

The Jefferson Spirit

Sundays at 9:00AM

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The Gift of the Holy Spirit

John 20:19–31 takes us into one of the most tender and powerful moments after Jesus' resurrection. The disciples are locked away in fear, uncertain of what the future holds, when Jesus Himself suddenly stands among them—offering peace, showing His scars, and breathing the Holy Spirit into their lives. In this passage, we witness not only the reality of the risen Christ, but also the beginning of a new kind of relationship with God: one marked by His Spirit living within us. It's a story of peace replacing fear, faith overcoming doubt, and God's presence stepping straight into our locked rooms and our wounded hearts.

Scripture Reading: John 20:19-31 (NIV)

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

²¹ Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” ²² **And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”** ²³ If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

Jesus Appears to Thomas

²⁴ Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!”

But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

²⁶ A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”

²⁸ Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

²⁹ Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

The Purpose of John’s Gospel

³⁰ Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Interesting Facts about John 20:19–31

- **The doors were locked** — yet Jesus entered without opening them, showing His **resurrected body** is physical but **no longer bound** by ordinary limits.
- **Jesus says “Peace be with you” three times** — emphasizing that peace is **His gift to fearful, doubting hearts**, not something they had to achieve themselves.
- **Jesus breathes on the disciples** — mirroring **Genesis 2:7** when God breathed life into Adam. This symbolizes **new spiritual life** through the Holy Spirit.
- **This is the first time the disciples are sent** — Jesus commissions them (“As the Father has sent me, I am sending you”) even *before* Pentecost.



- The phrase “Receive the Holy Spirit” is unique here — it’s a **personal, quiet empowerment** compared to the **public outpouring** at Pentecost (Acts 2).
- Thomas is the only disciple singled out for missing the first encounter — giving rise to the phrase “Doubting Thomas,” though his story is ultimately one of **bold confession**, not failure.
- Thomas' confession (“My Lord and my God!”) is the **strongest personal statement of Jesus’ divinity** found anywhere in the Gospels.
- Jesus meets Thomas’ doubt with **grace, not rebuke** — showing that **honest questions** are not barriers to faith, but can become doorways to deeper belief.
- The blessing extends to us — When Jesus says, *“Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed,”* He is directly speaking about **future generations** of believers—including us today.
- John 20:30–31 is the original “**purpose statement**” of the Gospel of John — John clearly says he wrote these stories *so that you may believe and have life in Jesus’ name*.

How John 20:19–31 Ties into the Old Testament

1. **Breathing the Spirit — Creation Echo (Genesis 2:7)**
 - In Genesis, God breathed physical life into Adam.
 - In John 20, Jesus breathes spiritual life into His disciples. ☞ *This shows Jesus as the New Adam, bringing a new creation through the Spirit.*
2. **Peace to the Fearful — God's Covenant Promise (Numbers 6:24–26)**
 - God’s blessing over Israel was peace: *“The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.”*
 - Jesus' repeated words, “Peace be with you,” fulfill God's desire for His people to live in His peace, not fear.
3. **Sending After Receiving — The Mission of God's People (Isaiah 6:8)**
 - When Isaiah encountered God, he was forgiven and then sent: *“Here am I, send me.”*
 - Similarly, Jesus breathes new life into His disciples and immediately commissions them: *“As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”*
4. **Proof of Resurrection — Scars and Signs (Psalm 22, Isaiah 53)**
 - The Old Testament foretold the Messiah would suffer (Psalm 22:16-18; Isaiah 53:5).
 - Jesus showing His wounds fulfills these prophecies—He is the Suffering Servant who now stands alive.
5. **Doubting and Believing — Pattern of Israel (Exodus 4, Numbers 14)**
 - Thomas’ doubt mirrors Israel’s struggles to trust God even after miracles.
 - Just as God patiently pursued Israel, Jesus patiently meets Thomas—inviting faith even after doubt.

6. Blessed Without Seeing — Faith Foretold (Habakkuk 2:4)

- *"The righteous will live by faith."*
- Jesus blesses those who believe without seeing, fulfilling the Old Testament truth that faith—not sight—is the basis of righteousness.

7. Witnessing Life — New Covenant Promise (Jeremiah 31:33)

- God promised in Jeremiah to write His law on people's hearts.
- The giving of the Holy Spirit begins this inner work—transforming hearts from within, not just guiding them by external laws.

John 20:19–31 Quiz

1. Where were the disciples when Jesus appeared to them?

- a) In the temple
- b) On a mountain
- c) Behind locked doors
- d) Fishing by the sea

2. What was the disciples' emotional state before Jesus appeared?

- a) Excited
- b) Fearful
- c) Confused but joyful
- d) Angry

3. What were Jesus' first words to the disciples?

- a) "Why are you afraid?"
- b) "Peace be with you."
- c) "Do you believe in Me?"
- d) "Follow Me."

