

Dear Friends,

John 20: 19-20

The friends of Jesus are in lockdown. They are in a room, in a house, where all the doors are locked. Maybe they fear that they might be so locked down that Jesus will not be able to get to them. If they fear that, they are just wrong. The story shows us that no obstacle gets in his way. Is there anything in you, in your life, in your background that makes you think that Jesus won't be able to get to you? Well, it won't stop him. Really, you only have to want him and he's already there with you.

So, Jesus comes and stands among them and says, "Peace be with you". He comes to the very heart of things. He comes to the centre of every situation, to the centre of you. In fact, he's already there. He may be a bit hidden. Or you may not be that serious about looking for him or wanting him, but he's there. Take time to go within, deep within, and the presence of God is there, in your heart, in your inner core where you are one with God.

At the centre of everything, Jesus is present saying, "Peace be with you". That was a normal greeting. It was what people said when they met each other. It meant rather more than "have a nice day". They were expressing their hope that the earth would be filled with God's life; that all people would live together in peace and the whole creation would flourish and be abundant; that no one, woman or man would live in fear of what others might do to them; that no one would have to assert that their life mattered, because all people of whatever race or colour would be treated justly because all people matter.

Jesus stands at the centre and gives this peace. As he once said, "Peace, I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not let them be afraid".

And he not only gives them peace in words, he also gives peace by his actions. He shows them his hands and his side. They have been afraid to show their wounds and share their brokenness. They have hidden their vulnerability. Jesus by contrast is open. He is saying, "Here I am. This is me, just as I am. Here's where I have been broken. Here are my wounds. Here's my vulnerability". He shows it all to them and it's okay. And it gives them permission to feel okay about their own wounds and to share them too.

And then maybe they all get a bit over excited. Well, it's not every day that you meet someone who is risen from the dead. It's not every day that in one moment you think you are broken and finished and done for and in the next you find that God still wants you and has something for you. So yes, perhaps they do get a bit over excited. The word is, they rejoiced. And that's what Jesus wants for them, what he wants for you. He wants your joy to be complete.

But there are a few things yet to be done. Jesus has work for his friends to do and a gift to give that will equip them for that work. They need to find that peaceful place where they will be open to God. Jesus says again "Peace be with you". They settle and ready themselves to receive their commission.

God bless you,

Tony