

Hindrances To God's Peace and God's Mission

"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." 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." (John 20:19-29)

In the above chosen passage, that had happened in the same day that Jesus resurrected from the dead, the Lord went and visited His disciples and appeared to them to reassure them that HE really rose from the dead. The first statement that Jesus told them is this ***"Peace be with you!"*** Jesus said this because the disciples they were really in need of that peace of God. They lost their peace due to various reasons.

1- Fear: *"the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders,"* The disciples were having fear from the Jewish leaders and that is why they did not have peace. Fear from different reasons will take away the peace of God from your life and will put you locked behind doors. Financial fear, fear from the future, fear from sicknesses, fear from old age, fear from rejection, and other kind of fear will ultimately take the peace of God from your life.

"20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord." The event of the crucifixion and death of Jesus that the church and disciples had passed through contributed much to that fear and had imparted discouragement, therefore the Lord went to them and showed them himself and the true evidence of his resurrection from death.

The fear that had come into your life will not only take the peace of God from your life but will hinder you from moving forward and do the work of God. Therefore, *"21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."* For the second time Jesus spoke peace to his disciples to pave the way for his disciples to go outside the locked doors that they were in. After that Jesus told them, *"As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."* He wanted His disciples to go forward with the message of Salvation that the whole world should hear. *"22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."* This represents the seal of The Holy Spirit that Jesus marks His disciples with, *"13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's*

possession—to the praise of his glory." (Ephesians 1:13-14) Jesus also encouraged His disciple and gave them authority when He sent them, ***"If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."*** The meaning of this is that God forgiveness will flow in the people life if they repent and renounce their sins and have faith in the Lord Jesus. The disciples of Jesus who witness how the people respond to the message of God they can proclaim to them God's forgiveness as they can witness their repentance and true changes in their lives. Sure with such measures the disciples were encouraged by the message of the Lord and were willing to come out from their locked door and move forward to preach the gospel and witness to others Christ resurrection.

2- Discouragement from others who does not believe: *"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."* Thomas when the disciples told him about what they witnessed, and explained to him clearly the evidences that Christ showed them of His resurrection, he should believed and be glad because that what the Scripture speaks and declares. But instead of that he declared to them his unbelief. That for sure had discouraged the disciples and took away the peace that they had just received from God. The evidence of their discouragement is clear, because when the Lord visited them after one week they were in same place and the door was still locked. And He still needed to tell them for the third time ***"Peace be with you!"*** You need to understand that your faith should not be based and balanced on others disobedience and non willingness to believe. You need to go forward and let God deal with those who are not willing to believe and obey. That will be another expression of your faith on Him. Jesus said, ***"5 "When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' 6 If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you." (Luke 10:5-6)*** Do not put your ear on what the people speaks. Concentrate more on what the word of God says. If you keep focusing on those who speaks like Thomas you will never get out from your jail.

From what Thomas said there are other causes of lack of peace in your life: ***"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."***

3- Doubts: Thomas said, ***"I will not believe."*** He has doubts and lack of faith and that can contribute much to the lack of peace. People who lives in doubts they do not have the peace of God. It is up to you to trust God and obey Him, or you chose to doubt God and give room to devil to play in your mind.

4- Stubbornness: Thomas said, ***"Unless I see the ...,"*** so he put obstacles and conditions before he would believe, although what the disciples explained to him was very clear and goes along the word of God. Many people are stubborn and their stubbornness will take away God's peace from their lives; they are stagnant and non fruitful in their lives and ministry.

Christ evidence of resurrection either he appeared personally as he did with the apostle, or the people hear the message of resurrection from those whom the Lord appeared to them, or understood that that from the Scripture, or was grasped from the indirect evidences of his resurrection with the confirmation of the Scripture.

While Jesus was walking with the two disciples on the road of Emmaus and explaining to them from the Scriptures that Christ should die and would raise from the dead, they told the Lord, **“22 In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning. 23 but didn’t find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. 24 Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.”** (Luke 24:22-24) And the events went on this way, **“25 He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. 28 As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. 29 But they urged him strongly, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them. 30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. 32 They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?” 33 They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together 34 and saying, “It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.” 35 Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.”** (Luke 24:25-35) So here we found that the disciples and the church they came to hear about Christ resurrection without seeing Christ, but then Christ to some of them He came explaining the Scripture and revealing Himself. What we want to say, ‘Not everyone saw Christ, but those who saw told others and the Scriptures confirmed the message.’ There are certain things you need to believe and apply and you do not need to be particular about direct evidences as long as it goes in one accord with the word of God. If that is your practice then you will be blessed as Jesus said, **“Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”** But if you are a person who believe only after you see, like Thomas, then the blessing of God will not reach you because you are still waiting for evidences.

All the teaching that the Lord would give to His church is to solve problems. Christ death on the cross solved the problem of sin. Christ rose from the dead to solve the problem of death. Christ commissioned the church to preach His resurrection so salvation will flow to others. What we want to say that the church had reached certain teaching to face particular problems. The teaching was giving to the church using in certain occasion direct evidence and in other circumstances indirect evidences that that the Scripture declares and confirmed, and in this way we were led to sound way of life and sound teaching. Do not honour people talk and opinions and put aside scriptures, because if you do that you will not be led to the risen Lord, peace and progress but to fear, stagnation and death. Therefore there are certain things you do no need to believe from whoever you hear and apply in your life as long as it does not go along the Scriptures.

The resurrection of the Lord was something beyond belief to many of the disciples but indirect evidence (the empty tomb), direct evidence (Christ appeared to good number of His disciple) and the Scripture confirmed it. In the same way, many teaching that the church today adopts and lives, developed in same manner. Even certain teaching might not be acceptable to many, but ultimately the Scriptures confirmed it, therefore we embrace and apply.

5- Absence from being in the right company of believers: **“24 Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came.”** Other point that made Thomas unable to meet Christ at His first visit as other disciples, was his absent from among them when Christ came. Many who are absent from church meeting and bible study will not be able to hear God’s message that God ordained for them to hear and understand. In failing to do that they will fail to understand the circumstances of their lives and what God wants them to do and they way to live their lives for Him.

6- No humility and the Lack of the desire to know the truth: When the disciples declared to Thomas that Christ came to them, and witnessed to him all the evidences of Christ resurrection, he answered them this way, **“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.”** That not only shows stubbornness but lack of humility and the lack of desire to know the truth. Christ was merciful to Thomas and after one week the Lord came and passed through barriers and met Thomas, spoke to him and showed him with eye and touch witness the evidence of His resurrection. Now if the Lord would not return next week and meet Thomas then what will be the outcome of his life and the stubbornness that he is in? God is expecting from you humility, and from inside the desire to know the truth and to accept it. *Pray and ask God to reveal the truth further to you!*

7- When Christ is not the Lord over your life: **“28 Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”** When Christ is not Lord and the master over your life then you will not have that peace that surpasses all understanding. The written word of God should be the clear guide to your mission and your walk with God.

My Dear and Beloved: Stop doubting and believe! I pray that Christ will pass through locked doors, reach you, speak to you and show evidences to restore your faith. As Christ had rebuked Thomas and changed his life, the same shall happen to you. **“Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”** You suppose to live by faith and not by sight; faith that based not on people opinions and views but faith that is based on the word of God as you agree to pray.

My Prayer: *Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for my sins to give me eternal life. Lord I repent from doubts, stubbornness and pride. Lord I commit myself and my life into your loving hands and your truthful word. Lord I receive your peace and I am moving forward in my service unto you. “My Lord and my God!” Uphold me in your grace and let your blessing flow into my life. This is my prayer in Jesus name. Amen.*

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