



Life in His Name

A Gospel Reflection on John 20:19–31

There are moments in life when the heart feels shut in. Fear lingers. Questions rise. The disciples knew that kind of moment. On the evening of the resurrection, they gathered behind locked doors, uncertain and afraid. The weight of the cross still pressed upon them, and their hopes seemed fragile.

Yet it is into that very room that Jesus comes.

“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’” (John 20:19, ESV).

The risen Christ does not wait for calm hearts or steady faith. He comes in the midst of fear and speaks a word that carries the full authority of His finished work. Peace. This is the peace purchased at the cross and confirmed in the resurrection. It is the peace of reconciliation with God.

The apostle Paul writes, “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1, ESV). This is the ground beneath every

trembling soul that looks to Christ. His peace rests on what He has accomplished, not on the strength of those who receive it.

Jesus then shows His hands and His side. The marks remain. They testify that the One who stands before them is the very One who was crucified.

“When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord” (John 20:20, ESV).

Sorrow gives way to joy as the reality of the resurrection settles into their hearts. Jesus had told them this would happen. “You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy” (John 16:20, ESV). Now they see it fulfilled. The presence of Christ transforms everything.

He speaks peace again, and this time He sends them.

“Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you’” (John 20:21, ESV).

The mission of the church flows from the mission of the Son. The Father sent Christ to accomplish redemption. Now Christ sends His people to bear witness to that redemption. They do not go in their own strength. They go as those who have received grace.

“And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’” (John 20:22, ESV).

This moment points forward to the outpouring of the Spirit and reminds us that the life of the believer is sustained by God Himself. Salvation is a work of new creation. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come” (2 Corinthians 5:17, ESV).

Jesus also speaks of the authority tied to the gospel message.

“If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld” (John 20:23, ESV).

The church does not create forgiveness. It proclaims it. When the good news of Christ is declared, those who believe are truly forgiven. Those who turn away remain in their sin. The message we carry is a matter of eternal life.

The account then turns to Thomas. He was absent when Jesus first appeared, and he struggles to receive the testimony of the others.

“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’” (John 20:25, ESV).

Thomas speaks with sincerity, yet his words reveal the need for grace. The human heart longs for certainty yet wrestles with unbelief. Left to itself, it cannot rise to faith.

Eight days later, Jesus comes again. The doors are still shut, yet nothing prevents His presence.

“Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you’” (John 20:26, ESV).

Once more, peace is spoken. Then Jesus addresses Thomas directly, meeting him in his struggle.

“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’” (John 20:27, ESV).

This is the grace of Christ in action. He calls Thomas to believe, and in that call He brings about the very faith He commands. The risen Lord opens blind eyes and softens hardened hearts.

Thomas responds with a confession that rings through the ages.

“Thomas answered him, ‘My Lord and my God!’” (John 20:28, ESV).

Here is the essence of saving faith. Jesus is embraced as Lord and confessed as God. This is not merely an intellectual conclusion. It is the work of the Spirit within. “No one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except in the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:3, ESV).

Jesus then speaks a blessing that reaches to every believer who would follow.

“Jesus said to him, ‘Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed’” (John 20:29, ESV).

We live in that blessing. We have not seen Him with our eyes, yet we have received the testimony of Scripture. Through the Word, Christ is made known, and faith is given. “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17, ESV).

John closes this section by reminding us why these things were written.

“Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 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” (John 20:30–31, ESV).

This is the invitation of the gospel. Life is found in Christ. It is received by faith, and that faith is a gift of grace. “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8, ESV).

The risen Christ still comes to His people through His Word. He still speaks peace to troubled hearts. He still reveals Himself as the crucified and risen Savior. He still calls sinners to believe and grants life in His name.

Take comfort in His nearness. Rest in His finished work. Walk in the peace He has secured.

And with hearts made alive by His grace, let us confess together, “My Lord and my God.”



*At the heart of Redeemer’s ministry is the pastoral leadership of **Jason K. Boothe**, who serves as pastor of Redeemer Church in Piketon, Ohio. Known for his warm, Gospel-centered preaching and careful exposition of Scripture, Pastor Boothe consistently points listeners to the finished work of Jesus Christ as the foundation of the Christian life. His ministry emphasizes the sufficiency of Christ, the comfort of God’s promises, and the assurance believers have through faith alone. Through preaching, teaching, and pastoral care, he seeks to help ordinary people see the extraordinary grace of God at work in His Word and in their daily lives.*

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