

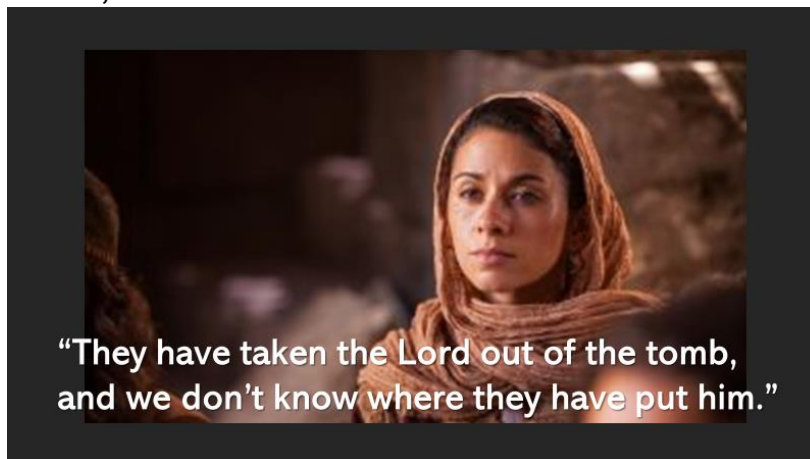


John 20:1, very early, on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, some of the women went to the tomb of Jesus.

What they discovered, shocked them.

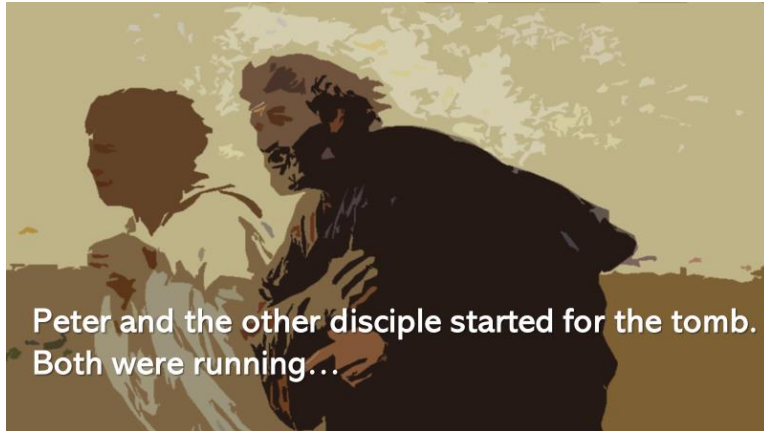
The stone had been rolled away and the tomb was empty and the body of Jesus was gone.

This was their conclusion, the only option that made sense to them, which was expressed by Mary Magdalene to Peter and John, John 20:2:



The "they" which Mary referred to was not qualified. Was it the religious leaders? Pilate? the Roman soldiers? Or all three?

Mary's news caused an immediate response in John and Peter.



Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb.  
Both were running...

v.3

Theirs was not a leisurely run where they chatted back and forth. They had one thing in mind... get to the tomb! Because he was the faster runner, as John 20:4 says...



"[John] outran Peter and reached the tomb first."

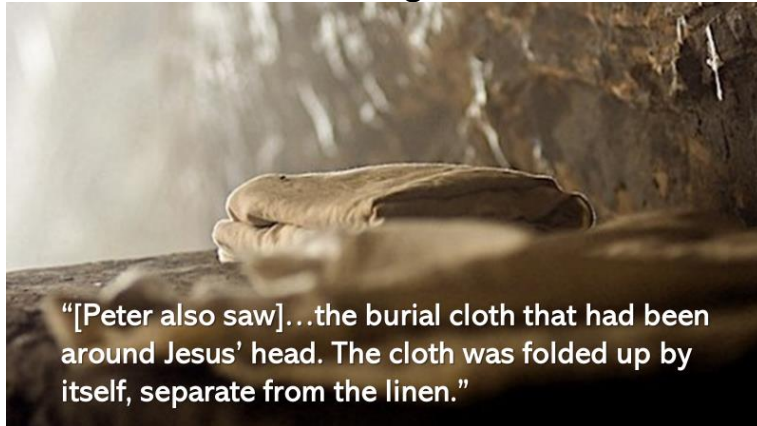
Once there, he bent over and looked in. What he saw was exactly what Mary had reported – there was no body. It was gone. But!!!! Look at 20:5. As John looked into the tomb, he saw...



