

Sermons at the Anglican Church of Luxembourg

Preached by Rev Geoff Read on Sunday 27th April 2025

Text: John 20:19-end

Jesus once described his purpose in life like this

I have come that they may have life, life in all its fullness (Jn 10:10)

The writer of the gospel of John describes his record of the life of Jesus and its purpose in the same way: READ Jn 20:31

These are written so that you may continue^[e] to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

And in the first appearance of the risen Jesus to his dps in the upper room we have a perfect example of the power of the resurrection to bring this quality of life that comes “through his name” or in other words through all that Jesus is and all that Jesus does

READ 20:19-20

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors were locked where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.”²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

Note how the disciples are at the beginning of the encounter compared with how they are at the end: fear gives way to not just joy – they were over-joyed



At the start the doors are locked

They are deeply fearful that those who have so brutally killed Jesus have power and the desire to do the same to them

This word “fear” is far more than being afraid: it is a description of the complete opposite of life: they are totally without freedom, paralysed and imprisoned by the hate of others and their own fear

It is not just the physical doors of the room that are locked out of fear: it is the doors of their hearts and minds

And it is into this living death that Jesus comes: not just into the physical room, but the mental and emotional prison each of them has within them

And note that Jesus comes: He is the one who takes the initiative, He is the one who keeps the promise made 4 days before in what was probably the same upper room: READ Jn 16:22b

So you have pain now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. ²³ On that day you will ask nothing of me.^[d] Very truly, I tell you, if you ask anything of the Father in my name, he will give it to you.^[e] ²

And Jesus comes in a way that is real and that is accessible to them: in this brief period between resurrection and ascension He comes with a resurrection body that enables them to see him

As Jesus moves between the realms of heaven and earth, time and eternity, space and infinity He is the same but different – he is able to enter the room despite locked doors

But there are things about his resurrection body that enable them to recognize him (hands and side) – because we then read: “they were overjoyed when they saw the Lord”

“When they saw the Lord” (v20b) - in other words when they choose to give a particular interpretation to what seemed an unbelievable fact, what Thomas then struggles with – to believe that the one who stands before them is Jesus is risen from the dead

This is the crucial way in to this “life in all its fullness” that Jesus is all about
Through trusting or believing “you may life in his name..” (v31b)

Because if this is true – that Jesus is risen – everything changes, so much flows
from it to transform the living death of fear into the joy of life in His name

Joy is not just that they are happy because a friend is there

The word is joy, indeed over-joyed – a word that points to an attitude that
arises from a deepening conviction, something that isn’t just shaped by passing
external circumstances

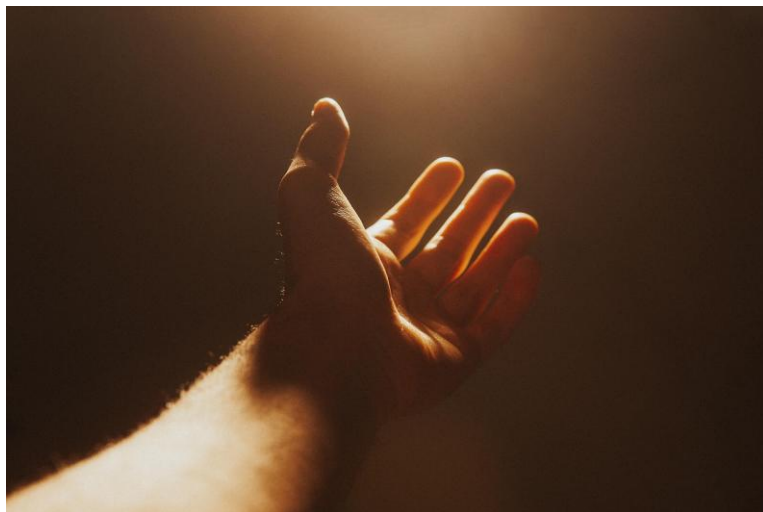
It is the word St John uses to describe resurrection life in contrast to life
without this recognition of Jesus, namely fear

It was like this: fear

It is now like this: joy

And that joy is: whatever the passing circumstances of our life may be

The question is in which realm we choose to live: fear or joy, death or life?



To be a Christian is to choose life

- and to keep on choosing life as a daily choice whatever the passing
circumstances may be

- to choose to believe that Jesus always takes the initiative to come into the midst of those passing circumstances and that He has the power to transform them

READ 20:21-22

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." ²² When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

To be a Christian is to share this life

- that means, empowered by His Spirit, to keep sharing this life with others as a daily choice whatever the passing circumstances may be

- to join in with all that Jesus is doing, the One who always takes the initiative to come into the midst of those passing circumstances and who has the power to transform them, sometimes even through us