

Sermon May 3rd 2020

Jesus' Presence brings the gift of Peace Purpose and Power

<https://youtu.be/iXCMQwHwp0g>

What have you been doing differently during these last five weeks?

This week someone sent me a YouTube video going under the name of Tom Foolery called "The Great Realisation" A bedtime story for children. It has had over a million views in just three days. It speaks to the situation we are in so very beautifully and poignantly.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nw5KQMXDiM4>

In some ways it echoes of what I was saying last week about how a paradigm shift can come so suddenly and change the way we perceive things and a situation or even life itself is forever different because we see it through new eyes, from a different perspective, with new glasses through a different paradigm.

If you have been reading more of the life of Jesus in the Gospels over these five weeks of lockdown what an amazing story you have been reading.

Those five weeks two thousand years ago that mirror our time leading up to and going on from Easter were absolutely extraordinary.

When Jesus came to his disciples during their period of lockdown and voluntary isolation because they were in fear of the authorities he came with a gift.

John 20: 19 – 31

His appearance to them over those six weeks in many different places and different times affected in them a paradigm shift. A new way of seeing the world.

They would go from hiding behind locked doors to standing on street corners,

from fear of arrest to singing in prisons,

from running for their lives to losing all fear of death because they had talked to and spoken with and embrace the one who had conquered death and given them a new vision of life.

20 20 vision. Clearer vision.

They had come to understand the promise of God in Jeremiah ch. 29:11. For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a **future**.

What are these plans for your life?

Have priorities and values changed with these recent events?

Are you taking time to consider these things, write them down, pray about them, share your thoughts with others?

Jesus' appearance to the disciples in that period of lockdown, to the believing and the sceptical, brought about a new way of looking at things.

The six weeks between Easter and Pentecost effected within them a new sense of Jesus' presence and with that presence came a present – the gift of peace.

Peace is not the absence of fear but trust during the storm. The realization that Jesus is in the boat with us. And indeed others are in the boat also. We discover in a new and wonderful way that we are all in the same boat and can find new friendships as we work together to bail out the boat and keep this thing afloat until Jesus calms the storm.

The peace of Jesus came as he breathed on them his holy spirit. The peace came with his presence. Are we spending time in his presence with music, silence, meditation on his words in the Bible. The Apple watch comes with an app to help you walk, run, and a reminder every now and again to simply stop and breathe. Be grateful for every breath in this time when the virus is making so many people struggle for breath.

Breathe in the breath of God, receive the Holy Spirit in a moment of quietness and let him speak his peace to you.

Out of this peace and contemplation will come purpose.

What is his plan for your life? What mark will you leave on this world when your time comes to leave it, as surely it will come sooner or later. Will you be known for your kindness, gentleness, the letters you wrote, the phone calls you made, your financial generosity? In the face of 5,000 five small buns and two little fish did not seem a lot but they were enough when the little boy handed them over to Jesus.

With the Holy Spirit Jesus gives not only peace and purpose but power to accomplish those purposes.

God gives us the power and ability to act. Even small forces bring about large changes when they are used with a fulcrum and a lever, that's how you can lift a car using a jack to change a wheel. Take a small action, ask God what it should be. Captain Tom made a decision to walk around his garden one hundred times and hoped to raise £100 pounds. £30 million later we realise he had not done it alone, he was just the bit of sand in the pearl. I guess even if I feel like I am an insignificant speck of sand in this world I would rather opt to try to be remembered as being in the oyster rather than the sandwich.

Romans ch.15:13. May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope and bring hope to others by the power of the Holy Spirit.