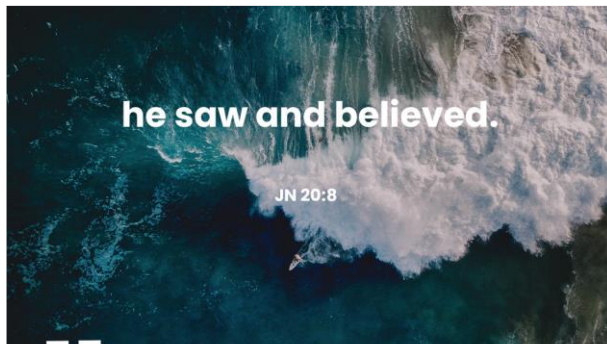
"... the strips of linen lying there..."

That said, John didn't go into the tomb.

But Peter did, v.6 ... as soon as he arrived.  
He too, like John, saw the linen strips lying there.  
But he saw something else. Look at 20:7...



Finally, John joined Peter inside the tomb.  
Look at what John did when he stepped into the tomb. 20:8 –



What was it that John believed?  
That Jesus' body had been stolen as Mary thought? No!  
He believed that Jesus had risen from the dead.

What does this say to us?  
It says that faith rests on evidence.



John saw the evidence... of the strips of linen lying there and the folded head cloth... and the absence of Jesus' body.

As he thought upon what he saw, his thinking, his reasoning was informed by grace and when combined with the faith he already had in Jesus, he reached this conclusion.

A thief, or even a group of thieves, who might have stolen the body of Jesus would not have unwrapped it... and left the linen strips lying there... and then have stopped to carefully fold the head cloth.

Why is that?

Because a thief or a group of thieves would not have wanted to get themselves covered in blood or the fluids of a decaying body.

Once John had ruled out the thief theory, there was only one reasonable option left...



Here we see how reason and faith go hand in hand.

They are not adversaries.

Everything pertaining to Jesus – his birth, his life, his death, his resurrection...were historical events; they were not made-up, pretend stories.

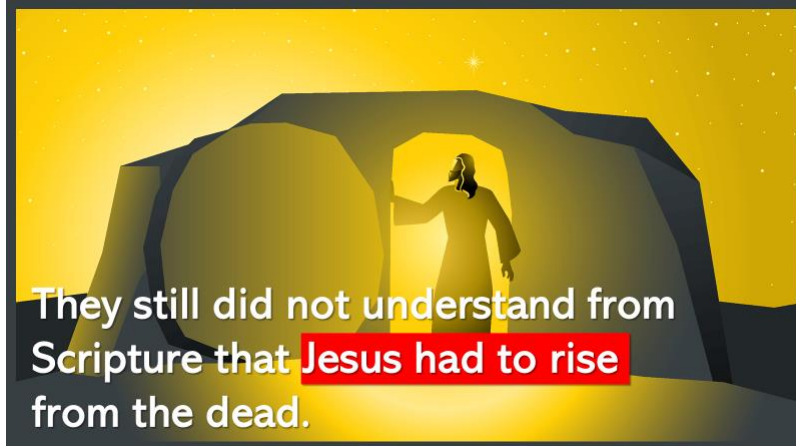
I appreciate that the gospel of John tells us... that John and Peter, at that moment... still lacked the bigger picture.

John believed Jesus had risen from the dead.

But he and Peter hadn't yet put together the greater story of Rescue.

And they were not alone.

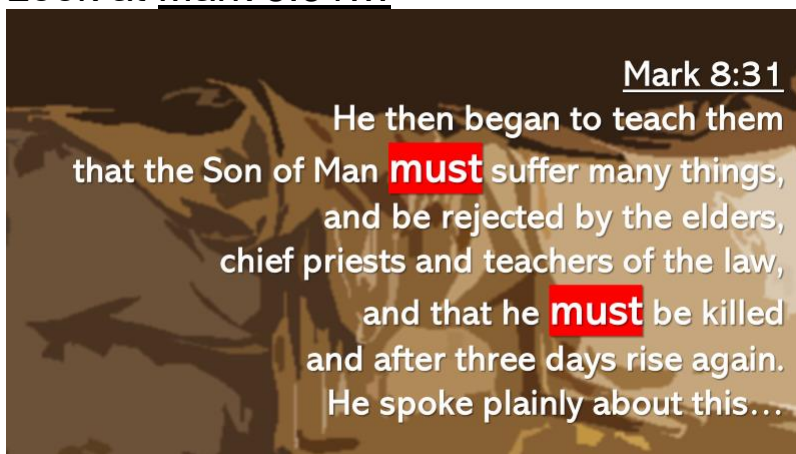
What were they missing? Look at 20:8 –



Our first takeaway truth is connected to this statement made in v.9... that Jesus **had to** rise from the dead.

