

A SERMON

(JOHN.20: 19-31)

As I said on Wednesday at St Luke that straight after the resurrection there is these, continuous stream of APPEARANCES' of Jesus. He appeared to many people and on Wednesday we looked at the story of the journey of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

To day we have the story of the appearance of Jesus to his disciples. It was late on Sunday evening, the Sunday of the resurrection and they were gathered behind locked doors. And the reason why they were behind locked doors was because, they were afraid of the Jewish authorities.

Here we have a group of very frighten men, who feared the authorities, who were scared that they too will fall into the authorities hands. They thought they have crucified Jesus and sooner or later they will be coming for us. For this reason they locked the doors and stayed inside.

There was also doubt regarding the resurrection even when the tomb was reported empty and some were reporting they meet the risen Christ. There were two things Jesus said to the disciples,' Peace be with you' than he 'showed them his hands and his side'.

a) 'Peace be with you'

Peace is what the disciples needed most and at this point they lacked it. Lack of peace brought fear, lack of peace made them afraid of the authorities, lack of peace meant having the doors locked. Lack of peace took their minds away from scripture and what it predicted would happen to Jesus the Messiah, and even what Jesus himself said of the death and resurrection.

Lack of peace makes us become very emotional and our circumstances begin to dictate our responses and our action.

This is why peace is very important and this is why the main message of the resurrection to the disciples and to us is 'peace be with you'.

b) 'He showed them the scars'

The scar confirmed that the person standing is Jesus. No one has ever had scar like that and it removed all doubt from them. The resurrection indeed happened, it took place and the scars confirmed

it beyond all doubt including Thomas who was absent in the first encounter but was present in the second one. Jesus told Thomas to even touch the scars with his fingers but for Thomas seeing the scars was enough and he fell on his knees and worshipped, 'My Lord and my God'. All doubt gone.

c) 'Receive the Holy Spirit'

Many theologians give various names and functions of the Holy Spirit but I like the one in which the Holy Spirit is said to be 'Power'. And here Jesus breathes power into his disciples. Power to overcome their situation of fear and unforgiveness. Power to open that locked door and face the outside world.

That is what we see in the reading from Act 5.27-31. They brought the Apostles and made them stand before the council. You see these were the men who were behind locked doors and now standing before the very council that they were afraid of.

The Apostles boldly spoke to the council about the Jesus they crucified but God raised on the third day.

Peter said, 'We are witnesses to these things, we and the Holy Spirit, who is God's gift to those who obey him'.

Where did they have the courage and boldness. Where did they get confidence and conviction to speak. Peter said it all, WE AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. There it is God's power to overcome and face the world. Each of us need the presence of God in His Spirit, He is power that can change our situation and circumstance and help us to face the world. Our parish needs the Holy Spirit who is the power of God to transform us as a church in his world here where we are.

'Lord Jesus breathe your spirit upon us'

Amen!!!!