

Episodes in Life of T/lord 09 Peace Be Unto You

by Robert Constable

The sermon highlights the transformative power of Jesus' presence in our lives and the promise of His return.

Duration: 32:15

Scripture: Matthew 4:18-20, Matthew 9:18-26, Matthew 14:13-21, Luke 24:36-43, John 1:14, John 5:1-9, John 20:19-20

Topics: "Peace"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the transformative power of Jesus in the lives of his disciples. He emphasizes Jesus' willingness to turn difficult and hopeless situations into moments of triumph and wonder. The speaker encourages the audience to recognize that Jesus wants to bring goodness, joy, and comfort into their lives. He also highlights the disciples' initial disbelief in Jesus' resurrection and how their doubt was dispelled when Jesus appeared to them and ate with them. The sermon concludes by introducing another instance of Jesus' coming in the 20th chapter of the book of John.

Transcript

I would like to mention for your consideration the fact that they have several titles in the bookstore. This one is Green Leaf in Drought Time, but the important thing it was written by Isabel Kuhn. Any of you who have read any of her books don't need me to say anything about the rest.

She was a student at the Moody Bible Institute. Some of her books make reference to this. She went out into southeastern Asia, into the Vietnam area, and God has wonderfully, wonderfully used her in the days gone by.

She's with the Lord now. But particularly, you ladies, although I've known a lot of men, to find real blessing in the reading of the books. So I recommend them to you.

We've got a few of them in the bookstore, so don't wait too long. They might be all gone. During our times together this week, we have passed from one day to another.

We began with a day like any other day, when the Lord Jesus was walking along the street and passed the office of the tax collector and called him by name. Matthew left all and followed Jesus. We were on Bethesda's porch on that Sabbath day without a name when Jesus came walking through the porch and

talked to a man that had been lying there for 38 years and asked him whether he would be made whole.

The man walked away carrying his bed with him. We have mingled with the crowds that thronged the Lord Jesus and heard the word go forth that the prophet comes. People came running from wherever they were.

Among them, a desperate father who, hearing that the prophet comes, said to his wife, you sit here with our little daughter, and I'll go and try and find him. He came to Jesus and pled with him to come. We have seen him stopped on the way and heard a woman who, sitting in her room, heard the word that Jesus was coming by and thought, if only I could get to him, if I could only touch his clothes.

Leaving her room, she mingled with the crowd and made her way to him and found the blessing in finding him. We have seen 12 years of wilderness turned into a garden, and we have seen utter desolation turned into ecstasy in the presence of the Lord Jesus. And I hope as we have moved from scene to scene considering these episodes in the life of our Jesus Christ, I hope we have learned something of his heart.

His will to turn the flat, interminable days of life round into days of triumph and wonder. His willingness to change the bondage of sin and long frustration and hopelessness into the freedom of realization and fulfillment. His readiness to lift life's agony and transpose its dirge into an anthem, turn people from sorrow to singing.

His will to do us good. Have you learned this week that the Lord Jesus wants to do you good, that he wants to move into your life and make it shine, that he wants to put a glory on all its circumstances, a joy in all its sorrows, a comfort in all of its bereavements? Have you learned something this week that this is what he wants to do? That's why we visited so often with him and seen so many times these things that we've repeated again and again and again this week. And I have had to say I must not apologize for repeating these things so often, but we must learn these things.

We must have a deep and abiding conviction in our souls that he wills to do us good, that he loves us with an everlasting love. One of the ladies following one of these talks, as she left the chapel, said, Then Jesus came. That's it.

Then Jesus came. And that made all the difference. It makes all the difference in human life, and it makes all the difference in our enjoyment of himself as Christians.

Tonight I want to consider another time when Jesus came. This time it's in the 20th chapter of John. Will you turn with me to John 20? And I want for us this evening just to read two verses, the 19th and 20th verses of the 20th chapter of John.

John chapter 20, verse 19. Then 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. Came Jesus. You know, any of the other times he might have come, any of these other occasions he might have come, it was as though, you remember, as though Matthew had said to himself, If only he ever came my way, if ever I had the opportunity to speak to him, to hear his voice, to see his face, to know him, if only.

