

Cycle B 3rd Sunday of Easter
Sunday April 15th, 2018

Today we hear another post resurrection account of Jesus appearance to the disciples. In all three accounts Jesus greets them with the same words: **“Peace be with you.”** **“Peace be with you.”** What is going on here? Is Jesus saying, “Hey there is not going to be any more conflict.”? “No more wars” “Hey, all of you will never disagree.” Of course not. What Jesus is getting at here requires us to go back to the Agony in the Garden, after Jesus was betrayed by Judas. What did the others do? They fled in fear. Jesus closest friends, the Apostles abandoned Jesus in His darkest hour.

Back to our post resurrection events. Certainly those first followers of Jesus were feeling pretty bad for running away from Jesus, including Peter who denied Him three times. Jesus words, **“Peace be with you.”** is our Lord’s assurance that they are in fact forgiven. Mostly likely it took three times for them to believe and to be assured of the Lord’s forgiveness. Likely then also **struggled** to forgive themselves.

We find confirmation in the belief that the Lord forgives when we look a little further today. **“Jesus opened their minds to understand the Scriptures and He said to them, ‘Thus it is written that the Christ would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins would be preached in His name.’”**

St. John affirms this when he writes, **“My children I am writing this to you so that you may not commit sin. But, if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous one. He is expiation for our sins.”**

It is important to point out what Jesus said, **“That repentance for the forgiveness of sins would be preached in His name.”** Jesus is saying that we do not preach judgment and condemnation. Rather we preach **mercy and peace**. **Mercy** indicating that Jesus is truly merciful. **Peace**, the assurance that we are in fact forgiven. Of course preaching **mercy and peace** does not mean that we do not challenge. Rather to challenge and teach TRUTH IN LOVE is an act of **mercy**; because we want what is best for a person body and soul, both in this life and eternal life.

The apostles needed the assurance that they were forgiven after they had deserted Jesus. It took three times. **They needed to forgive themselves too!** How many times do people not forgive themselves for something they did wrong forty or fifty years ago? This happens a lot. This lack of forgiveness of self holds people back from growing in their relationship with Jesus. Perhaps their image of God is that divine judge is just waiting to strike us down. If that was the case the human family would have ended with Adam and Eve. God loves us and forgives us. We need to forgive ourselves. In the words of Jesus **“Peace be with you.”**