New Life: Change of Direction

John 20: 19-23

041121

**Announcement:**

* Elections- vote in person today and next week (member, 25) or an electronic ballot, just request one by emailing [info@centralchurchonline.com](mailto:info@centralchurchonline.com).

Remember last Sunday: Resurrection Sunday, Easter…

Maybe a bit difficult to recall it all, but not for those who were friends of Jesus

**They experienced something that radically altered the rest of their lives**

When we read John 20 **nothing is guaranteed** for those in the story…

These folks are in **shock**, I think, from what they have witnessed…

They are huddled together, processing, thinking, wondering…

**Imagine the first evening after resurrection that morning.**

* Still excited by the events of the overwhelming morning?
* Brave enough to assemble, scared enough to bar the door.
* *The Emmaus Two* return and add to the excitement and questions.
* Are the first pangs of doubt creeping in? “A day filled with strange rumors…” (Maclaren, 308)
* Are they wondering where Jesus is right now?
* What does this mean for us? For the movement?
* Are we going to die? If so, we will be resurrected?

Read John 20: 19-23, on screen

In the middle of their questions, Jesus appears (20:19)

* This is a truth that needs to be heard today
* **Right in the middle of their questions, Jesus is present**
* Just because we have questions, doesn’t mean Jesus is absent
* Jesus offers solutions, but not word for word
* Jesus offers presence
* **[The Source is always better than an answer] [Designer vs. FAQ page]**
  + FAQ pages are hit or miss/one and done
  + The Designer is long term…
* **In the resurrection, we get the Designer with us.**

**There is a real change of direction for these disciples as they encounter the risen Jesus. They go from isolation, turmoil, despair, and misery to something else…**

A change from isolation to presence

* + 19, “…Jesus came and stood among them…”
  + [First Judas, then Peter] pattern of isolation, failure, disappearance.
  + Now the disciples (plus other followers) are hiding away.
  + Thomas is absent…is he going the way of Judas and Peter?
  + Will the rest of the disciples follow the path of Judas and Peter?
  + **In the midst of their temptation to isolate and give up, the resurrected Jesus appears, and it changes everything.**
  + **The resurrection is a remedy for isolation today, just like it was then**
  + We have been locked down, locked out, and stir crazy this year
  + No matter how alone you may feel or even be, because of Jesus’ resurrection **you are never really alone.**
    - The resurrection means that Jesus is with you always
    - The resurrection means that we are **connected to all who understand the New Life that resurrection brings.**
  + Also, sin is by definition, the fracturing of relationships, isolation.
    - It’s what happens to Judas and Peter
  + **Resurrection breaks the isolation of sin.**
  + Resurrection means that Peter and all of us, can receive a New Life, another chance.

A change from despair to rejoicing

* + 20, “…The disciples were overjoyed when then saw the Lord…”
  + Locked doors
  + Worry
  + Death of their hopes and dreams in Jesus
  + Jesus shows them his wounds
  + **Jesus’ wounds validate their experience.** 
    - They knew Jesus. They saw him die.
    - These wounds answer the, “Is it really him?” question.
  + They rejoice when they know it is really Jesus
  + In a moment, the disciples’ despair gets transformed in the person of the resurrected Jesus
    - **[Every Oprah episode where the deployed dad surprises his kids at school]**
  + Can this happen for us? You bet! How long does it take to believe?
  + This is faith demonstrated by Old Testament Abram
    - **Solely based on God’s promise, Abram believed, and God changed history.**
    - **Solely based on the God’s reality: resurrection, if you believe God will change your history.**
  + This is the beginning you need

