

LIVING THE RESURRECTION

APRIL - MAY 2021

HOME GROUP & DEVOTIONAL MATERIAL

“Living the Resurrection” – Siphokazi Lukhozi – 11 April 2021

Sermon link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4wUdRa1Ktw>

Scripture: John 20:19-31

Open your mind and heart as you read the passage of Scripture aloud and then again quietly to yourself. Listen for God’s word to you.

Worship

Spend some time in worship, offering this session up to God..

Observation

It is likely the disciples continued to meet in the upper room where they had last been with Jesus, but this time they were afraid that they, as known companions of Jesus, may be next to be arrested and killed. So they listened for every footstep on the stairs outside the door. But Jesus did not climb the steps. He was suddenly just there, amongst them, greeting them with the everyday greeting they had used all their lives.

“Shalom” he said, which means: ‘Peace. May God give you every good thing’. He went on to give them and his church a commission in those moments.

- He sent them out into the world, just as the Father had sent him. The world would never hear Jesus’ message unless his church took it to them. Jesus depends on his church to spread his word.
- At the same time, the church needs Jesus. He gives them the authority to go, the message to take, the power and the support only he can offer them. The church depends on Jesus.
- Just as the Father sent the Son, so Jesus, the Son sends his church. Just as the relationship between Jesus and the Father depended on Jesus’ perfect obedience and love so the church be obedient and love in Jesus’ name. The church must constantly rely on the will and guidance of Jesus Christ to reach people with his gospel message.
- In the Old Testament we read of God breathing life into mankind (Genesis 2:7) and into the dry bones (Ezekiel 37:9). Here again Jesus breathes on his disciples, giving new life to his church.

- Jesus gave the disciples, and subsequently the church, the privilege of passing on the message of God's willingness to forgive people. The disciples knew Jesus better than any others and they knew God would forgive if people were truly repentant. It did not give them the power to forgive, just to tell others of God's mercy. However if a person did not repent, then God would not forgive. It is important to note that it is God who forgives, not men or the church.

But Thomas was not there. He was a brave man and he loved Jesus. It was he who had suggested the disciples accompany Jesus to visit Lazarus, no matter what the consequences of that visit may be (John 11:16). He suspected that the visit may result in Jesus' arrest and when his suspicions came true with devastating results, he was broken-hearted. He needed to be alone with his grief. So he was not in the upper room when Jesus returned and he refused to believe what the others told him. It seemed too good to be true. He needed to see Jesus for himself. Thomas refused to say he understood when he did not, or that he

believed when he could not. There was absolute honesty in his declaration. When Jesus returned several days later, he knew what Thomas felt and offered him the chance to do what he had declared he needed to do. Touch the scars in Jesus' hands and his side. Thomas was so overwhelmed with love he could only say 'My Lord and my God.' He no longer had a single doubt about Jesus' resurrection.

In the final two verses of this passage it is clear that the aim of the gospels was not to give a detailed account of Jesus' life and ministry but just record a few events which give those of us who come later an idea of who he was and what he did. They paint a picture, breathing life into the historical Jesus who lived as man but who could only be God because of his teaching, response to people, his healing miracles and his resurrection.

Icebreaker:

Briefly share any doubts you may have about the information you have seen or heard about Covid-19 and/or the vaccine at this time. Why do you think you feel this way?

Application

- Thomas withdrew and mourned alone. As a result he missed out on the greatest event of church history – Jesus' return. How have the restrictions about worshipping together as a body affected you and your faith in this time of the pandemic? Where do you find Christian fellowship today?
- Following on your answer to the above questions, what would you ask God to do which would help you most in your Christian walk today?
- Jesus meets Thomas in Thomas' place of doubt. He also patiently walks with the two on the Emmaus Road until they understand. How much time do you give Jesus to help you with your own doubts? Do you just live with them, or do you intentionally spend time with Jesus listening for His response to your questions?
- What will you commit to do in the presence of the members of your group to give Jesus the opportunity to come to you with his answers? How do you hear him say 'Shalom' to you?

- How can the group help you with the struggles you have mentioned during this session?

Prayer

Pray for one another in regard to the issues that have been raised during your discussion time, and in regard to other needs of the group.

Service

How can you, as individuals or as a group, help those around you who are shielding for whatever reason, to provide Christian fellowship for them in some way? Name people you are aware of who may need you to contact them in some way as a brother or sister in Christ – and then do this during the coming week. Report their response back to the group.

Bibliography

<https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/dsb/john-20.html>