Jesus himself had actually spoken of this more than once.

Look at Mark 8:31...



Remember I said Peter and John were not alone?

Jesus stressed these same truths he had previously spoken of...  
...to the two disciples who walked with him on resurrection day on the road to Emmaus.

Luke 24:25-26

[Jesus] said to them,  
“How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!  
Did not the Christ **have to** suffer these things and then enter his glory?”

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

And then again, later that same day, in the evening, Jesus appeared to the rest of his disciples, and did with them what he had done with the two who travelled to Emmaus.

Luke 24:45-48

**Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.**

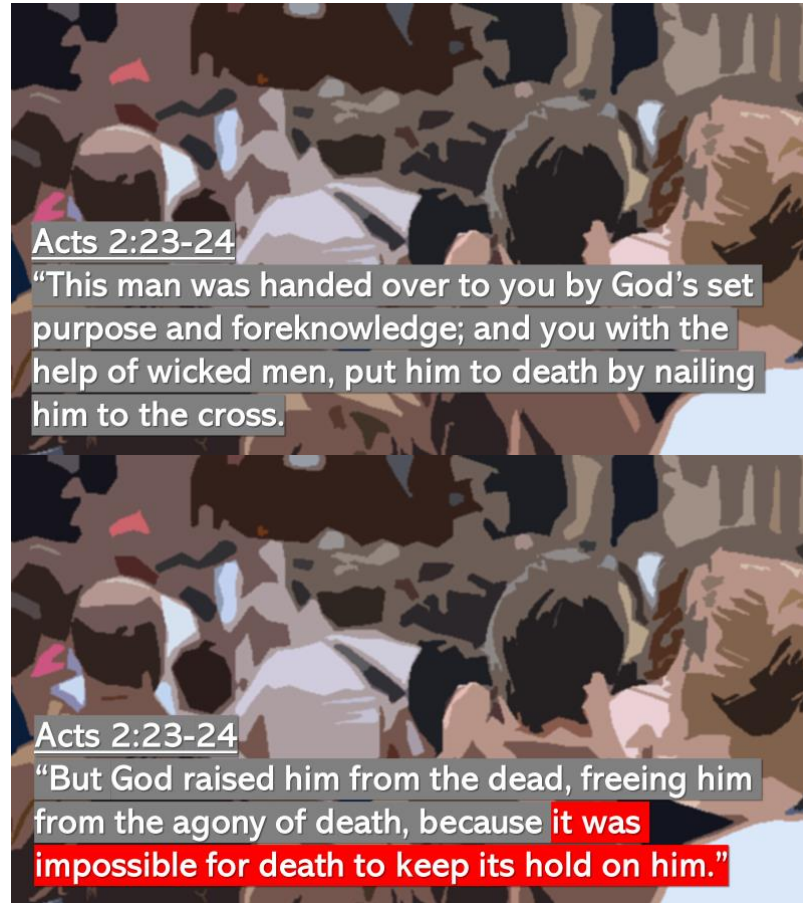
He told them, “This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead and repentance of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.”

The Christ had to suffer, and he had to rise from the dead. This theme... which had turned Peter’s world right-side up... was at the heart of his preaching on the day of Pentecost... because it is at the heart of the gospel.

In Acts 2, Peter said that Jesus of Nazareth, v.22, “[**was**] a man **accredited by God,**” and that through him... God did miracles, wonders and signs.

The audience who listened to Peter that day... had been in Jerusalem when Jesus was crucified. It’s very possible that some of them had even stood outside of Pilate’s palace and shouted, “Crucify him! Crucify him!”

Look at what Peter said to them...



Why was it impossible for death to hold Jesus?