And there was a real possibility that that would happen. And it happened. And the word had gone around of his healing, and the way he had healed the sick, made the blind to see, and the lame to walk, and the sick people in all the villages and cities knew about this prophet that walked their streets, that was doing men good.

And the word had no doubt come to Bethesda's porch. And there on the porch, those who had been there bound by their illness had spoken one to another about one day perhaps the prophet may come through this porch. Who knows what he might do if only he would come by way of the sheep gate.

And there was a real possibility that he would do that. In fact, he did that. And we know all about that.

We considered that. It was because of the possibilities that Jairus rushed from his home and found him by the seaside, and pled with him to come to heal his daughter. It was because of the possibility that the woman with an issue of blood left her room, went into the crowd, oh, to find him.

It was possible that she could find him, and she did. All these things were perfectly possible, but now, now, now it wasn't possible. You know, we know so much more now than the disciples knew then, that it's hard really to put ourselves back into those circumstances.

But let's think of them, and let's think of the circumstances in which they had lived and known him. One day when Jesus was walking with his disciples, he said to them, who do people say I am? And they told him, oh, some people say that you're John the Baptist, and some people say that you're Elijah the Apostle. Everybody's got his own idea, and Jesus said, who do you think I am? And Simon Peter said, thou art the Christ, the Messiah of God.

Oh, how the hearts of the disciples are thrilled to hear Peter say that. And they said, amen, we believe in you. You are our Messiah.

Then on another occasion, he had been walking along with some of his disciples, and he sort of probably got ahead of the rest of them, and James and John and their mother came along and sidled up to him and walked closely beside him, and she said, Master, I'd like to ask you something privately, if you don't mind. And he said, what is it? And she said, Master, when you come in your kingdom, would you let my boys, James and John, sit on the right and the left-hand side of your throne? What a concept this woman had. Oh, the disciples didn't like it that she asked this, but they were all expecting that soon this one that they had learned to love would sit upon a throne and gather his own around in triumph and in glory.

She wanted this for her boys, but oh, it grew out of a conviction in her heart that this one, this one that they called Master, was going to sit upon a throne. And then there was another occasion when two of his disciples were walking in sadness one day from Jerusalem to Emmaus, and they were heard to say, We trusted it had been he that should have redeemed Israel. Ah, yes, we trusted it had been he.

But there was a day, oh, there was a day just a few days ago when our hearts were lifted up. The multitudes were gathered round. It just seemed like everything was going right.

Everything was going so good. We thought he was so stupid. Now he's gone.

And there was a day early in the morning when those who loved him so came with spices and with ointment to show their love, to anoint his body. But he was gone. He was gone, and their hearts were broken.

But then, but then, the disciples gathered together, had break-in upon their company two hysterical women. We've seen him! We've seen him! He told you a lie! And the disciples tried to calm them down. Oh, what a trial.

These poor women who loved him so, and now they'd gone clean off. They thought they saw him living. No wonder, no wonder.

But the record says they believed them not. They were hysterical. Then Peter came.

Oh, Peter. Peter had been the most devastated of them all. He couldn't dare to show his face again.

He had denied he had betrayed his Lord. Oh, awful day when Peter had betrayed his Lord. But he broke in upon this group and said, I've seen him.

I've seen him. He met with me the way he said he would. And the disciples listened to what Peter said and thought.

Good Peter. Peter means so well. But he does such crazy things, and he gets such goofy ideas.

Well, let's not argue with Peter. His heart is broken. He feels bad enough.

Let's not argue with him. Okay, Peter. You saw him, and the two came breaking in.

The two who met him on the road to Emmaus, they came. They said, we've seen him. And they told him all about his talk with them, his breaking bread with them.

He was alive. You know what the last few words of that record are in Luke chapter 24? And they believe them not. Well, now, wait.

Don't blame the disciples. Would you? Would you have believed them? They were gathered together this evening in a room with the doors shut for fear of the Jews. There was trouble abroad in the city.

They were frantic with a sorrow that was so disturbed, oh, if they could only grieve in peace. If they could only grieve in peace. But people kept coming with these stories, and they were filled with uncertainty and grief.

Their reason rocked by revelation. Jesus came. Nobody heard his footfall on the stairs.

Nobody saw his coming. Nobody expected him, but he was there. But he was there.

