

Day Thirty-Five

Jesus: Real, Relevant, Raw and Radical!

You Had Me at Hello

John 20:19-23(NLT) *That Sunday evening the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. **Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them!** “Peace be with you,” he said. **20** As he spoke, he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord! **21** Again he said, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.” **22** Then he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. **23** If you forgive anyone’s sins, they are forgiven. If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”*

Luke 24:35-49(NLT) *Then the two from Emmaus told their story of how Jesus had appeared to them as they were walking along the road, and how they had recognized him as he was breaking the bread. **36** And just as they were telling about it, Jesus himself was suddenly standing there among them. “Peace be with you,” he said. **37** But the whole group was startled and frightened, thinking they were seeing a ghost! **38** “Why are you frightened?” he asked. “Why are your hearts filled with doubt? **39** Look at my hands. Look at my feet. You can see that it’s really me. Touch me and make sure that I am not a ghost, because ghosts don’t have bodies, as you see that I do.” **40** As he spoke, he showed them his hands and his feet. **41** Still they stood there in disbelief, filled with joy and wonder. Then he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” **42** They gave him a piece of broiled fish, **43** and he ate it as they watched.**44** Then he said, “When I was with you before, I told you that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and in the Psalms must be fulfilled.” **45** Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. **46** And he said, “Yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah would suffer and die and rise from the dead on the third day. **47** It was also written that this message would be proclaimed in the authority of his name to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem: ‘There is forgiveness of sins for all who repent.’ **48** You are witnesses of all these things. **49** “And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as my Father promised. But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven.”*

Emotions are like being on a roller coaster. There are twists and turns, ups and downs, slow climbs and fast falls. One moment you squeal with delight, the next you hold on for dear life. As quickly as it starts, it comes to an abrupt stop. To say that the disciples have been on a roller coaster of emotions would be an apt description. There is one overriding emotion that they just can’t shake. Fear. It’s resurrection Sunday night. The disciples are behind locked doors. That has been the theme for almost the entire week, at least since the arrest of Jesus. The doors are locked because they know they are in

the crosshairs of the Jewish leaders. Their emotions are frayed and fragile. What are they to make of all that has happened just in this day?

What a day it has been. They are finally all together, except, somehow, Thomas is missing. He is probably with his twin. The tomb is empty. The body of Jesus is gone. Mary Magdalene insists she saw Jesus, or at least heard Him say her name. The other women saw angels, and then they say they saw the Lord. The men are not totally sure about that. Then Peter says he also has seen the Lord. So, it looks like the women might have been right. Then, suddenly, there was a knock on the door, and they cautiously opened it. It was Cleopas and company all the way back from Emmaus. So, they gave them the floor. They were insisting that they had seen the Lord.

As they were telling their story, Jesus appears. I mean He just appeared. We know He didn't knock. He wasn't there before, and then suddenly He was there. Then Jesus said, "Hello!" Jesus said, "Peace!" Then He does what He always does, ask questions. "Why are you afraid? Why are you filled with doubt?" Then, as He spoke, He shows them His hands and feet. He does not only encourage them to see, He encourages them to touch. He told the women earlier in the day not to touch Him, but now He is telling everybody to touch Him. The disciples are in a state of utter awe. Suddenly, they have flashbacks of a lake, a storm and a ghost. They did not say anything, but as always Jesus gives the answer before anybody can even ask the question, "Hey everybody, ghosts do not have bodies. Come touch and see, I am not a ghost." Jesus speaks peace to them, and then He shows them His wounds. ***Isaiah 53:5(NIV) "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed."*** So, Jesus repeats Himself and says "Peace" again. "Just in case you guys did not hear me say it the first time, I will say it again. Look, these are the wounds that will bring you peace."

"I know your emotions are worn down thin, but I give you what you need, My peace." So, Jesus, in His wisdom, does something to calm their emotions. "Do you have anything here to eat?" He left the people of Emmaus at the table, but He didn't eat with them. He broke bread with them, but He didn't eat. Now the resurrected Son of God, with all His glory and power, the One who has overcome sin, hell and the grave, asks, "What's for dinner?" So, they give Him a piece of broiled fish. Jesus sits and eats. The disciples stand and stare; mouths wide open, hearts filled with wonder, minds in disbelief. Then Jesus does what only He can do so well, He addresses an unbelieving mind, while He heals a broken heart with His Word. He addresses their greatest fear and dispels their biggest doubts.

He confirms for them that He is the Messiah. All that they hoped for is not lying in a tomb. Death could not hold Him. The grave could not keep Him. Jesus addresses their

biggest fears and highest hopes. Just as suddenly as He appeared, their emotions are flooded with joy, awe, wonder and amazement. They are pinching themselves, rubbing their eyes and making sure they are awake. Then He reminds them that, just like the Father sent Him, He is sending them. Just like Jesus laid down His life for them, they will now lay down their lives for others, so that others can have the same peace He gives them.

Jesus knew what they needed. What should give us complete confidence and trust is not only that Jesus knows your name, but that He knows who you are and what you need. There is a theme repeated throughout Scripture and implied in hundreds more, “Fear not” or “Don’t be afraid.” **1 John 4:18-19(NIV)** ***“There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. 19 We love because he first loved us.”*** Jesus loves us with a perfect love. There is no lack or deficiency in His love for us. He comes to us in our darkest days of doubt and despair. He shows Himself faithful even when we are completely fearful. He lets us in on what he has planned. He adopts us into His family. He empowers us to love like He loves and give like He gives. He is willing to pursue the lost sheep. He searches for the lost coin. He waits patiently and longingly for the prodigal. He does not cast the first stone or condemn the guilty. He is the Good Shepherd that lays His life down for the sheep. He is the Good Samaritan that binds up the wounded. He is the pearl of great price. He is heaven’s treasure and earth’s answer. He is a home to the restless and a fortress to hounded. He is the deliverer to the captives and the healer to the wounded.

He is a friend to sinners and the last Hope to the lost. He is good and He is kind. If you feel that your emotions are corroded and your resolve is weakened, if you feel like you are locked up in fear, then listen to what Isaiah prophesied about your Messiah. **Isaiah 42:2-4(NLT)** ***“He will not shout or raise his voice in public. 3 He will not crush the weakest reed or put out a flickering candle. He will bring justice to all who have been wronged. 4 He will not falter or lose heart until justice prevails throughout the earth. Even distant lands beyond the sea will wait for his instruction.”***

If you are barely flickering, and you feel bruised and on the verge of being broken, He won’t raise His voice in condemnation or bring you to a breaking point. He will make sure that, in the end, true justice prevails. He comes into the place of your fear. He says, “Shalom!” He says, “Look at My wounds. They are there for your peace.” In case you did not recognize the first time, He says it again, “Shalom!” -- wholeness, completeness, soundness – “May you be filled with goodness.” When fear and anxiety attempt to strangle your hope, just remember Jesus says, “Hello.”

Prayer:

- **Ask the Lord for His peace to flood your heart and mind.**

- **Pray and ask the Lord to forgive you for trying to control everything around you.**
- **Forgive those who have hurt you and pray for their healing.**
- **Ask the Holy Spirit to give you His strength for your dark days and show you the path through.**