

Jesus has the answers

Wil Horwood. 15 June 2014. Cambridge.

John 20:19-20

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!' After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

Jesus unlocks the doors of fear

- I remember being afraid behind locked doors
- Trish and I visited friends Isaacs in Dublin
- Some of the Dublin church visiting for evening meeting
- Bike chained outside
- Tried to warn off some kids looking at the bike
- They attacked the house, rushed the front door
- All the men crowded in the porch to stop them coming in
- Women went to back of house, in kitchen
- In the press by the door, Nick ended up on the street with the mob between him and the rest of us in the house
- None of us knew where he was
- The mob smashed the front window, kicked in the front door and had thrown a tree pot through the glass window
- We were now stuck behind the second door, a glass door, they trying to kick it in, women in kitchen crying
- Miraculously, the door withstood their kicks
- Eventually they left. The Police took an hour to arrive
- I remember my legs shook afterwards
- Another brother lived nearby, Nick had gone there
- We all walked there with duvets and stayed the night while the house was boarded up
- The walk there was intimidating
- The next night, staying in first house, no sleep, could hear kids outside, the boarded up windows would have been easy to break in
- Lay awake all night hearing every sound
- Next night. A mother and son arrived unannounced, IRA, wanted our help to catch the culprits for anti social behavior, secret trial and punishments for the kids and their families
- Next night, landlord requested we move out, threats the house would be burned down.

Fear does funny things:

- Physical impact – shivers – numbness – paralysis
- Emotional impact – locked away – fear of anybody you meet outside (when we walked to other house – old ladies chatting in front gardens and staring

Imagine how fearful the disciples were:

- Not just a few kids
- Seemed like the whole city had mocked Jesus
- Called for his crucifixion
- City leaders were responsible
- No police to rescue them
- Totally isolated and vulnerable
- Who can they trust

How amazing to see Jesus again.

He says the perfect words

- "Peace be with you"

We might not be afraid of personal safety, but what about?:

- Fear of humiliation
- Fear of embarrassment
- Fear of financial fragility

Which doors do we hide behind?

John 20:21-22

Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.' And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.

Jesus is alive:

- He provides reassurance and security
- He also clearly conveys their purpose
- He still expects from them, despite their fears
- He is sending them

John 21:1-14

Afterwards Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee. It happened this way: Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. 'I'm going out to fish,' Simon Peter told them, and they said, 'We'll go with you.' So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realise that it was Jesus. He called out to them, 'Friends, haven't you any fish?' 'No,' they answered. He said, 'Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.' When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is the Lord!' As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, 'It is the Lord,' he wrapped his outer garment round him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred metres. When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.

Jesus said to them, 'Bring some of the fish you have just caught.' So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, but even with so many the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, 'Come and have breakfast. 'None of the disciples dared ask him, 'Who are you?' They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

Jesus reminded his disciples of better times:

- The miraculous catch of fish when he first called them
- Also had been the time he told them they would be fishers of men
- Reminded them of how it started
- Of their first decision to follow him

Jesus also recognized:

- A relationship between building faith and building relationships
- Both linked to shared experiences
 - A shared victory
 - A reminder of previous times together
 - Jesus brought his own fish – already cooking
 - Fun before correction
 - Being restored gently
- All possible because Jesus is alive

Jesus' perfect plan with imperfect people

John 21:15-17

When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?' 'Yes, Lord,' he said, 'you know that I love you.' Jesus said, 'Feed my lambs.'

Again Jesus said, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' He answered, 'Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.' Jesus said, 'Take care of my sheep.'

The third time he said to him, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, 'Do you love me?' He said, 'Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.' Jesus said, 'Feed my sheep.'

Jesus asks Peter, "do you love me?" three times

- Peter seems to say yes each time
- But all isn't what it seems
- Two different words for love are used

*When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you **AGAPE** me more than these?' 'Yes, Lord,' he said, 'you know that I **PHILIA** you.' Jesus said, 'Feed my lambs.'*

Peter is not replying with the same word for love.

Agape:

- Spiritual selfless love
- Sacrificial
- Unconditional love
- Continuing to love even if there is no response or reward

Philia:

- Mental general love
- Friendship
- Depends on give and take

So actually, the conversation goes:

- Jesus asks: "Do you Agape me more than these others?"
- Peter replies: "Yes Lord, you know that I Philia you"
- Jesus asks: "Do you Agape me?"
- Peter replies: "Yes Lord, you know that I Philia you"

In effect:

- "Do you love me with a selfless, spiritual, sacrificial, unconditional love that will continue no matter what?"
- "I like you as a friend"
- "Do you love me with a selfless, spiritual, sacrificial, unconditional love that will continue no matter what?"
- "I like you as a friend"

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- Jesus ends up asking: "Do you like me as a friend?"
- "Yes, I like you as a friend"

Peter is unable to answer Jesus directly

- Jesus recognizes where Peter's faith is and accepts it
- Jesus changes his question

This is our alive Jesus

- He knows we are imperfect
- He still has a plan which we can do

Finally:

Matthew 28:16

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'

- Even here, some doubted
- Reassures me because I doubt at times
- Jesus still shared purpose to his doubting followers
- Even at the end, he could have been tempted to think,
 - "Will this work with these? Should I find different followers?"
- Jesus chooses to work with imperfect people like
- He still has a plan
- We have a part in that plan
- How exciting

Conclusion

Jesus has the answers

- He can unlock the doors of fear
- He has a perfect plan for imperfect people