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The sermon text for today is based on  
John Chapter 20 Verses 19 - 29.

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## **He is Risen! He is Risen indeed!**

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"

Have you ever felt you've had one of those emotional roller coaster weeks? There is sadness and grief, anxiety and fear, worry and doubt, confusion and then clarity. I think we all experience them from time to time at different levels and it seems that the disciples are no different. They have truly had a big week or so.

We see in our text today that this is about the risen Jesus as well as a wonderful contrast that John loves to do, between fear and love.

The Risen appeared to Mary early in the morning of the first day of the week. He tells her "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

Mary has this encounter with her Lord Jesus and speaks the word that Jesus gives her, telling the others that she has seen the Lord and

that He must ascend to the Father. Mary is participating in the work of Jesus, speaking the words she is given to those around. She speaks the truth of Jesus that He must return to my God and your God.

Now Jesus, the Risen Lord appears again, this time in the evening of that same first day of the week. He greets them with peace. Peace be with you He says in the room that is full of fear.

We are told the doors were locked. It is amazing that Jesus doesn't need keys to appear to them but the doors are locked for the disciples are in fear of the Jews.

In this room then of fear and a whole heap of other emotion, the Risen Jesus appears and says, 'Peace be with you.'

I want you to close your eyes. Now see Jesus as He speaks these words to you, 'Peace be with you.' Peace be with you.

Sometimes in life we can hear these words in liturgy and pass over them because we may have heard them so often. But as we stop and hear the words anew in our heart what a difference it makes.

In western think we hear words that go into our ears and go to our brain to process, however the Hebrew people believe that when you hear something it goes in your ear and then into your heart. This is why when we are called names it hurts not in our brain but in our hearts and soul that really deep place in the centre of our being. When we are encouraged we hear those words and they lift us as they sit in our heart and soul. Jesus word lives in our hearts so let us grow to hear the word and know it lives in our hearts and soul. The

light of the Risen Lord Jesus dwells in us for Jesus dwells in us by His word.

God's love for all continues through Jesus in this appearing to His disciples. In the midst of fear Jesus brings peace, He is peace. He cares for His followers and gives them His gift of peace by His powerful presence.

After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

In the midst of fear Jesus equips His followers by giving the Holy Spirit. To be sent through the power of Jesus word into the world to share this peace through the forgiveness Jesus offer. To go into the world like Mary speaking the very words of Jesus to others, and to declare I have seen the Lord.

We see Jesus in His word. His life changing word. So simple yet so powerful. Come to me all of you that are weary from carrying heavy loads and I will give you rest. I forgive you. Take and eat this is my body this is my blood given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. How can there be fear when Jesus is with us? Perfect love drives out fear and Jesus is perfect love.

When we are hiding, locking ourselves away because we are scared of what others will say or do, take heart in the presence of Jesus who said over and over to you. Peace be with you.

Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.” A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.” Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!” Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

You sisters and brothers believe without seeing, yet with the eyes of believing you will see and maybe have already seen Jesus working in your life.

He is Risen! He is Risen indeed.

Amen.