

JOHN 20:1-10, 19-20

[WELCOME]

- Welcome again to Cedar Springs.
- My name is James Forsyth, and I'm the Senior Pastor here.
- Let's give our attention to the story that has brought us here this morning.
- We'll focus on John 20:19-20, but I'll also read the start of the chapter—verses 1-10—as well.

[SCRIPTURE READING]

The Resurrection

¹ Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. ² So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." ³ So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. ⁴ Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, ⁷ and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. ⁸ Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; ⁹ for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰ Then the disciples went back to their homes.

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

¹⁹ 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." ²⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

[INTRODUCTION]

- This Easter, we've been talking about seeing Jesus.
 - Because it's possible to see him—but not really see him.
 - Something happened to me this week that brought this idea home.
- It all started when I was late for a counseling appointment.
 - My wife and I see a guy here in town—he helps keep us healthy as we navigate the beautiful, messy adventure of life.
 - And this week, I was running late.
 - Men—can I give you some free advice?
 - Wives don't like it when you're late for couples counseling.
 - I know that... and yet for some reason—I still roll the dice.
 - Time got away from me, I run out the door, jump in the car, pull out of the driveway—and then... CRUNCH.
 - In my haste, I scrape the side of my car against... wait for it... the back of my daughter's car.
 - My car.
 - Her car.
 - Two for the price of one.
 - And the worst part is...
 - Her car was right there on the driveway.
 - I saw it—I just didn't see it.
- Well, it turns out this isn't just a driving problem—it's also a spiritual problem.
 - Because it's possible to have Jesus right in front of you—and not really see him.
 - If you're a Christian, that may be why we don't experience the abundant life he offers. We see him—but we don't really see him.
 - And if you're not a Christian—it may be that he's closer than you think... and you just haven't seen him yet.
 - So here's the question this Easter:

What does it mean to really see Jesus?

[Transition]: Come with me to be a fly on the wall of a locked room.

[STATE]

V19: On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors [were] locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews.

It's Sunday evening, the sun is going down—and the hearts and hopes of Christ's disciples are doing the same.

- Huddled in shadows, ten have gathered—Judas and Thomas are missing.
- But there's another empty chair at the table:
 - That weekend, Jesus—their leader, their friend—has been seized.
 - And not just seized—He is crucified. He is dead. He is buried.
 - Never to be seen in this world again—they think they've seen the last of him.
- The atmosphere speaks of his absence: There's ten of them—but the room feels empty.

Empty, that is, apart from some tangible, heavy emotions...

1. [FEAR]: First, the disciples are **afraid**.

- Their enemies are on the warpath.
 - Now they've tasted blood—Jesus's blood—the disciples have every reason to expect that they'll be next.
 - Their Master's destruction is likely a prelude to their own.
- Their only hope is a feeble gesture—they lock the doors.
 - As if that's going to stop a bloodthirsty mob.
 - Like a frightened child covering their eyes—all they can do is pretend that the trouble will somehow stay “out there.”

[Transition]: But when we think of the context, we know that along with **fear—guilt** is also in the air.

2. [GUILT]: No locked door can keep it out—the events of the weekend have seen to that.

- For three years, they had been with Jesus.
 - They left everything to follow him...
 - But received so much more in return.
 - They witnessed healings and miracles—and drank the best wine.
 - They found acceptance, forgiveness, new purpose—and joy.
- Jesus was worth living for—in fact, they all agreed he was worth dying for.
 - But this weekend, when the moment arrived...
 - When Jesus needed them most and their loyalty was put to the test...
 - They'd proved themselves cowards.
 - Despite their promises, when it came to it: **all the disciples left him and fled (Mt 26:56)**—Deserters. Betrayers. Failures at the end.

[Transition]: In this room, we don't see Jesus—but **fear** and **guilt** are everywhere.

- And if we step out of that room for a moment—back into this one—it might not be hard for us to relate.
- Our doors aren't locked (that would be weird!)—but these emotions are deeply human.

1. [FEAR]: Fear—what are you afraid of?