Quoting from Psalm 16:10 Peter explained why:  
God had said that He would not let... his Holy One see decay.

If Jesus had not risen from the dead, then either he was not the Rescuer... or God was a liar.

And neither of these two options are true.

The evidence for the truthfulness of God is undeniable.  
As Hebrews 6:18 confirms, "...it is impossible for God to lie..."  
The testimony of God's own word confirms his truthfulness.

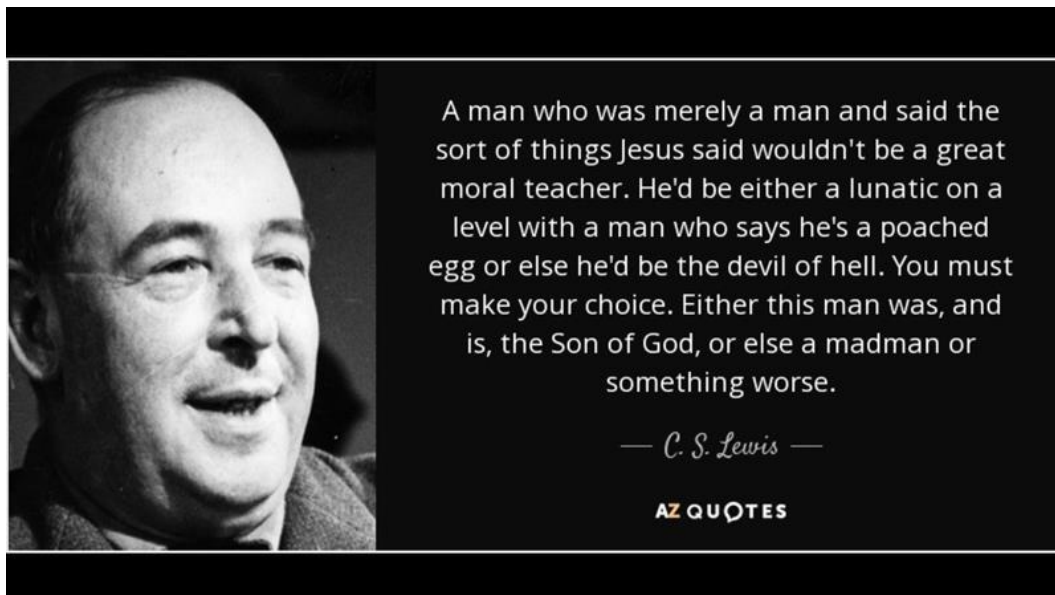
The Bible tells...

**One story**  
**Sixteen hundred years**  
**Three continents**  
**Three languages**  
**Forty different human authors**  
**One God**

This book, the Bible, is not discombobulated.  
It does not contradict itself.  
There are no lies or errors within it.

Do you know why?  
Because it is God's breathed-out, spoken word.  
Every word is true... because God is truth.

Why was it impossible for death to hold Jesus?  
Because the evidence regarding who Jesus is...the Son of God...  
and the Rescuer of humanity... is also undeniable.  
As CS Lewis once said..



It was impossible for death to hold Jesus because he was sinless.



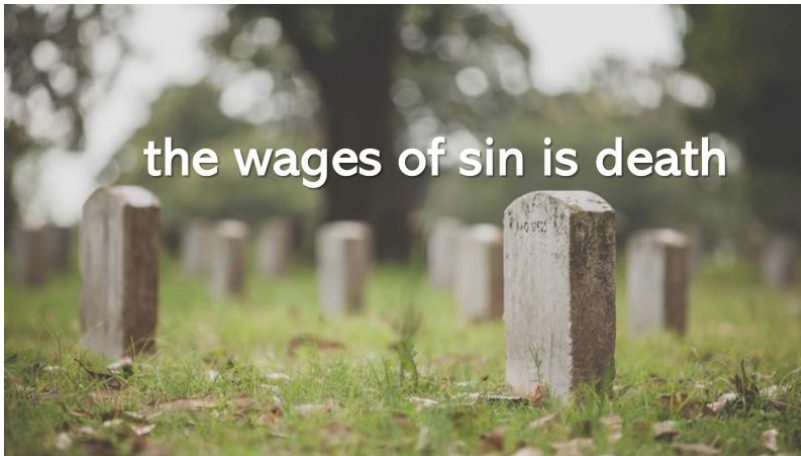


Satan unsuccessfully attempted... to tempt Jesus in the desert. In the garden of Gethsemane, he unsuccessfully attempted... to crush Jesus and convince him to forsake the Father's will.