This is absolutely unbelievable. They had seen him fall in the street under the burden of the cross, and they had wept to see him fall. They had seen him nailed against a Roman cross, nailed there, hand and foot.

And as they watched, oh, some of them couldn't watch. They were shaken to see a Roman centurion take a spear and throw it through his side. Then they helped to take his body down.

They laid it lovingly in Joseph's tomb, and they went home and wept. They went home and wept. But he was there.

It cannot be. It's got to be his ghost. Terror upon terror, they thought they had deserted him.

It said they all forsook him and fled. They'd failed him. One had said, we'll die with you if need be, and they all had said amen.

But they had failed him, and filled with terror at this apparition, they heard him say, be quiet now, be quiet now, for it is I myself. Why did you not believe when Mary and Salome came, when Peter came, when Cleopas and his companion came? Why did you not believe? Didn't I tell you I'd be back? Hard, hard to believe. Oh, so hard to believe.

Would you mind to turn to Luke chapter 24, verse 39. Luke 24, verse 39. Let's begin at 38.

And Jesus said to them, why are you troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet.

And while they yet believed not, for joy and wondered, he said to them, have you here any meat? And they gave him a piece of broiled fish, and of a honeycomb, and he took it, and did eat before them. And everything was changed from that day on. This is the gospel.

This is the good news. This is the new beginning. And it happened one day, about 1939 years ago.

Yeah, 1939 years ago, just about. And it's been happening ever since. It's been happening ever since.

In frustration and weariness, in sin and unhappiness, in fear and hopelessness and unbelief, when he is not expected, Jesus comes. And it makes all the difference. He reveals himself, and he shows his relevance to our circumstances.

Now, our circumstances are different than the circumstances of the disciples. We live in a different century. We face a different set of problems.

Our lives are very different than their lives were. But down the centuries and the millennia since this time, Jesus has come, and hearts have been lifted, and joy has overflowed to those who believe and who receive him. The gift of the Spirit is given.

New power, new vision, new life, all things new because Jesus came. That's been the experience of men ever since. Now, this evening, we have looked back.

We've looked back a long, long ways when this all began. When he came, but having come, he took them out. One day, out to a mountain near the city.

And he was taken away, but he still comes. He comes to his people by his Spirit. He comes to reveal himself to his own, to give them the new strength, the new vision, the new power that they need in all their circumstances.

And this is now. This is for now. We have looked back.

We have known something of the joy and the gladness and the release and the freedom of having him come into our lives now. But when he went away, there were two men in white apparel standing by who said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. Yes, this same Jesus about whom we have been thinking this evening, about whom we have been thinking all this week, this same

Jesus is coming back again.

And he's coming, he said, in such a time as ye think not, when he's not expected. Men say today, where is the promise of his coming? For from the fathers all things continue as they were from the beginning. And he has said, in such a time as ye think not.

The world thinks this is ridiculous. And his people are tormented by fear and confusion. And believe me, we live in a day when they're tormented by fear and confusion.

They don't know whether they should be pre-tribulationists, mid-tribulationists, post-tribulationists, pre-millennialists, or post-millennialists, or amillennialists, or what. They're confused. They're roughed up.

Fear on every side. And yet his promise stands. I will be back.

And reason once again will be rocked by revelation, and we'll be glad. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. Now are his people glad when they see the Lord.

And then we shall rejoice to hear his voice when he returns. May I remind you of the promise of the word of God, that God is not slack concerning his promise, but is longsuffering, not willing that any should perish, but that in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God. And they which are dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we which are remaining shall be caught up and changed and be forever with the Lord.

He's coming back at such a time as we think not. Perhaps I'd better leave it there. I'd love to have you leave this place with your ears cocked, hoping that since nobody really expects him now tonight, maybe tonight he'll come.

Shall we pray? O blessed promise, gracious God, we thank thee for thy word and for thy faithfulness. O warm our hearts, we pray, with the joy of Jesus' coming, with the remembrance of all it meant to those that loved him long ago, with a new sense of what it means to us today to hear his voice, to know the joy of his company, O God, and to enter into the hope that soon he that is to come will come and will not tarry. Raise our hearts in expectation, make this hope a living reality in all our lives, we pray in his dear name.

Amen.

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