

JOHN 20:19-23
ROME GEORGIA
April 18, 1993 & October 17, 1993
October 23, 2016

REVIEW. **John 20:18** - **Mary's report to the disciples.**

19 - MEETING IN "**FEAR OF THE JEWS**". IT IS **STILL ON THE FIRST DAY – SUNDAY**.
The Sabbath is no longer in view in nt. 9 of 10 "commandments reiterated in NT, but not the keeping of the Sabbath.

The **Jew - under the law** - had viewed life from the perspective of "**six days of work**" then rest.

The **church under Christ**, during this **age of grace**, views life from the perspective of "**faith in the living Christ first**, - - then follow the works!

JESUS HAD ALREADY APPEARED TO:

- **MARY MAGDALINE,**
- **THE OTHER MARY** **MATT. 28:1, 9-10,**
- **PETER & LUKE** **I COR. 15:5 AND LK. 24:34**
- **AND THE TWO EMMAUS DISCIPLES** **LK. 24:13 FF.**

YET, ON THIS **FIRST SUNDAY NIGHT** MEETING OF THE **DISCIPLES OF JESUS (NOT JUST THE APOSTLES)** - THE **DISCIPLES MET IN FEAR!**

Mark 16:14 SHEDS LIGHT ON JUST HOW **FEARFUL** THEY WERE:

Mar 16:14 Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and **upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.**

In **Mark**, Jesus tells them plainly that the reason for their unbelief was a **HEART CONDITION!**

The most dangerous condition of the heart is **CARDIOSKLEROSIS**.

Most of us are more familiar with **arterial-sclerosis** but the **Word Of God** is more concerned with **CARDIO-SKLEROSIS** - LITERALLY, A **HARDENING OF THE HEART**.

*** *SKLEROKARDIA GREEK. (CF. LAST WEEKS MESSAGE ON THIS PASSAGE.)*

THEIR **HARD HEART PRECLUDED THE TRUST NECESSARY TO EXERCISE FAITH**, WHICH IN TURN LEFT THE DISCIPLES **FAITHLESS - AND FEARFUL**.

- **FEARFUL OF THE JEWS. JOHN 20:19** -
 - **FEARFUL OF THE WORLD** AROUND THEM.

THE FEAR OF THE WORLD IS A **PARALYSIS TO THE WORK OF THE CHURCH**. So, on this very **first "Sunday"** worship service:

JESUS CAME TO THEM TO DISPEL FEAR AND REPLACE IT WITH JOY!

PERHAPS – read the **article** on the 11 missionaries martyred in Syria a few days ago. (attached)

BUT BEFORE THE REBUKE - JESUS SPOKE THE WORDS IN **JOHN 20:19**

John 20:19 Then the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, **Peace be unto you.**

PEACE – **SHALOM ! CHECK THIS OUT.** (HANDS AND SIDE)

20 And when he had so said, he **shewed unto them his hands and his side.** Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

From a human perspective, we would have felt like Jesus could have justifiably chastised the disciples for their cowardice the preceding weekend, but he did not: Thank God for His Words to us in **Psalms 103:10**

"He Hath Not Dealt With Us After Our Sins, Nor Rewarded Us According To Our Iniquities" **PS. 103:10.**

CHRIST ACCOMPLISHED HIS WORK ON THE CROSS - TO THE END THAT THERE COULD BE "PEACE" - Eph. 2:14-17 (TURN HERE)

Eph 2:14 For **He Himself is our peace**, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,

15 having abolished in His flesh the **enmity**, *that is*, the **law of commandments contained** in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man *from* the two, thus making peace, **16** and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby **putting to death the enmity**. **17 And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near.** *NKJV*

ROM. 5:1 "BEING JUSTIFIED BY FAITH, WE HAVE **PEACE WITH GOD** THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST."

THE MESSAGE THAT CHRIST BROUGHT THAT DAY, - IMPARTED TO THEM THAT THEY MIGHT THEN IMPART IT TO OTHERS - WAS THE "**GOSPEL OF PEACE**"

Rm. 10:15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF **THOSE WHO PREACH THE GOSPEL OF PEACE.** WHO BRING GLAD TIDINGS OF GOOD THINGS!"

MAN HAD DECLARED WAR ON GOD – Acts 4:22-30 (TURN HERE & **3:1** & **4:1** ff. for context.)

Act 4:27 "For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together

28 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.

29 Now, Lord, look on their threats, **and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word,**

30 by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus."

31 And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, **and they spoke the word of God with boldness.**

BUT GOD HAS DECLARED "PEACE TO THOSE WHO WOULD BELIEVE."

(The disciples "*fear of the Jews*" in Jn. 20:19 was because the "Jews" were the element of the world system that they had the most intimate contact with!

(Acts 4:27 makes it clear that the "people of Israel" were allied with the world system!)

"For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, **with the Gentiles and the people of Israel**, were gathered together 27

WE used to HEAR A LOT ABOUT A "**PEACE DIVIDEND**" THAT IS, THE FINANCIAL BENEFITS THAT WE SHOULD ACCRUE, assuming THAT THE WORLD IS (REPORTEDLY) AT PEACE.