- I don't mean the **simple stuff**—snakes, spiders, heights.
- I mean the **deeper things**:
 - *What keeps you awake at night*—staring at the ceiling, wondering, “Am I going to be okay?”
 - *What makes you catastrophize*—one moment at work where you didn't have what it takes, and now you're worrying about losing your job, your home, everything?
 - *What do you carry deep in your chest or gut*—watching your kids and quietly asking, “Am I messing them up?”
 - *What do you try not to think about*—your physical health, your mental health, the reality of death? (Our culture does its best not to think about the fact that one day we're all going to die.)
- Like the disciples, we try to manage fear—we lock doors.
 - We put things in place, we work hard, we try to stay in control.
 - But most of us are trying to keep something out.

2. [GUILT]: And if **fear** is about what might happen to us, **guilt** is about what we've already done.

- And for some of us, that's even harder to escape.
 - *Something you said*—to someone you love—that you can't unsay.
 - *A decision you made*—and you're still living with the consequences today.
 - *Something you did*—and even though no one else knows—you do.
- Or maybe it's deeper than that...
 - *A moment where you let someone down*—someone who trusted you.
 - *A moment where you know*—you didn't just fail yourself, you failed God.
 - *A memory that haunts you*—a failure that still feels heavy.
- Like fear—we try to manage guilt too.
 - We explain it away. We justify it. We promise we'll do better next time.
 - But none of that quite makes it go away.

That's the reality in that locked room.

- The disciples are face to face with themselves—their **fear** and their **guilt**.
- And here's the problem: There's no way out.
- If we're honest with ourselves—some of us feel the same way.

[Transition]: So let's step back into their room—a room we belong in...

- But when we get there—in the second half of **V19**...
- Suddenly, somehow, everything has changed.

The shift is jarring—but unmistakably good.

- We expected the gloom and heaviness of **fear** and **guilt**—but instead:
 - The disciples’ faces are shining.
 - Their voices are throbbing.
- We look at each other and wonder:
 - Are these the same men?
 - Have we entered the right room?
 - What’s happened?

But then we feel it: the atmosphere no longer speaks of absence but of presence.

- And then—we see him: Jesus in the middle of his disciples.
 - **V19: Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.”**
 - **V20: When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side.**
- When they see Jesus—what do they see? Our passage emphasizes three things:

First: Jesus is STANDING.

- Why? Bc he’s alive!
 - Yes, he was crucified/dead/buried.
 - But on the third day—he rose again.
 - **Death** could not restrain him.
 - The **grave** could not detain him.
 - The **tomb** could not contain him.
- Now he stands—risen; risen indeed.

Second: Jesus is SPEAKING.

- To a fearful, guilt-ridden collection of motley fools—he speaks.
 - Not a word of **condemnation**—rebuking them for their cowardly desertion.
 - But a word of **benediction**—a word of blessing and grace.
- It’s summed up in a single word: Peace. **Peace be with you.**

Third: Jesus is SHOWING them his hands and side.

- Isn’t this curious? He’s alive, but he still has scars.
 - This is the risen Jesus—he looks then as he still looks now.
 - So why does his body still bear scars?
 - ***Because he wants to be known by these wounds.***
- You recognize a police officer or a Chick-fil-A employee by the uniform they wear.
 - So it is with Jesus—his scars are his uniform.
 - On the cross—they spoke of suffering and death.
 - But in his resurrection—they now speak of forgiveness and grace.
 - They are proof of his love for us:
 - Proof that he has taken the punishment for sin.
 - Proof that our debt is paid.
 - Proof that the work is done.

They see Jesus—standing, speaking, showing scars—and everything changes.

- **Fear** and **guilt** disappear—and instead we read that they are **glad**:
V20: Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.
- That’s what happens when you see Jesus: his presence changes everything.

[Transition]

- It does our hearts good to remember—Jesus didn’t just show up in that room.
- He’s been showing up in rooms ever since—changing even the worst of moments.

[ILLUSTRATE]

- I think of Kara Tippetts: A young wife and mum of four—a family full of life and warmth and joy.
- Then, not long after planting a church in Colorado, she was diagnosed with breast cancer. And over time—it spread.
- She wrote openly about the experience on a [blog](#)—not pretending, not sugarcoating.
 - At one point, she compared herself to a wee girl at a party whose dad is telling her it’s time to leave: *“I’m not afraid of dying,”* she said, *“I just don’t want to go.”*
 - No bravado. No denial. Just very real.
- And yet, alongside that honesty, there was something else.
 - She wrote: *“I do not feel like I have the courage for this journey, but I have Jesus... [He] will carry us—carry us in ways we cannot comprehend.”*
 - And he did.
 - As her body weakened—her hope didn’t.
 - As death drew nearer—her peace deepened.
- And just before she died, she wrote these words: *“It seems impossible that this journey has finally come to an end... My pain is gone, my fears are calmed—I’m in the sovereignly good hands of Jesus. He is my forever enough now.”*
- What happened?