A change from turmoil to peace

* + 19, 21, “…peace be with you…”
  + Jesus speaks “Peace” two times
  + **First**, peace enough to **experience** proof (hands and side)
  + **Second**, peace enough to **receive** commissioning and empowerment (“as the Father sent me…” “receive the Holy Spirit…”
  + **[Bobcat in trap]** Jesus’ resurrection means he comes to free us, stop fighting, put your claws away…take a deep breath and listen
  + **First**, peace enough to **experience** proof (hands and side)
    - Resurrection is real: empty tomb, 100’s of witnesses in 100’s of settings, Jewish rejection of a single resurrection in the midst of history, complete and immediate change of behaviors of those associated with the resurrection, etc.
    - By the objective standards used to verify any person or account in human history, there is overwhelming evidence that Jesus lived, was crucified, and was resurrected on the third day.
  + **Better than this, I can tell you my testimony of salvation. You could hear other’s stories.**
  + You can experience the resurrected Jesus today and in him find peace.
  + **Second**, peace enough to **receive** commissioning and empowerment (“as the Father sent me…” “receive the Holy Spirit…”

A change from misery to ministry

* + We have to switch over to Luke’s account in Acts
  + But this group is **activated** by Jesus’ resurrection
  + **They keep the same venue (this upper room) but they move from terror to worship**
  + **From silence to bold proclamation**
  + The resurrection is more than an event in history
  + It is the catalyst for life transformation…it makes it all possible
    - **Romans 4:25: “He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.”**
    - The resurrection means that real transformation in your life is possible
  + **It is the motivation for ministry in Jesus’ name**
    - Penn Jillette, of Penn and Teller, magician and atheist.
    - “How much do you have to hate somebody to believe everlasting life is possible and not tell them that? I mean, if I believed, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that a truck was coming at you, and you didn’t believe that truck was bearing down on you, there is a certain point where I tackle you. And this is *more important* than that.”

**Close:**

When you truly experience the resurrected Jesus, there is a motivation to do something in response.

* + - Surrender to his Lordship
    - Repent of inaction
    - Make steps to grow and serve in his name

**Prayer**

**Communion:** *At home, you can prepare your elements. In a few moments when it comes time to partake, if you are at home and practicing intinction, just wait until we drink the cup. That way we can all partake together. I’ll address the online group directly.*

*Those present today: Please take a moment and adjust or remove your mask so that you can partake of the elements. Also take a quick moment and familiarize yourselves with these individually wrapped communion elements. There is a thin layer of plastic covering the wafer, then another layer that opens up the cup for drinking. Take a moment and get all of that ready.*

Communion, instituted by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is a sacrament, which proclaims His life, His sufferings, His sacrificial death, and resurrection, and the hope of His coming again.

Communion is a means of grace in which Christ is present by the Spirit. It is to be received in reverent appreciation and gratefulness for the work of Christ.

Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, went about preaching, teaching, healing, and announcing the Kingdom of God. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. He rose again on the third day and is seated at the right hand of God the Father. He will return to judge the living and the dead.

All those who are truly repentant, forsaking their sins, and believing in Christ for salvation are invited to participate.

**Prayer:**

Holy God,

We gather at this, your table, in the name of Jesus your Son, who by your Spirit was anointed to preach good news to the poor, proclaim release to the captives, set at liberty those who are oppressed. Christ healed the sick, fed the hungry, ate with sinners, and established the new covenant for forgiveness of sins. We live in the hope of His coming again.

And so, we gather as the Body of Christ to offer ourselves to you in praise and thanksgiving. Pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on these your gifts. Make them by the power of your Spirit to be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the Body of Christ, redeemed by His blood.

By your Spirit make us one in Christ, one with each other, and one in the ministry of Christ to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, **Amen**.

**Before the partaking of the bread, let the minister say:**

The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, broken for you, preserve you blameless, unto everlasting life. Eat this in remembrance that Christ died for you, and be thankful.

**Before the partaking of the cup, let the minister say:**

The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, shed for you, preserve you blameless unto everlasting life. Drink this in remembrance that Christ died for you, and be thankful.

**Song**: Forever

**Benediction**:

* Thank you for your faithfulness in giving. We are nearing the fiscal year end for Central Church. I’d love to see us finish strong.
* Thank you to all those who week after week make Central Church such a great place to attend.

Thank you for joining us today, in person and online:

* Open hearts and hands: