

Welcome to this second Sunday of Easter! What? You ask. Easter is more than one Sunday? Yes! In the church calendar, Easter is more than one Sunday. It is seven Sundays, actually. Easter is a season of seven Sundays that lead up to Pentecost. And, because of the importance of the Resurrection on Easter, we are considered Easter People. So, during this Easter Season, we will be exploring what it means to be Easter People. Today, we are kicking off a sermon series called, **Easter People: The Series**, and we invite you back each week to see what Christ calls us to be and to do as Easter People. (If you aren't able to make it each week, we will have the sermons and sermon videos on our website.)

Today, we will look at how Christ calls Easter People to be Peacemakers. In our scripture passage though, the first disciples were anything but peaceful. On the evening after Jesus is resurrected, he appears among a group of disciples who are scared for their lives. And, rightly so. Their Beloved Teacher had just been crucified, and they were known as Christ followers. They were scared, anxious, and nervous, that they might be next. They were also filled with sadness and grief that their Beloved had been put to death.

And, then Jesus appears to them and says, "Peace be with you" (v.19). This was a typical Hebrew greeting, but this time, it was more than an ordinary gesture. This is the moment that many of them see for themselves for the first time that Jesus was not dead after all. He conquered death, and now he is alive again and brings them peace. He gives them exactly what they need at exactly the right time. In this moment in their lives when everything is so confusing and uncertain, and they don't know how to move forward, Jesus brings them peace and a purpose.

Jesus comes to them and commissions them for service. Jesus says to them, "Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so I am sending you" (v.21). They now understand that they were chosen to carry out the gospel, just as Christ did. Their purpose, as Easter People, would be carried out in many ways, but first, Christ sends them out as Peacemakers.

I saw a meme the other day that made me chuckle. It said, "Sometimes the best evangelism is simply telling people you're a Christian and then not being a complete jerk." Although meant to be funny, there's a lot of truth to that. The way we live our lives as Easter People is more convincing than anything we could say. So, when we find ourselves in sticky situations and smack dab in the middle of conflict, we bring peace instead of acting like a complete jerk.

God's peace doesn't mean lack of fear or anxiousness or a lack of conflict. There will always be those things in this life. A peacemaker remembers that Christ has brought peace into our lives, so we cling to that peace when we are fearful, anxious, and conflicted.

Being a peacemaker doesn't mean remaining quiet or holding your tongue, to avoid conflict or to remain in conflict. Being a peacemaker means going into a conflicted situation and bringing God's peace into it. It means standing up for those who cannot bring peace to the situation themselves.

Sometimes, we find ourselves in situations in which we feel totally out of control. We know we need to bring peace, but in order to do that, we have to face an incredibly difficult decision or person. We have to approach a task that seems impossible to accomplish. So, we keep peace hidden away behind closed doors,

locked doors even, like the first disciples. But, there's no hiding from Christ. He enters all our locked doors and brings a peace that "surpasses all understanding" (Phil. 4:7).

Sometimes, being a peacemaker means making peace with how things are in a situation. It may not be how we want things to be, but it is what it is. We trust that God is in control, even if we feel we aren't, and God's peace will change our hearts of uncertainty to hearts of peace.

Being a Peacemaker is not easy. Bringing peace to certain people and situations is incredibly difficult. Making peace with incredibly difficult people and situations can seem impossible. But, Jesus calls us as Easter People to do the hard work. Jesus appears to us even in the places that seem like Jesus can't get to, those places we keep locked away. He appears and invites us to open the locked doors of our hearts, to accept his peace even in those dark places, and to embrace our call to take his peace into the world.

Where do you need peace in your life? Where is Christ calling you to bring peace? Where is Christ calling you to make peace? Think of those places as we pray.

God of Infinite Peace, come into the locked doors of our hearts. Pass through the barricades. Fill the dark rooms, every hidden doubt and fear, with your healing light and unending peace. We are often afraid and anxious to let go and trust you with all the uncertain and difficult situations that we find ourselves in. We are faced every day with anxiety, conflict, uncertainty of the future, so many things that need your peace. Show us where you are calling us to

bring peace and where to make peace. Show us how. Give us the courage and strength to be your Peacemakers in those places. In the name of the Risen Lord we pray, Amen.