(post -Cold War - President [George H.W. Bush](#) and UK Prime Minister [Margaret Thatcher](#) in the early 1990s, purporting to describe the [economic](#) benefit of a decrease in defense spending.

CHRIST CAME NOT:

TO A WORLD AT PEACE WITH ITSELF,

NOT TO THE HEALTHY - BUT RATHER TO THOSE IN NEED OF A PHYSICIAN,

JESUS CAME TO A SIN SICK WORLD.

HE PROVIDED A PEACE PLAN UNSURPASSED IN ALL OF MAN'S HISTORY - IT IS PEACE WITH GOD –

AND THIS IS THE **PEACE DIVIDEND - PEACE WITH GOD** RESULTS IN ETERNAL LIFE!

CHRIST HAS **ABOLISHED THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN JEW AND GENTILE** when it comes to the matter of **salvation**.

THERE IS ONLY - ONE WAY - THROUGH JESUS.

ONE WAY FOR THE WORLD TO KNOW GOD - THROUGH JESUS!

EPH. 2:14 For **He Himself is our peace**, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,

FEAR TURNED TO JOY (20:20) AT THE RECEPTION OF THE REALITY OF THE RISEN CHRIST!

The wounds were there as a testimony to the accomplished work of redemption.

But the glorified physical body, capable of walking through walls, **was testimony of the glory that has been secured for all who believe.**

IF THERE IS **PEACE** OR A **PEACE DIVIDEND** AT ALL TO BE FOUND IN THIS WORLD - IT IS THE PEACE THAT CHRIST BRINGS TO US.

FOR THE BELIEVER - IT IS POSSIBLE TO HAVE FEAR, BUT OUR FEARS CANNOT LOCK HIM OUT FOR LONG WHEN WE LIFT OUR VOICE TO HIM.

When the FEAR turned to JOY the commission was issued.

THE GREAT PARALYSIS OF THE CHURCH TODAY IS **FEAR OF THE WORLD**. BUT IT IS A **FALSE FEAR**. THERE IS NO NEED OF THIS. THE WORSE THAT THE WORLD CAN DO IS TO TAKE YOUR LIFE. "**FEAR NOT THEM WHO ARE ABLE TO DESTROY THE BODY**"

UNFORTUNATELY, **SOME IN THE CHURCH TODAY ALSO FEAR THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD**. THEY ARE **AFRAID** TO GET TO KNOW HIM FOR **FEAR** THAT IT WILL REQUIRE SOME CHANGE IN THEIR LIFE. **DON'T BE AFRAID**. IT WILL CHANGE YOUR LIFE TO FELLOWSHIP WITH THE RISEN SAVIOR, BUT IT IS A **CHANGE THAT BRINGS JOY**

-
NOT FEAR AND SORROW.

"Yes, but I have failed so often." .you may retort.

*******TO WHOM DID CHRIST SPEAK IN THIS MORNINGS PASSAGE?**

TO "**THE BRAVE AND THE FREE**" OR TO "**THE DESERTERS AND DOUBTERS**"?

EVEN IN THE GARDEN WHEN HE "**PRAYED AND WEPT**" - THEY "**LAI D AND SLEPT!**"

JESUS CAME TO THE FEARFUL AND THE FAINT AND COMMISSIONED THEM. - V . 21

Then said Jesus to them again, *Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. JOHN 20:21*

JESUS LOVES US AS THE FATHER LOVES HIM - JOHN 15:9; As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

WE ARE IN THE FATHER JUST AS HE IS IN THE FATHER - JOHN 17:21-22.

That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

Joh 17:22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

AND OUR COMMISSION IS TO
"GO INTO ALL THE WORLD AND PREACH THE GOSPEL OF PEACE TO ALL MEN."

IN SPITE OF MANY FAILURES, THE DISCIPLES WERE BEING SENT OUT. THEIR JOY INCREASED EXPOTENTIALY.

JESUS COMMISSION WAS UNDOUBTEDLY ENNOBLING TO THE DISCIPLES BUT HE

ALSO EMPOWERED THEM TO DO HIS WILL **John 20:22**

And when he had said this, he breathed on *them*, and saith unto them, **Receive ye the Holy Ghost: 22**

BREATH = SPIRIT.

Gen. 2:7 – BREATH = PHYSICAL LIFE

JOHN 20:22 - BREATH = SPIRITUAL LIFE.

AT PENTECOST THEY WOULD BE BAPTIZED WITH THE SPIRIT FOR EMPOWERMENT FOR SERVICE AND THEY WOULD BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT TO DO THE WILL OF GOD. THE SPIRIT OF GOD HAD DWELT WITH THEM IN THE PERSON OF CHRIST - HE WOULD NOW BE IN THEM! -

John 14:17 *Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

V. 23 - LITERAL READING

"Whosoever's sins you remit shall have already been forgiven them, and whosoever's sins you retain shall already have not been forgiven them." (**MANTEY IN WIERSBE - P. 134.**)

WE DO NOT PROVIDE FORGIVENESS - WE PROCLAIM IT!

At several steps on their path to death by beheading and crucifixion last month, 11 indigenous Christian workers near Aleppo, Syria, had the option to leave the area and live. The 12-year-old son of a ministry team leader also could have spared his life by denying Christ.

The indigenous missionaries were not required to stay at their ministry base in a village near Aleppo, Syria; rather, the ministry director who trained them had entreated them to leave. As the Islamic State (ISIS), other rebel groups and Syrian government forces turned Aleppo into a war zone of carnage and destruction, ISIS took over several outlying villages. The Syrian ministry workers in those villages chose to stay in order to provide aid in the name of Christ to survivors.

"I asked them to leave, but I gave them the freedom to choose," said the **ministry director**, his voice tremulous as he recalled their horrific deaths. "As their leader, I should have insisted that they leave."

They stayed because they believed they were called to share Christ with those caught in the crossfire, he said.

"Every time we talked to them," the director said, **"they were always saying, 'We want to stay here—this is what God has told us to do. This is what we want to do.'** They just wanted to stay and share the gospel."

Those who chose to stay could have scattered and hid in other areas, as their surviving family members did. On a visit to the surviving relatives in hiding, the ministry director learned of the cruel executions.

The relatives said ISIS militants on **Aug. 7 (A Sunday)** captured the Christian workers in a village whose name is withheld for security reasons. On **Aug. 28 (also a Sunday)**, the **militants asked if they had renounced Islam for Christianity. When the Christians said that they had, the rebels asked if they wanted to return to Islam. The Christians said they would never renounce Christ.**

The 41-year-old team leader, his young son and two ministry members in their 20s were questioned at one village site where ISIS militants had summoned a crowd. The team leader presided over nine house churches he had helped to establish. His son was two months away from his **13th birthday**.

"All were badly brutalized and then crucified," the ministry leader said. **"They were left on their crosses for two days. No one was allowed to remove them."**

The martyrs died beside signs the ISIS militants had put up identifying them as "infidels."

Eight other ministry team members, including two women, were taken to another site in the village that day (Aug. 28) and were asked the same questions before a crowd. The women, ages 29 and 33, tried to tell the ISIS militants they were only sharing the peace and love of Christ and asked what they had done wrong to deserve the abuse. The Islamic extremists then publicly **raped the women, who **continued to pray during the ordeal**, leading the ISIS militants to beat them all the more furiously.**

As the two women and the six men knelt before they were beheaded, they were all praying.

"Villagers said some were praying in the name of Jesus, others said some were praying the Lord's prayer, and others said some of them lifted their heads to commend their spirits to Jesus," the ministry director said. **"One of the women looked up and seemed to be almost smiling as she said, 'Jesus!'"**

After they were beheaded, their bodies were hung on crosses, the ministry director said, his voice breaking. He had trained all of the workers for their evangelistic ministry, and he had baptized the team leader and some of the others.

Hundreds of former Muslims in Syrian villages are in danger of being captured and killed by ISIS, which is fighting to establish a caliphate in which apostasy is punishable by death. **The underground church in the region has mushroomed since June 2014, when ISIS began terrorizing those who do not swear allegiance to its caliphate, both non-Muslims and Muslims.** Consequently, the potential for large-scale executions has grown along with the gains in ISIS-controlled territory.

The ministry assisted by Christian Aid Mission is providing resources and trying to find ways to evacuate these families by other routes.

Many of the ministry's teams also remain in Syria. Christian Aid Mission assists those who do not or cannot leave with the means to survive.

Even those who leave, however, may encounter ISIS militants and other criminals in refugee camps, said the leader of another ministry that Christian Aid Mission assists. **He spoke of a Muslim from northern Syria who, like all men in areas that ISIS takes over, was coerced into joining the caliphate or being killed.**

Recruited into ISIS, he fled the country after his brother was killed in the fighting. Disillusioned with ISIS but still adhering to Islam and its teaching that Christians and Jews are unclean "pigs," he went to Amman, Jordan, as he had learned that relatives there were receiving aid from Christians.

The Muslim, whose name is withheld for security reasons, went to a Christian meeting with the **intention of killing the aid workers gathered there. Something kept him from following through on his plan, though, and that night he saw Jesus in a dream, the ministry director said.**

"The next day he came back and said, 'I came to kill you, but last night I saw Jesus, and I want to know what are you teaching—who is this One who held me up from killing you?'" the director said. **"He received Christ with tears, and today he's actually helping in the church, helping out other people. We're praying for lots of such Sauls to change to Pauls."**

The sorrow of the ministry team leader who lost 11 workers and one of their children last month has been deep, but he takes heart that their faithfulness could help change the hearts of persecutors.

"They kept on praying loudly and sharing Jesus until their last breath," he said. "They did this in front of the villagers as a testimony for others."

He asked for prayer for surviving family members and for himself.

"These things have been very hard on me," he said. "What wrong did those people do to deserve to die? What is happening is more and more people are being saved. The ministry is growing and growing—in the past we used to pray to have one person from a Muslim background come to the Lord. Now there are so many we can barely handle all the work among them."