4. What did Jesus show them to prove it was really Him?

- a) His eyes and feet
- b) His scars and His side
- c) His robe and His sandals
- d) His crown of thorns

5. What did Jesus do to the disciples after saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit"?

- a) Touched their heads
- b) Breathed on them
- c) Anointed them with oil
- d) Gave them a scroll

6. Which disciple was not present when Jesus first appeared?

- a) Peter
- b) John
- c) Thomas
- d) James

7. What did Thomas say he needed to do in order to believe?

- a) Hear Jesus speak
- b) See the empty tomb again
- c) Touch Jesus' scars
- d) Pray for a sign

8. How many days later did Jesus appear again, this time for Thomas?

- a) Three days
- b) Seven days
- c) Eight days
- d) Forty days

9. What was Thomas' declaration when he saw Jesus?

- a) "You are alive!"
- b) "I believe!"
- c) "My Lord and my God!"
- d) "Teacher, forgive me!"

10. Why did John say he wrote his Gospel?

- a) To prove Jesus' miracles
- b) To explain prophecy
- c) So that readers may believe Jesus is the Christ
- d) To preserve the disciples' stories

Answer Key

1–c, 2–b, 3–b, 4–b, 5–b, 6–c, 7–c, 8–c, 9–c, 10–c.

Order of Worship

Welcome

Opening Prayer

*Call to Worship (Congregation)

Leader:

Come, all who are weary, all who are fearful, all who are longing for peace.

The Risen Christ stands among us—offering His peace, His presence, His power.

People:

We come to receive His breath of life.

We come to be filled with His Spirit.

We come to worship the One who calls us by name.

Leader:

The doors are no longer locked.

The grave is no longer sealed.

The Spirit is no longer distant.

People:

We rejoice in the living Christ!

We open our hearts to the Holy Spirit!

We worship the God who is with us, within us, and among us!

Children's Message

***Crown Him with Many Crowns, p.327 UMC Hymnal**

Scripture Reading: John 20:19-31

Sermon: The Gift of the Holy Spirit

Offertory - UMC Choir

*Doxology - p.95 UMC Hymnal

Up from the Grave He Arose , p.322 UMC Hymnal

*Confession and Pardon

Confession (Unison Prayer):

Merciful God,

We confess that we often live behind locked doors—

Locked by fear, locked by doubt, locked by our own striving.

We have heard Your promise of peace, but we have clung to anxiety.

We have seen Your scars of love, but we have clung to our wounds.

We have received Your Spirit, yet we have tried to live in our own strength.

Forgive us, Lord.

**Breathe Your Spirit into us again.
Open our hearts to Your presence.
Set us free to believe, to love, and to be sent in Your name.
Amen.**

Pardon (Assurance of Forgiveness):

Leader:

Hear the good news:

Jesus stands among us even now, speaking peace to every fearful heart.

His scars are proof of His love.

His Spirit is the breath of new life.

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

People:

In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

Glory to God! Amen.

Announcements

Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

***Christ is Alive, p.318 UMC Hymnal**

***Sending Forth**

Postlude

Upcoming Events:

May 10 - 9AM Prayer Meeting at JUMC

May 11 - 10AM May Birthday Celebration

May 17 - 3-5 Paint Day - advance reservations needed

June 8 - 10AM June Birthday Celebration

June 14 - 9 AM Prayer Meeting at JUMC

June 22-26 - 6-8:30 PM Vacation Bible School at JUMC

July 12 - 9AM Prayer Meeting at JUMC

July 13 - 10AM July Birthday Celebration

Sermon Insights

Sermon Lesson:

Even behind locked doors, Jesus comes. In John 20:19–31, we see the risen Christ step into fear-filled rooms, offer His peace, show His scars, and breathe His Spirit into broken hearts. He meets the doubters without shame and sends the fearful out with purpose. This passage reminds us that faith isn't about having it all together—it's about receiving the living presence of Jesus, even when we're uncertain. Through the Holy Spirit, God moves from being beside us to living within us, empowering us to walk in peace, to believe without seeing, and to carry His light into a fearful world.

Application:

- Let Jesus into your locked places. No fear, failure, or doubt is too great for Christ to enter. Invite Him into the areas of your life you've hidden away—and receive His peace.
- Trust the Spirit who lives within you. The Holy Spirit isn't a distant helper; He is God's presence in you. Rely on His strength daily, especially when you feel weak, afraid, or uncertain.
- Carry peace and purpose into the world. Just as Jesus sent the disciples, He sends you. Go into your everyday world—with your scars, your story, and His Spirit—to be a witness of His love and life.

Conclusion:

Even today, Jesus still comes to locked rooms and fearful hearts. He still speaks peace, shows His love, and breathes His Spirit into His people. No matter where you find yourself—doubting like Thomas, hiding like the disciples, or longing for more—Jesus stands before you with open hands and an open invitation. Receive His peace. Trust His Spirit within you. And go—sent into the world not in fear, but in the unstoppable power of the risen Christ.