But in every instance, and in every day of his life... Jesus said yes to the Father and no to Satan... and so proved his sinlessness.

Even the testimony of Pilate confirmed this. John 19:6

He said of Jesus – **“I find no basis for a charge against him.”**



Jesus had to rise from the dead, because he is sinless... and death had no claim on him.

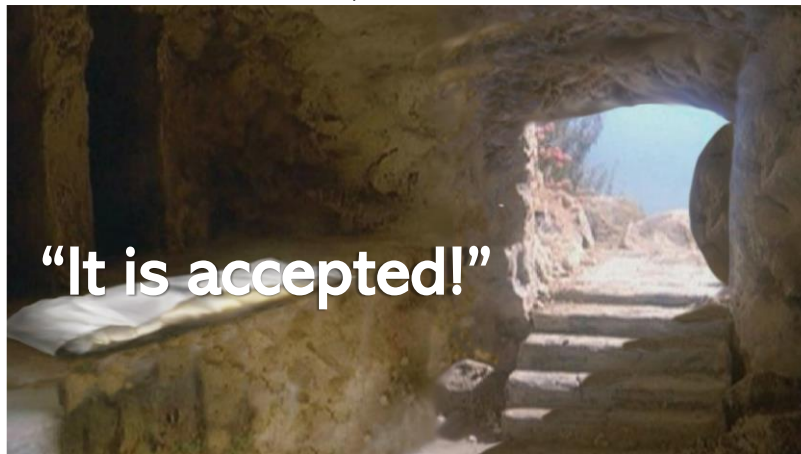
Have you ever heard of someone, anyone... who died, was buried for three days and then physically rose from the dead, and now lives... forever????

Only one person has... and his name is Jesus.  
His resurrection proves... he is who he says he is.

Just before he gave up his life Jesus cried out from the cross...



At his resurrection, the Father cried out...



What was accepted?

Jesus' once-for-all-time sacrifice on behalf of the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve.

What Jesus finished... and the Father accepted... was the sacrifice of Jesus' life for our sin... in order that Jesus' goodness might be credited to us for our lack.

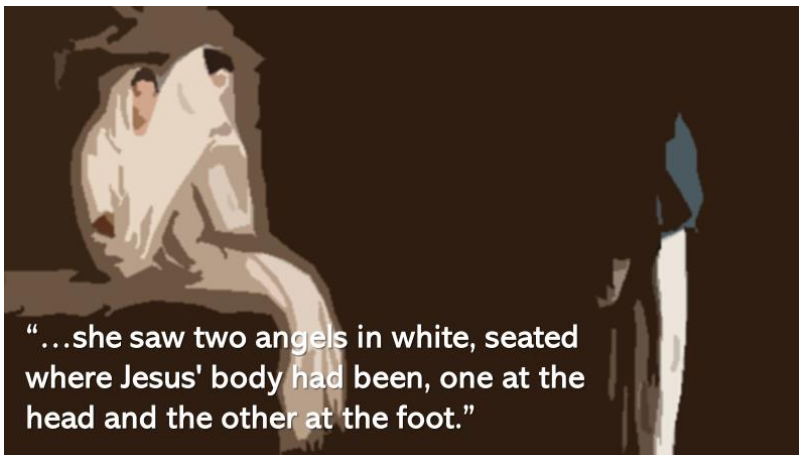
The gospel of Jesus is good news.

Our Savior, having given his life in sacrifice to pay our sin debt, was raised from the dead!

When Peter and John, left the empty tomb, v.10... and went back to their homes, Mary remained.



At some point, like Peter and John, she looked into the tomb. But unlike them, she saw more than strips of linen and the folded head cloth. Look at 20:12



“...she saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.”

They asked her, **“Woman, why are you crying?”**  
She told them why.

And then, either hearing or sensing someone behind her, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but didn't realize it was him.

