**Acts 4:32-35 (ESV)**

**32** Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. **33** And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. **34**  There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold **35** and laid it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

**1 John 1:1-10 (ESV)**

**1**  That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— **2**  the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— **3**  that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. **4** And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. **5**  This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. **6**  If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. **7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. **8**  If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. **9**  If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. **10** If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. **1 John 2:1-2 (ESV) 1** My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. **2**  He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

**John 20:19-31 (ESV)**

**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. **21** Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” **22** And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. **23**  If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.” **24** Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. **25** So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.” **26** Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” **27** Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.” **28** Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” **29** Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” **30**  Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; **31**  but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

**“Peace Be With You”**

 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. When a person buys a vehicle, it never hurts to pop the hood. Who knows what kind of engine you are getting despite the looks. Easter Sunday unites Christians to the two most basic facts that Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead. On this second Sunday of Eater, we now consider what the risen Jesus means for the Church in the world. For instance, on that first Sunday of the resurrection Jesus was busy being consistent, while everyone else were scattered. He appeared to different people throughout the day like Mary Magdalene, the Women, and even the Emmaus disciples. Yet, it was only until the evening that it finally all came together.

 You could picture that first Sunday as Jesus being the Good Shepherd gathering His sheep. Of course, when the flock was together they still hid behind locked doors. The Church did not have peace from a certain disciple like Peter or some fancy plan to save the day. When we “pop the hood,” the engine at work in the church is Jesus and His word proclaiming peace. Peace is a rich word going back to the Hebrew word, “Shalom.” Especially important to note is how peace has wholeness and security, “relating not only to the individual, but also to entire communities and relationships among persons.”[[1]](#footnote-1) Jesus provides peace that world cannot give, as Savior and Lord. The risen Jesus delivers peace to His Church to have fellowship with God and each other based on forgiveness.

1. **Peace is forgiveness to the fearful.**
2. Fear brings all kinds of anxieties over life.
* Good Friday struck fear into the disciples leaving them to each run off in fear.
* On the third day, the risen Jesus appeared to some, but at the end of the day locked doors proved more fear over the Jews.
* We know that fears over instability and insecurity have driven whole societies into the arms of a fearless dictator.
* Fear is also very personal as it raises worries over death be it with your own well-being or that of someone we love.
* Sin even breeds a kind of fear where hiding it from others leaves guilt still to devour you up on the inside.
1. The risen Jesus came to the fearful with His peace for life.
* Locked doors were a false security so, “Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.”
* They were focused on saving their lives, which was no different from what happened at the cross, but Jesus held no grudge.
* Instead, His words of peace proclaimed forgiveness proving if God was not against them, they were safe.
* For all the fears in life, and there are many, the greatest enemy death has been conquered for us by Jesus.
* God unlocks our hiddenness for St. John says, “If anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”
* Jesus is the only leader who upholds the Church providing peace that comes from the forgiving power of His Word.
1. **Peace is also forgiveness to the distressed.**
2. More than stuck in a rut, the disciples had no peace to move forward.
* They had lost focus because the crucifixion of Jesus had left them confused and shattered.
* Those who were to be salt of the earth and light to the world found themselves trapped behind locked doors.
* Distress has a way of undoing what we want to do, since there is no sense of peace.
* Just as a spouse or child needs support, so the lack of peace in our culture with the Christian Church makes us lose purpose.
* This distress has caused conflict in relationships, let false teaching be praised, and even turned the church’s peace into a product of man.
1. Yet, the risen Jesus gave His disciples peace that world could not give.
* He said, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”
* Jesus undid the confusion and distress, because His Word of forgiveness had the purpose to give peace.
* Instead of being paralyzed, the Church moves forward sharing forgiveness, since Christ goes before us speaking forgiveness.
* “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.”
* The called ministers of Christ extends this absolving in a public way, but this peace also goes into the private life of His people.
1. **Peace is finally forgiveness to the unbelieving.**
2. Thomas had such restlessness that gave no peace until a week later.
* Being resistant to the disciples, He demanded to see the risen Jesus denying their witness.
* His position was like, “Fool me once with the Messiah being Jesus shame on you, fool me twice now with the crucified Jesus shame on me.”
* Doubt and unbelief is not as far off as those atheists and agnostic types.
* No, Thomas reminds us there is healthy aspect to raise questions and look for facts rather than be a pushover.
* How easy is it today for a Christian faith to be empty of substance, unwilling to handle questions, or fueled only on emotions.
* At the same time, when doubts never let up all you have is unbelief and that leaves no peace only emptiness on our terms.
1. Christ cared about His whole Church and that included Thomas.
* There was nothing new to share that following Sunday saying once again, “Peace be with you!”
* However, Jesus provided special attention to Thomas determined to speak His peace, “Do not disbelieve, but believe.”
* Rather than holding back, Thomas confessed the truth, “My Lord and My God!”
* Witnessing the risen Jesus belonged to the early church, but they did not forget us, “that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.”
* Jesus knows the doubts and unbelief in every age, but He forgives us to handle His Word and see Him present in the Sacrament.
* This peace greets the baptized daily seeking to affect every part of our life and conversation.

 The Second Sunday of Easter is more than a moment behind locked doors, but looking at the engine. It is Jesus and His Word of peace greeting a fearful, distressed, and unbelieving church with forgiveness. Him sending out the same church with the keys of His kingdom as peace of forgiveness for all people. The risen Jesus delivers peace to His Church to have fellowship with God and each other based on forgiveness. Amen. Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia! Amen.

1. Eerdman’s Bible Dictionary, 807 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)