She saw Jesus.

- The same Jesus—standing, speaking, showing wounds—showed up in her room.
 - As she saw him:
 - Fear gave way to peace
 - Guilt gave way to grace.
 - And even death gave way to hope.
 - Seeing Jesus enabled her to live—and die—so very well.
- That’s what happens when you see Jesus:

His presence changes everything.

[Transition]: And it’s not just the dramatic moments—Jesus also shows up for us.

- But if that’s true—how do we see him?
- Let’s follow the example of our passage and see what they saw.

[APPLY]

First: Will you see him **STANDING** before you?

- Some of us live as if Jesus is absent—a good man, a great teacher, but dead and gone.
- Easter says: he is not in the grave—he is on his feet.
 - He is alive. He is present. He is here—in this very room.
 - Which means, if you're a Christian—you are not facing life alone.
 - The thing that's keeping you awake at night—he is there.
 - The situation you don't know how to handle—he is there.
 - The weight you're carrying—he is there.
 - **In fact, he's standing—right in the middle of it.**
 - Not far off. Not absent. Not distant
- That's where seeing Jesus begins for us: With the faith to believe, this Easter morning—he is alive, and he is here.

Second: Will you see him **SPEAKING** to you?

- Because when Jesus stands before people like us—he has something to say.
 - To fearful, guilty people...
 - To people who have failed and hidden and run.
- I wonder what you would expect him to say to you personally?
 - *How could you? What's wrong with you? Do better.*
 - Or would you expect—**Peace be with you?**
- This is the Jesus of the Bible:
 - He has not come to condemn you.
 - He has come to give you forgiveness and peace.
- Some of us need to hear that this morning:
 - You've been carrying something—a regret, a shame, a weight you can't shake.
 - And deep down, you assume—God must be disappointed.
- But when you really see Jesus—he speaks a different word.
 - Not condemnation.
 - Not rejection.
 - But peace.

[Transition]: How do we receive that peace? We receive it when we see his scars.

Third: Will you see him **SHOWING** you his hands and side?

- When Jesus stands before us...
 - He doesn't hide his wounds—he shows them.
 - Because he wants to be known by them.
 - Not just as a teacher.
 - Not just as an example.
 - But as a Savior—with wounds of love.
- Earlier, we said those wounds are his uniform—his uniform of grace.

- And uniforms don't just help you **recognize** someone...
- They also tell you how to **relate** to them.
 - If a police officer pulls you over, you don't wind down your window and give him your Chick-fil-A order, *"I'll have a spicy chicken sandwich, large fries, and a Diet Coke."* (That officer will not say, *"My pleasure."*)
 - The uniform tells you who you're dealing with—and how to respond.
- So it is with Jesus:
 - His scars tell you exactly what he has done.
 - He has paid for your sin.
 - He has taken the punishment you deserve.
 - Your debt is cleared.
 - And his scars tell you how to respond:
 - Not by fixing yourself. (Why would he bear scars if you can save yourself?)
 - Not by cleaning yourself up. (Why would he go to the cross if you can make things right?)
 - Not by earning his favor and love. (Why would he be wounded if you still have to earn his love?)
- Instead of telling us to do something for him—his scars call us to trust what he has done for us.
 - To see Jesus is to look at his wounds and say: *"That was for me."*
 - That's what it means to become a Christian.
 - Ask him to forgive you—free you from your fear and guilt.
 - His scars guarantee that he will.

[CONCLUSION]

- This week I learned that not seeing can be costly...
 - That's true of cars.
 - But it's another thing to miss Jesus.
- If you don't see him:
 - There's no way out of fear and guilt.
 - And there is no hope beyond death.
- But it doesn't have to be that way.
 - Because this Easter...
 - He is not hidden. He is not distant. He is not hard to find.
 - He is **standing**. He is **speaking**. He is **showing** you his wounds.
 - So don't miss him.
 - See him...
 - And like the first disciples—let your heart be glad.

Do you see him?