He asked her the same question which the angels had asked:  
**“Why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?”**

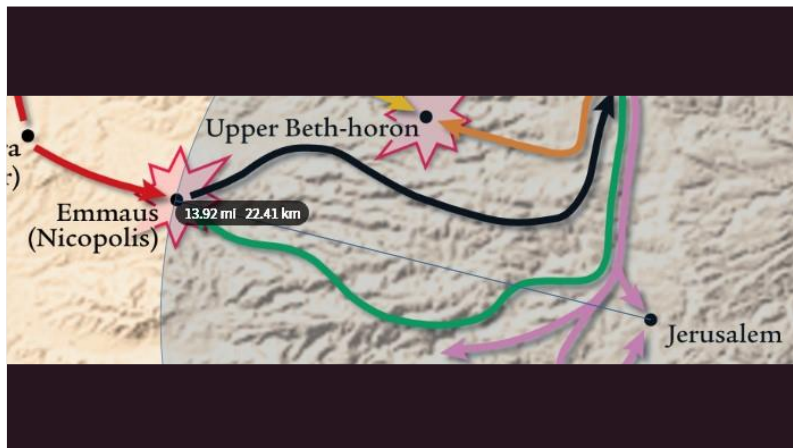
Interestingly, Mary thought Jesus was the gardener.

And so, she answered him with a question, hoping he might know where the body of Jesus has been taken.  
But Jesus didn't answer her question.  
He just said her name.



And with that one word... her tears of sorrow became tears of joy.

When Mary returned to the rest of the disciples, her news was different from when she had first come to them.  
It was not – “they have taken the Lord;” but “I have seen the Lord!”



As we earlier noted, at some point in the afternoon of resurrection day, Jesus walked for several hours with two of his disciples who were travelling to Emmaus, but only revealed himself to them when they invited him to share a meal with them... and then he was gone.

v.19 - it was the evening before the rest of the disciples saw Jesus.

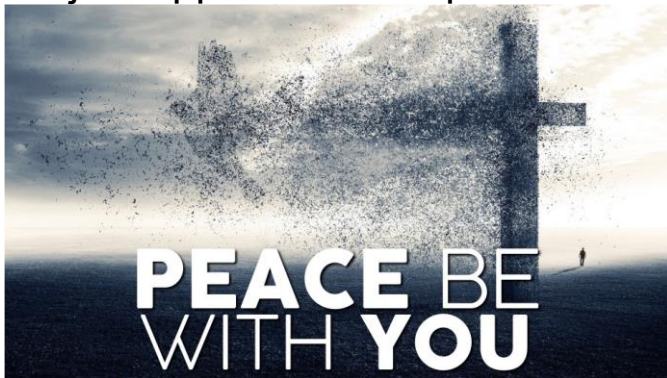
They had gathered together in a room whose doors were locked. Probably the windows were shuttered or at the very least heavily curtained.

I think all conversation would have been muted.

And then... suddenly... Jesus came... and stood among them. One moment he was not there, the next he was.

He had not opened a door, nor climbed through a window or made a hole in the ceiling through which he entered.

He just appeared and spoke to them, v.19...



Were there any better words to hear than those?

I love how well Jesus knew his disciples.

What was the first thing he did after speaking to them?

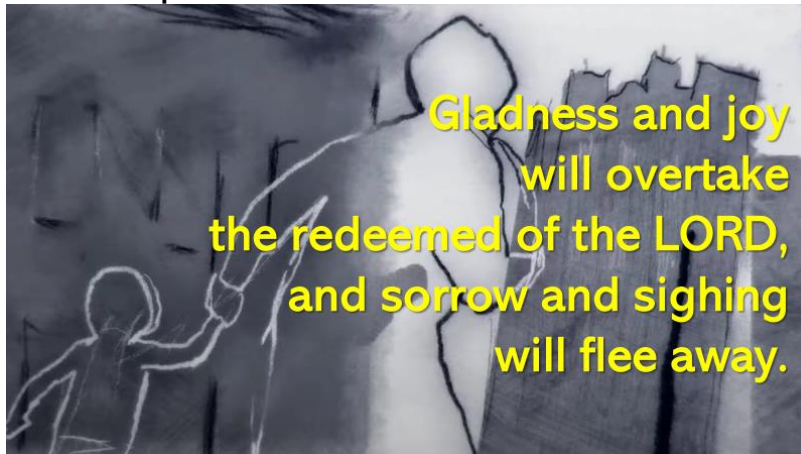
Look at v.20.



