

Running on “E” – John 20:19-29

When Jesus was arrested and eventually crucified on the cross, His followers fell apart. They scattered to the winds and were filled with devastation. I'm sure they were wondering why it happened the way it did and why then? After all, He had only been relevant for a short time. His followers gave everything up to follow him. For three years they listened to Him, watched Him, traveled with Him, and allowed Him to challenge all their norms. Jesus radically shifted them from rule followers to relationship focused believers. Yet when Jesus was arrested and crucified, most of them fled or went into hiding nearby. Some of them even denied ever knowing Him. Cowards! Wouldn't you say? Hold on now. In their defense, most Christians today would also react in the same manner. In the final days of His life and in the days during His death, the followers of Jesus were frightened, discouraged, defeated, confused, demoralized, and perhaps even depressed. In a word, their world had just crashed in on them and they were left with empty tanks. At this point, they were running on “E”.

Fortunately for some of the followers, for His closest, chosen disciples, His appearance some three days later, rejuvenated them and began the process of filling their tanks back up. That's where we'll look this morning. **Join me as I read John 20:19-29.**

I want you to consider the results of these two meetings. Those who were once cowards and running scared just received another promise of the coming Holy Spirit and have been commissioned to begin their work for the Kingdom. The words of Christ here serve as the precursor for the Great Commission and for the events found in Acts. What happens in that room and eight days later with Thomas forever changed them and it's the moment where their transformations truly began. Those who were once running on E, are now empowered. They leave the room with a new boldness, a new confidence, a daring spirit, afraid of nothing and no one. I pray you leave today in the same manner.

I'm not sure where you are in life, or what kind of week you may have had, what kind a month, or two months or years you may have had recently. Perhaps you too may be running on E this morning. You see, when I read this story, yes, I see all the cool interactions between Jesus and the disciples. Yes, I see His words for them. Yes, I see where doubting Thomas gets his nickname. But I also see similarities between us and the disciples as well. Many of us, in many ways, find ourselves feeling just like they did at this moment. It may not be this morning, and praise

God for that blessing, but everyone will agree that no one is immune to moments of fear, or doubt, or frustration, or weariness, or fatigue. Have you ever been just sick and tired of being sick and tired? Well, here's another beautiful thing I see in this story. I see another reason to put my hope in Jesus. I see another reason to celebrate the good news that is the Gospel of Jesus Christ! The same things Jesus did for the disciples, He'll do for you, if you'll let Him.

The truth is, Jesus knows we will get tired, weary, frustrated, confused, fearful. We need to know that He doesn't want us to remain that way. We need to be reminded about His promises, just like He reminded Thomas and the others in this moment. The disciples were scared to death, hiding in a room with the doors locked. Perhaps, second-guessing themselves and everything they believed. Perhaps asking, were we wrong? Was Jesus not who He claimed to be? Was He not really God? Were we led astray and fooled?

Look what Jesus does though. He passes through locked doors to greet them. Jesus does for them what He often does for us. He comes to them and meets them right where they are! During their moment of fear, self-doubt and questioning, Jesus shows up, and they didn't even recognize Him. You know why? They weren't expecting Him. You know, this sort of thing happens in our lives too. It's probably more common than we think. God shows up in your life and you don't even know it because you weren't expecting Him too. And that's the Jesus I know. The one who shows up in the messes of my circumstances and situations. Look... I know how it feels to feel like your world is a mess. To have no answers. To feel like the tank is empty. To be stressed because you're forty miles past the gas light coming on with no gas station in sight. There are times it can feel like God's a million miles away but know this: He's closer than you realize. He's here and He's near and He wants to be involved in your life. And He wants you to want Him to be involved in your life also!

Go back to our story because I want you to see what He can do for you. Three times, He says to them, "Peace be with you." Jesus was offering words of encouragement here. Again, HE had no intention to scold them. He was simply encouraging them. He was also attesting to His statement on the cross of "It is finished". One of the completed works of Christ on the cross, was peace between God and man. Belief in Jesus puts an end to the curse of sin and death. No longer will God be angered by those who repent and accept Jesus as their Savior and Lord! **Romans 5:1** says, *"Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have*

peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” I’m not sure many people think about it, or perhaps people are just unaware of it, but God stands at war with anyone who sins against Him and is rebellious to His moral laws. John the Baptist made this clear, as evidenced by his words in **John 3:36**: *“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.”* I don’t know about you, but I am glad there is peace between me and God because of Jesus. I’m glad He’s in my corner with me because I don’t want to experience God’s wrath.

Here's something else. Jesus didn't just show them his nail scarred hands and pierced side as proof for His presence or His resurrection. Thomas wasn't really filled with doubt as much as we like to blame him for. Instead, he wanted tangible evidence because He was wise and didn't want to put His faith in something that at this point and time was not commonly taught, much less believed. The idea of resurrection was new to them, and Thomas didn't want to appear gullible. Jesus knew this about Thomas and because it was a weakness for him, Jesus removed the weakness by providing all the evidence needed to support the craziness that was His resurrection. Jesus put the disciples at ease. He comforted them in their distress. His continued love for them motivated Him in this moment to express compassionate care for each of them. The same Jesus that stood in that room with those men, is the same Jesus ready and waiting to stand in the room with you too. Look at verse 29 again. This is important, so pay close attention. **Read John 20:29.** Thomas confessed his belief in the deity of Jesus because of his belief in the resurrected Jesus. What a powerful confession to make. Would you consider making the same confession today? To say that Jesus is alive is not just some cool slogan used for Easter. No! It's real! It's true! It's undeniable! And, if you confess that Jesus is alive, then you must also confess that He is real and His work on the cross and in the grave is real too. Would you consider making this confession today? If so, I want you to see what Jesus has to say about it. He says, “Blessed are those who have not seen yet have believed.” With Jesus comes life eternal. With Jesus comes many blessings. Just consider some of the ones seen today. Jesus loves you. He redeems you. He's a source of encouragement. Jesus will forgive you when many others will not. His presence is all the fuel you'll ever need. He's a peacemaker in your life. He's your hope when there seems to be no hope. Won't you choose Him today? Won't you trust Him today?