

There's a detail in John's Gospel this morning that's easy to skip right past. The disciples are hiding behind locked doors. And Jesus doesn't knock.

He just shows up. Right there, in the middle of a room full of people who had every reason to believe that locked doors could keep the world out. And the first thing he says isn't "Why did you run?" It's not "We need to talk about Thursday night." It's not even "I told you so," which, frankly, he had earned.

It's "Peace be with you."

He says it twice, actually. Which matters. Because the first time, they're just staring at him. Luke's version says they thought he was a ghost. So he shows them his hands and his side, and then he says it again. "Peace be with you." As if the first time was the announcement and the second time was the invitation.

And notice what comes with that peace. He shows them his wounds. The risen Christ doesn't arrive with a fresh start and a clean slate. He arrives carrying Friday. The nail marks are still there. Whatever resurrection is, it is not the erasure of what came before. It's the transformation of it. The wounds are real. They're just not the end of the story anymore.

This is the peace the world can't manufacture. The world's version of peace is the absence of conflict. Lock the door. Keep the trouble outside. But the peace Jesus speaks into that room doesn't depend on the door staying locked. It doesn't depend on circumstances improving. It's the peace of a God who has walked straight through the worst thing that can happen and come out the other side, still bearing the marks, still saying your name.

Peter gets this. Listen to him in Acts this morning. This is the same man who, seven weeks earlier, couldn't even admit to a servant girl that he knew Jesus. Now he's standing up in front of everyone and declaring that God raised Jesus up, having freed him from death, because it was

impossible for death to keep hold of him. *Impossible*. That's a strong word from a man who recently learned the hard way that courage isn't his strong suit. But Peter isn't speaking from his own confidence. He's speaking from the other side of having been found by someone he failed.

The Psalmist knew it too. "You will show me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy." Not the absence of difficulty. The fullness of joy. In the presence of the One who doesn't wait for you to unlock the door.

Our collect this morning asks something beautifully demanding of us. It asks that we, who have been reborn into the fellowship of Christ's Body, might "show forth in our lives what we profess by our faith." Show forth. Not just believe it. Not just say it on Sunday mornings. Live it so that people can see it. The peace Jesus gives isn't a private possession. It's a commission. "As the Father has sent me, so I send you." The breath he breathes on them is the same Spirit who drove creation out of chaos. And she is not interested in locked doors.

So let me tell you something I didn't mention last week. I didn't mention it because it was Holy Week, and Holy Week belongs to Jesus, not to me. But on April 1st of last year, I signed the letter of agreement to become your priest. Yes, April Fools' Day. I'll let you draw your own conclusions about the Holy Spirit's sense of humor.

And I need to be honest with you. I walked through these doors carrying my own version of that locked room. Every priest does. You hope it'll work. You pray your particular weirdness is compatible with their particular weirdness. You trust, in a white-knuckle kind of way, that the Spirit knows what she's doing, even when her timing suggests she might be joking.

She wasn't joking.

What I've watched you do this year is the collect come to life. You have shown forth in your lives what you profess by your faith. You've opened

doors to people arriving from parishes that closed, to neighbors who hadn't been in a church in years, to the strange, messy, beautiful work of actually becoming the Body of Christ together and not just talking about it. That isn't something I did. That was already happening. I just had the good sense, or the good luck, or the good grace, to walk through an open door.

Peter tells us this morning that we have been given "a living hope through the resurrection." Living. Not a hope preserved under glass. Not a hope that depends on everything going smoothly. A hope with nail marks in it. A hope that walks through locked doors and says, "Peace be with you."

That is what I have found here. And I am more grateful than I know how to say, which, if you've heard me try to speak off-the-cuff, you know is really saying something.

So here is your commission for the week. It's the same one that echoed in that locked room two thousand years ago: go be the unlocked door. For the neighbor who's barely holding it together. For the stranger who didn't think church was for people like them. For the friend who needs to hear that the worst thing is never the last thing.

Peace be with you. Not as the world gives. As the risen Christ gives: with wounds still showing, and a door standing wide open.

Amen.