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Resurrection Appearances – The Breath of Life

John 20:19-31

Intro

2 stories from the Alpha Conference:

The church who don't invite outsiders;

The muslim woman whose life was transformed.

Now I don't know what these stories do for you – but I LOVE to hear stories like the second one – and there were others – whose lives had made a complete U-Turn. I love to hear the stories of the difference that a relationship with Jesus Christ has made to people.

This morning I want to look at **two areas of our lives that can limit us** from growing into all that God has for us – and then I want to look at **three**

things that Jesus brings to counteract them and move us on into the place he has for us.

I want you to picture for a moment – THE ELEVEN – behind locked doors – afraid of what was out there – overwhelmed by the situation they faced.

Then think for a moment about the same ELEVEN – going out around the world – preaching the gospel, healing the sick, raising the dead, casting out demons; willing to die for what they believed in.

To me this picture is to CHALLENGE us not to settle for living in a place of fear and doubt – because our God has SO MUCH better things in store for us!

1. Fear

“On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came...”

Fear is a genuine reality. The Bible tells us its the opposite of love – because perfect love casts out all fear.

And the disciples had every reason to be afraid...

What are the things that fill you with fear? Are you hiding behind locked doors in some way because of fear? Is your job overwhelming? Is there a sadness that is locking you away?

Fear can restrict our lives at the best of times – and be crippling at the worst!

I really think that's how the disciples felt as they gathered in the upper room. **But Jesus wasn't prepared to leave them in that place of fear!**

2. Doubt

Then there was Thomas, before he saw Jesus – he expressed these words: *“Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand in his side, I will not believe it..”*

Again – doubt is very real. I'm pretty sure that we all have moments of oscillating between doubt and belief.

John Ortberg – Why I doubt (drowned baby)

Why I believe (newborn baby)

- Every newborn baby bears witness to creator God “who wants the world to go on!”

And Jesus wasn't prepared to leave the disciples in a place of doubt either!

So what does Jesus bring to the equation? What does he bring that completely turns the situation around?

1. Peace

“On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came...”

Thankfully the verse doesn't end there – it goes on: *“...Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you!’ ”*

Without Jesus in the room: fear, doubt, trouble, anger...

What makes the difference?

The Breath of Life rocks up! Jesus speaks a word – and look how it changes.

The disciples were trapped in fear – and Jesus speaks peace.

Wrote off Bren's car – Dad came – *'It's ok – I'm here now.'*

When I was preparing for today and got to this point – I had a very clear picture in my mind of the embrace the Father gives to the Prodigal Son. Its as if in that moment – God puts his arms around the disciples and says: *"I'm here. Its ok. I'm here now."*

2. Joy

"The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord."

Gordon Crowther who leads CHS was speaking to the Parish staff last week and pointed out that the peace and joy that Jesus brings to the room – are nothing short of the fruits of the Spirit of God.

The joy that the Spirit brings is transforming.
(Muslim woman yesterday)

3. Life in Jesus' Name

John writes (v.31) *"These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God and that by believing you may have life in his name."*

Name = character = person = LIFE IN JESUS

There was once a man who wanted to see the Niagara falls. He lived back when people didn't travel much and most travel was on horseback or on foot.

But he had heard how beautiful and magnificent it was. So he set out on the long journey to see the falls for himself.

When he was getting close, less than a day's journey away, he could hear a very faint roar. He stopped that night at an inn and was speaking with the owner.

He discovered that the innkeeper had lived there his whole life. So he asked the innkeeper, "Is that roar I heard the sound of Niagara falls from a day's journey away?"

The innkeeper replied, "That is what I have been told." And to the man's amazement he

discovered that the innkeeper who had lived only a days journey from Niagara falls his whole life had never gone to see it.

Yet he had traveled a long way to witness its power.

Christians are like that sometimes. We live in the same neighborhood with the life and power of the God of this universe. Yet we rarely go out of our way to let that power become a reality.

Wherever Jesus is present there is Life and NEW LIFE.

What is it to have Life IN Jesus??

- Peace
- Joy
- Filled and empowered (to...)
- Be sent (v.21)
- Reconcilers: God & man (with forgiveness at the heart of it – at the heart of bringing any relationship to wholeness!)

Conclusion

Do you hear that? Off in the distance. It's a roar.
Like a mighty waterfall far off in the distance.

You're from these parts! Tell me - is that the fullness of what God has in store for you if you'll receive it?

Many have made the journey – even set up camp by the falls. Some of us are still searching – have been for years – but it really IS within your reach.

God's Spirit is here for you today – will you let him bring peace and joy to the place of your doubts and fears. Will you let the Breath of Life – the Breath of Jesus – breathe afresh on you today?

Amen.