

MESSAGE OUTLINE
THIS IS THE LIFE: LIFE IN JESUS

John 20:19-31

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

²¹ Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."²² And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit.²³ If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

²⁴ Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came.²⁵ So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

²⁶ A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though 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; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

²⁸ Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

²⁹ Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

³⁰ Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book.³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

1. Belief = Jesus is _____

■ **Doubting** ■ **Seeing** ■ **Believing**

How have you experienced spiritual growth in the past year?

2. Behavior = Life in his _____

■ **Peace** ■ **Holy Spirit** ■ **Sent**

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete.

1 John 1:1-4

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS WEEK OF MARCH 21, 2021 THIS IS THE LIFE: LIFE IN JESUS

CONNECT

- What word would you use to finish the sentence: Life is... .
- When it comes to meeting new people or receiving new information, on scale of 1-4, do you think you are more accepting (1) or skeptical (4)? Why is that?

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: Slowing Down

In our busy world, slowing down for silence can feel awkward or like a waste of time. Psalm 46:10 is a promise: "Be still and know that I am God." Give yourself this gift of time to quiet your soul and be still. Allow yourself to engage with the living God as the greatest treasure available to you in this moment.

Quiet: Begin with a minute of silence, allow yourself to slow down and leave behind the rush of today.

Listen: Read John 20:19-31 aloud, imagining yourself in the room with the disciples. As you listen, circle any form of the words peace, see, and believe.

Reflect: What is one area of your life where you desire Jesus to break down a wall or barrier so that you can believe in a new way?

- If Jesus came to you in the place where your heart feels troubled, what would you want to say or ask Jesus?
- What would you want Jesus to show you or say to you?
- What is the new or deeper experience Jesus is inviting you into right now?

Group Debrief: What is it like to imagine yourself with the disciples? How do you feel as you explore Jesus speaking or responding to you personally? Considering the Reveal survey and what we have learned about our faith community, how does dealing with barriers help us move forward in our lives and relationship with God?

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

- Reflecting on this week's Scripture and message, what stands out to you? What is the significance of that for you?
- What do Jesus' words and behaviors communicate about grace to his disciples? If you view this passage through the eyes of the disciples, what do you think they would most need from Jesus right now?
- What do you learn about doubt and belief from this passage? What did it take for Thomas to say, "My Lord and my God?" How does Thomas' experience encourage you?
- What is the relationship between the Holy Spirit and forgiveness? Why do you think Jesus' first instructions to the disciples concerned forgiveness? How might we underestimate the role of the Holy Spirit in our spiritual growth?
- What do you think Jesus meant when he said he was sending the disciples "just as the Father had sent him"? How did God send Jesus? How can this passage provide a road map to equip you for being sent?
- How did Jesus clarify the disciples' new role and purpose? How did their experience shape their understanding of what it meant to be the church in the first century? How does this passage shape your understanding of the church and your role in it now?
- Reflect on verses 30-31, what is your reaction to these words as you think about sharing your own story of faith?

PRAYING TOGETHER

As you reflect on the discussion, where do you long for Jesus to appear for you? Share your desire as a prayer request. Pay attention this week to the peace Jesus gives to you. Spend time praying for one another, closing with the following benediction and response.

BENEDICTION: (Psalm 133:1, 3b)

Passing the Peace: This is an ancient communal practice based on Jesus' words to his disciples in this passage. It helps us to invite the peace of Christ to form and shape our hearts into a community reflecting his peace.

How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity...For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore. The Peace of Christ be with you. **Response:** *And also with you! Amen*