

THE LORD'S SERMONS

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Sermon 20

First Sunday After Easter

The Lord Appears to His Disciples

John 20, 19-31: "When the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained. But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, we have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

March 5, 1872

This chapter confirms My resurrection and shows you its importance and that it was essential if My teaching, dearly paid for with such great sacrifices, was to have permanency and success, for you find My disciples frightened, lacking courage and faith, locking themselves in their houses.

When I appeared to My disciples - as I did to Mary Magdalene at the tomb - one of them was so unbelieving that he would only convince himself of My resurrection by touching My wounds.

All that happened in those times, including the other signs I did before the disciples behind closed doors, signs of which you will learn later, too, - all this will gradually happen before people's eyes when I next come to the earth.

The more the number of believers in My pure teaching, as I am giving it to you now, will grow, the more will they have to experience all the stages of enthusiasm, doubt, disbelief and all the violent emotions of spiritual life, for circumstances will often bear witness against Me. People will be misleading My followers in their belief, they will persecute them, hate them and, wherever possible, take revenge on them.

At that time there will also be doubting people, like Thomas, who, misled and discouraged, have thrown all their former peace of mind and faith overboard and will only be able to be healed through My personal appearance.

What at the time of My life on earth were the houses with locked doors, in future will be the hearts of those people who will allow entry neither to the world nor to the spiritual. There, too, I will have to call gently to the hearts of My followers: "Do not be afraid?" and "Peace be with you!", because they, too, without support, are at the point where they may lose everything and perish in eternal doubts.

There will be many who, like Thomas, do not believe at all. They do not even listen to My voice any more and can only be led back to their previously entered road by factual proofs.

Thus also My believers and future children will have to pass the last crucial test of true faith, for if they - like once My

disciples - are to be sent out to inspire others with trust and faith, they must necessarily possess these themselves, from the outset, in the highest degree. I once said that I shall be known by My words and deeds. In the same way also My children and future disciples must be recognized by their actions and words, thereby proving to the others that trust and firm belief are the prerequisites if they want to become worthy of Me.

At that time, I said to Thomas after he had felt My wounds with his fingers: "Because thou hast seen Me thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed!"

You, too, My children, to whom I have already given so much spiritual bread, are not in the least better than My disciples. You, too, are discouraged and fainthearted, you begin to doubt, brood over My words and turn to the world with its seductive attractions if everything does not immediately work out as you would like it. You, too, shut yourselves away, like the snail in its house, and try to ignore both the inner and outer world if there seem to be contradictions when You cannot reconcile certain actions and events with My all-embracing love. Then I must call to you: "Why do you cry? Save your tears for other occasions; He, Whom you believe to be separated and distant from you, is quite close, but not physically, only spiritually!" Mary Magdalene I had to tell, too: "Touch Me not," for it was My spiritualized body which she was seeing and which was not suitable for human physical touch. When I came to My disciples in their locked houses, I allowed them to have the impression as if they were feeling My physically; but actually it was no longer I. For, as My mission had ended with the death on the cross, I ceased to have a physical body. It was already spiritualized so as to reunite with the source of its divine essence within a few days.

As this Gospel mentions, I performed many other signs for My disciples, that is, I opened their spiritual eyes and ears, so that they, still more convinced of My deity, might gain the courage to withstand all future dangers that would be brought about by circumstances and their teaching mission.

As long as I still walked among them physically they did not have a firm conviction that I was a godlike being with powers and attributes ordinary people did not possess. They did witness My miracles, but lived and believed only under their compulsion. The moment I had been taken away from them

and this direct influence abated or ceased altogether, their firm belief, their confidence and trust, had faded away. If I had not risen from the dead and fulfilled all My former promises, My disciples would have promptly returned to their previous occupations and regarded their experiences with Me only as a dream of which nothing but a memory would have remained of the reality of which they would not have been able to convince anybody.

And as I then had to put My seal to My work with My resurrection, My repeated appearances among My disciples during forty days and My ascension, thus I must now guide and strengthen you, My children, in your faith and trust. If at that time I gave My disciples the Holy Spirit by breathing on them, if I invested them with the power to remit or retain sins - a power later on so much misinterpreted and misused by the clergy - I did this only because they had gained the firm conviction that there is only one God Who, superior to all that is material, is a spirit and can only be comprehended as such, and that this God, Jesus, was their guide. Thus also My might could be transferred to them, and it had to work, for My disciples only used it for noble purposes and aspired only after My spiritual aim to make people My children.

Just as My disciples could work miracles and heal the sick solely by the power of the Word, you and My future followers, if you have a firm faith in My might and participation, shall also receive the power to perform acts which are impossible to the ordinary person but will be easy enough to the one reborn in the spirit. The times and circumstances will educate you towards this. I have called many for this work, but whether you belong to the chosen ones depends on you alone.

Do not shut off your heart to My fatherly voice! Even when the last rays of hope are fading, do not lose heart! I am and remain always with those who want to stay with Me at all costs. Do not wait for My personal appearance like Thomas, but prepare yourselves to believe and trust firmly, so that My appearance will be only a confirmation of that which you have already believed and hoped for. Then you will be able to help me, yourselves and your fellowmen as I once helped My disciples during My life among them.

Do not allow doubts to attack your heart nor brooding to weaken your faith! My children shall not keep their hearts shut. With their gaze directed upward above all worldly things,

they shall always remember My sacrifice, My love and fatherly care for them and all living creatures so that their heart, as a permanent temple of My love and with unshakable faith in My infallibility, may be a true support in all life's difficulties and against all temptations through doubts and disbelief. Then you will always be hearing within you: "Peace be with you!" For, where through faith in Me and My love peace is already dwelling in a heart, I do not have to bring it, but can just confirm it.

Therefore, I am calling to you: Peace be with you and may it never leave your hearts that I may always gain free entry into them and do not have to force My way through locked doors with the power of My will, but find your hearts prepared to accept Me as the One Who, also to His disciples in those times, was nothing else but their leader, guide and Father! Amen.

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May God richly bless you.

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