift of the resurrected **Him bestowing Himself as “life for you” is no less “gladdening” as for those first disciples**. What it does (minimally) is **give me perspective yet so much more than just that**. **What I know that I get from Jesus who “comes and stands with me in places I’m at” is an assurance of everything that He makes me hope for. And “PEACE” THAT ALWAYS IS** …

… which isn’t a **feeling**, but **fact**. That fact can, of course, birth feelings, but only **accurate feelings (joy and rejoicing and gladness) because of the fact of it**. It’s a **bestowal / grace / a blessing: a gift, “peace” is**. And here (accounted in this text) is where Jesus shows that He bestows His risen self to, even, people His even scared and troubled yet gathered in His name. He stepped into their midst, emotions mixed, yet says so those mixed emotions “Peace be with you”. He bestows (He gives / blesses upon people where He comes) what His death and resurrection had won. And that He gave in Words to hear but also in words to witness beyond themselves. For others who needed that “peace” Jesus “**showed eye-witnesses His hands and His side**.”

And Him standing where He’s brought me, showing me His hands and His side, announcing “peace” to me is what I think we’ll all see in Heaven first thing. **Right now** we see that and touch that with **faith**. **Then** Jesus will **fully bestow Himself upon us (“peace”)**, then giving all He’d promised here. **He’ll show (face-to-face) the wounds He bore for me witnessed to me by the first disciples**.

And “**blessed are** those”, Jesus continued, talking about you and I in those events those nights, “who have **not seen it yet and have still believed the witness of it**”. That’s **yours and my further blessing of “peace” from His mouth to our ears those evenings:** that **by** “**believing** **WE** would have life in His name”. **By** **believing** you and I, **“peace” bestowed / blessed upon us**. **THAT** **happened those resurrection nights recorded here**.

## Application

I remember a children’s message that I did a lot of years ago. I asked them all for a **definition of “peace”** and got an answer from Jolene (and some of you may remember how vocal and extremely bright this young lady, Jolene, was … she’d moved, then, to California). She’d said of “peace” that it’s “**a** **part of something**” and she was **exactly right** except that I, then, explained it fuller and with the correct spelling (which “I’d, wrongly, not stipulated” before). Acts and Revelation point out that the “peace” we get from the resurrected and blessing Jesus is, indeed, “part of something”; and it’s huge and glorious and dominates all of us even while we’re in the midst of (much smaller by comparison) struggles or issues. The apostles and Peter didn’t **stay** huddled-fearfully in locked rooms, but, then, boldly proclaimed what it was they came to know that they were “**part of**”. And even in their shadow, eventually, **“peace” with healing got spread upon the sick**. Jesus shows the vaster content of His resurrected life in Revelation. **Revealing** His **cosmic rule and leadership**, here He tells those in Him to “Fear not … **anything**. I died, and behold **I am alive forevermore**, and **I HAVE the keys of Death and Hades**”, with Heaven “**at hand**” **/ close already** in Him and “peace” **already given / bestowed and begun for us in faith**. **“Peace” we’re part of already**.

The only “**addition**” that I added to Jolene’s other spelling of the word “correct definition” is that **IT / “peace” is both “PART of the huge gift of Christ’s life in us” and “ALL OF IT”**. Jesus (you should know) never gives just **pieces, or parts** … but **“peace” / all of it** …

… and He’**s risen!** He **is risen indeed! Alleluia! “Peace” be with you** … because **the risen Jesus is with you**, in +His name. Amen.