**WEEK TWO Monday 12th & Thursday 15th May**

John 20:19-25  Sunday evening without Thomas.

The transformation begins!

From men filled with fear hiding behind locked doors, to world changing apostles!

Lots of questions in the midst of wonderful certainty.

These notes are interesting …

*How did our Lord transform His disciples’ fear into courage? For one thing, He came to them. We do not know where these ten frightened men met behind locked doors, but Jesus came to them and reassured them. In His resurrection body, He was able to enter the room without opening the doors! It was a solid body, for He asked them to touch Him–and He even ate some fish (*[*Luke 24:41-43*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2024:41-Luke%2024:43)*). But it was a different kind of body, one that was not limited by what we call “the laws of nature.”*

*It is remarkable that these men were actually afraid. The women had reported to them that Jesus was alive, and the two Emmaus disciples had added their personal witness (*[*Luke 24:33-35*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2024:33-Luke%2024:35)*). It is likely that Jesus had appeared personally to Peter sometime that afternoon (*[*Mark 16:7*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark%2016:7)*;*[*Luke 24:34*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2024:34)*;*[*1 Cor. 15:5*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1Cor%2015:5)*), though Peter’s public restoration would not take place until later (*[*John 21*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2021)*). No wonder Jesus reproached them at that time “with their unbelief and hardness of heart” (*[*Mark 16:14*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark%2016:14)*).*

*But His first word to them was the traditional greeting, “Shalom–peace!” He could have rebuked them for their unfaithfulness and cowardice the previous weekend, but He did not. “He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities” (*[*Ps. 103:10*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ps%20103:10)*). The work of the cross is peace (*[*Rom. 5:1*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Rom%205:1)*;*[*Eph. 2:14-17*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Eph%202:14-Eph%202:17)*), and the message they would carry would be the gospel of peace (*[*Rom. 10:15*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Rom%2010:15)*). Man had declared war on God (*[*Ps. 2*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ps%202)*;*[*Acts 4:23-30*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%204:23-Acts%204:30)*), but God would declare “Peace!” to those who would believe.*

*Not only did Jesus come to them, but He also reassured them. He showed them His wounded hands and side and gave them opportunity to discover that it was indeed their Master, and that He was not a phantom. (The Gospels do not record wounds in His feet, but*[*Psalm 22:16*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ps%2022:16)*indicates that His feet were also nailed to the cross.)*

*But the wounds meant more than identification; they also were evidence that the price for salvation had been paid and man indeed could have “peace with God.” The basis for all our peace is found in the person and work of Jesus Christ. He died for us, He arose from the dead in victory, and now He lives for us. In our fears, we cannot lock Him out! He comes to us in grace and reassures us through His Word. “Faithful are the wounds of a friend” (*[*Prov. 27:6*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Prov%2027:6)*).*

*When Jesus saw that the disciples’ fear had not turned to joy, He commissioned them: “As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you” (*[*John 20:21*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2020:21)*). Keep in mind that the original disciples were not the only ones present; others, including the Emmaus disciples, were also in the room. This commission was not the “formal ordination” of a church order; rather, it was the dedication of His followers to the task of world evangelism. We are to take His place in this world (*[*John 17:18*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2017:18)*). What a tremendous privilege and what a great responsibility! It is humbling to realize that Jesus loves us as the Father loves Him (*[*John 15:9*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2015:9)*;*[*17:26*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2017:26)*), and that we are in the Father just as He is (*[*John 17:21-22*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2017:21-John%2017:22)*). It is equally as humbling to realize that He has sent us into the world just as the Father sent Him. As He was about to ascend to heaven, He again reminded them of their commission to take the message to the whole world (*[*Matt. 28:18-20*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matt%2028:18-Matt%2028:20)*).*

*It must have given the men great joy to realize that, in spite of their many failures, their Lord was entrusting them with His Word and His work. They had forsaken Him and fled, but now He was sending them out to represent Him. Peter had denied Him three times, and yet in a few days, Peter would preach the Word (and accuse the Jews of denying Him–*[*Acts 3:13-14*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%203:13-Acts%203:14)*!) and thousands would be saved.*

*Jesus came to them and reassured them, but He also enabled them through the Holy Spirit.*[*John 20:22*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2020:22)*reminds us of*[*Genesis 2:7*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Gen%202:7)*, when God breathed life into the first man. In both Hebrew and Greek, the word for “breath” also means “spirit.” The breath of God in the first creation meant physical life, and the breath of Jesus Christ in the new creation meant spiritual life. The believers would receive the baptism of the Spirit at Pentecost and be empowered for ministry (*[*Acts 1:4-5*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%201:4-Acts%201:5)*;*[*2:1-4*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%202:1-Acts%202:4)*). Apart from the filling of the Spirit, they could not go forth to witness effectively. The Spirit had dwelt with them in the person of Christ, but now the Spirit would be in them (*[*John 14:17*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2014:17)*).*

[*John 20:23*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2020:23)*must not be interpreted to mean that Jesus gave to a select body of people the right to forgive sins and let people into heaven. Jesus had spoken similar words before (*[*Matt. 16:19*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matt%2016:19)*), but He was not setting aside the disciples (and their successors) as a “spiritual elite” to deal with the sins of the world. Remember, there were others in the room besides the disciples, and Thomas was missing!*

*A correct understanding of the Greek text helps us here. Some years ago, I corresponded with the eminent Greek scholar Dr. Julius R. Mantey (now deceased) about this verse, and he assured me that the correct translation both here and in*[*Matthew 16:19*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matt%2016:19)*should be: “Whosoever sins you remit [forgive] shall have already been forgiven them, and whosoever sins you retain [do not forgive] shall have already not been forgiven them.” In other words, the disciples did not provide forgiveness; they proclaimed forgiveness on the basis of the message of the gospel. Another Greek scholar, Dr. Kenneth Wuest, translates it “they have been previously forgiven them.”*

*As the early believers went forth into the world, they announced the good news of salvation. If sinners would repent and believe on Jesus Christ, their sins would be forgiven them! “Who can forgive sins but God only?” (*[*Mark 2:7*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark%202:7)*). All that the Christian can do is announce the message of forgiveness; God performs the miracle of forgiveness. If sinners will believe on Jesus Christ, we can authoritatively declare to them that their sins have been forgiven, but we are not the ones who provide the forgiveness.*

*By now, their fears had vanished. They were sure that the Lord was alive and that He was caring for them. They had both “peace with God” and the “peace of God” (*[*Phil. 4:6-7*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Phil%204:6-Phil%204:7)*). They had a high and holy commission and the power provided to accomplish it. And they had been given the great privilege of bearing the good news of forgiveness to the whole world. All they now had to do was tarry in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit would be given.*

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