"...he showed them his hands and side."

As they heard his voice, and saw his hands and side, and as Luke adds in his gospel, touched him... to verify he was flesh and bones... and watched him eat a piece of fish in front of them... their hearts were filled to overflowing with joy.

Their experience made me think of Isaiah 55:11.

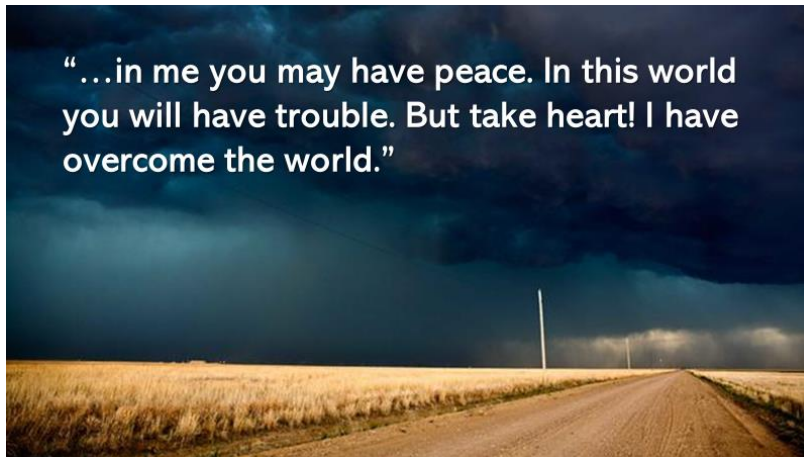


The presence of the resurrected Lord Jesus drove fear from their hearts and replaced it with gladness and joy.

And then, again, for a second time, Jesus said to them...



Three days earlier, very possibly in the same room... before he prayed his prayer of John 17 and they had left for the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus told them, John 16:33...



“...in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

What a remarkable promise!

Jesus promised peace... in the midst of trouble.

Not a peace independent of him, but a peace in him.

And here again, Jesus spoke a blessing of peace upon them and then linked it to his mission of overcoming and the mission he was entrusting to them.

### **v.21 - As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.**

The disciples had been with Jesus and had been a part of his mission throughout the past 3+years.

On that day... resurrection day... they discover that the mission which the Father had entrusted to Jesus was not over but would be continuing through them.

When Jesus began his public ministry, the Father publicly anointed him with the Spirit.

Look at what Jesus did after he commissioned them, v.22...



When God created the first man, Adam, he breathed... into... his nostrils the breath of life and the Scripture says, **“the man became a living being.”**

Here, on the 8<sup>th</sup> day, the beginning of new creation, we see Jesus, very intentionally... “breathe... on... his disciples,” making them alive ...spiritually.

His gift to them of the Spirit, who is the “Breath of God,” would be the One who would equip them for the mission he was entrusting to them.

The Spirit would mediate the grace of God to them that would both embolden and enable them to carry on what Jesus had started.

If there were ever questions – “what should we do?” – the answer would always be found in the asking of another question – “what did Jesus do?”

For their mission, and ours is a continuation of his.  
Just as Jesus had to die... and had to rise... so the news of Jesus’ resurrection... has to be told.  
Why?



Because until his return, there is opportunity... for sinners to be rescued... and for all who believe in Jesus to come home to God.

There will be a day when death will be no more.  
There will be a day when Jesus' followers join the resurrection, when these bodies, in a blink, will be raised imperishable and immortal.

As we celebrate today that our Savior lives, and that he is the Hero of heaven who overcame sin, death and the devil, we also are reminded that the news of Jesus is news that our world is desperate to hear.

It is the only news that makes sense of our world and the human condition and reveals the goodness and justice of the triune God.

If you haven't yet, I urge you to turn your life towards him and trust in Jesus today.  
Receive him who spoke on Resurrection Day – peace be with you.... the peace he offers as a gift is only found in him.

Followers of Jesus, when you believed in him and received him, you were granted peace with God.

I remind you that he breathed on you...  
...and gave to you the Holy Spirit, that in him, you might have ....  
not just peace, but also purpose...  
... for made alive by grace through faith in Christ... you are now sent by Jesus into the world... as Jesus was sent by the Father.

We are no longer our own, but belong to him, body, soul and spirit... and now live for his fame.

What he has begun will be finished.