

Third Sunday of Easter
Year B

Acts 3:12-19

Psalm 4

1 John 3:1-7

Luke 24:36b-48

The place must have been a little chaotic. People were rushing in and out, sharing incredible stories, and yet, everyone was also afraid. That was the situation in the house in Jerusalem where the followers of Jesus had gathered after the crucifixion. The stories they heard were borderline hysteria and the disciples had trouble believing all they heard. First, it was the women with their tales of seeing Jesus alive. Then, Peter and the Beloved Disciple went to see for themselves, but came back not understanding what they had seen. Cleopas and his companion arrived later in the afternoon with the story that Jesus had walked with them on the road home to Emmaus, though they did not recognize Him until He broke bread with them. With all of this chaos, who could possibly make sense of the events of the day?

Into the midst of this, Jesus appears and said, "Peace." If anyone needed a little peace in their lives, it was the gathered disciples. Of course they were startled and terrified. The last thing any one of them expected was Jesus. Weren't the doors locked and the windows secured? How could anyone just appear among them? No wonder they thought they were seeing a ghost. No person could just show up in the locked room.

As the story unfolds, in response to their unbelief, Jesus shows them two proofs that it was really Him in His physical body - He showed them the wounds from the crucifixion and He ate some fish they had prepared. No ghost had flesh and bones and a ghost definitely couldn't eat food. At this, they rejoiced, admitting to themselves that yes, Jesus was alive and standing before them. The One they had followed all these years, the One they had seen perform many miracles of healing, the One they had seen crucified and buried was really here with them, alive again.

Beyond the proofs, Jesus opened the scriptures to them regarding all that had been prophesied about Him, that He had to suffer and rise from the dead on the third day. All of this they had witnessed and now Jesus had a job for them - go and tell the world.

When Jesus first entered the room, He said to them, "Peace be with you." Peace, not security. Jesus knew that the road ahead would be difficult. He knew that there would be persecution and some would be put to death. Therefore, He told them, "Peace." Like those first disciples, we are not guaranteed security, or wealth, or success. We are guaranteed peace - the peace of God which passes all human understanding.

What is this peace of which Jesus speaks? Obviously, it is not a world free from war or strife. Rome had given the world that, supposedly. It was not a world free from arguments or tension between countries and cultures. It is an inner peace which rules our inner being. It is that calmness within the storm that guides us when everything around us is chaos. Even as the disciples were in the midst of chaos when Jesus arrived, they experienced this peace in their

souls when they discovered that Jesus really was alive and with them. That is the peace that Jesus gives us - that peace of knowing that, whatever may be happening around us today, Jesus is in the midst of us, alive and ever present. Jesus said He would be with them until the end of the age. The age has not ended yet and Jesus is still here. With Him, we are able to do anything because it is not us, but Jesus who will make it happen. Jesus is alive and here today.