

[Acts 3:12-19](#); [Psalm 4](#); [1 John 3:1-7](#); [Luke 24:36b-48](#)

Jesus appeared in that room among his frightened disciples. And he said, “*Shalom!*” which we have translated rather loosely as, “Peace be with you”, which is unfortunately an inadequate representation. *Shalom* means much more than “peace.” Or “peace” means much more than what we think it means. Since *shalom* means to convey that all is well with the world, all is just, all is fair, all is the way God means it to be and it ultimately more like a demand - “*What are you doing to make the world look more like God’s world?*” What are you doing to secure for God what empires, rulers, governments, multi-national corporations, markets, organized religion and the like try to annex for themselves? Of course the disciples are startled – this is the dead one speaking after-all. And terrified – because, holy moly, here he is! And he still has *shalom* on his mind. Always has, always will, always does. Why wouldn’t they be frightened by such impossible demands – well, aren’t we?

“*Here, look at the wounds – see my hands, see my feet*”, says Jesus, and “*Have you anything to eat?*”

Apparently, as it is in real life, so it is in the resurrection of the dead: We need something to eat, something to sustain us, something to nourish us, and we carry the scars of life!

So does Jesus want us to feed him? How should we respond to his simple yet direct request? The disciples offered some broiled fish. Jesus is as hungry post-resurrection as he was hungry before the resurrection. Jesus was vexed always with his contemporary religionists & this vexation made him hungry – hungry for freedom, *shalom* and justice for all people – not some people, not most people, not lots of people. All people. Had he not made it clear that the hungry were to be fed, the naked clothed the prisoner visited the sick made well, the stranger welcomed & the thirsty given something to drink? Had he not identified with all these people, including lepers, women, orphans, children, servants, gentiles and Jews?

Our church at times seems to be consumed by power struggles within and without; to be looking for the some clever scheme to attract more people; to be always creating dividing lines between correct and incorrect “belief”; to be distracted by just about anything but *Shalom*. Is it too difficult to see that this Jesus, who promises to be present in the bread and the wine, who promises that he is the stranger, he is the prisoner, he is the leper, he is the beggar on the street, he is the prostitute, sinner, the woman who is bleeding to death, the mother or father begging for their child’s life, and a tax collector; who endlessly teaches about our relationship to the land, the earth, in countless agricultural stories, parables and analogies, who challenges every sovereign temporal and religious power, and who is now back with us for all time, could be asking for something to eat?

“*Repentance,*” says Jesus, “*and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed...to all nations, all persons, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.*” Are we really witnesses to these things? These things Jesus is hungry for? What in the world are we prepared to offer him? What in the world are we willing to give to him? How shall our witness satisfy his hunger? Are we prepared to give him this *Shalom* he speaks of and died for? Or, are we still satisfied to just offer him a piece of broiled fish? Jesus is hungry, and he wants us to be hungry too.

Remember too, that Jesus’ resurrection body carried the scars of his crucifixion. The scars that made others whole, and brought life to those who had none. They were scars of rejection and pain, of being

misunderstood and misrepresented, and of being tortured and beaten and cruelly murdered. We all carry scars I am sure, and they don't evaporate any more than Jesus' did post-resurrection. Scars have their uses – they helped Thomas, and ours can be part of our own witness. I am sure that in this congregation there are physical, emotional and spiritual pains, angers and rejections that conspire to prevent us from responding to our God who at the very centre of our being. But is it possible that these wounds can transform to be our witness to *Shalom*?

Last week I shared a conversation with 2 elderly ladies from different countries, who compared notes about their lives – they had both been widowed, suffered depression, dealt with difficult children, and ridden the storms of parenthood. They both age related health issues, and it was clear that life had scarred them thoroughly. But then I realised as they started to compare their wrinkled faces that in fact I was looking at “twinkles” much more than “wrinkles”, because their faces were actually radiant and their eyes so warm and full of life. As Rumi (13th Century Sufi) said “*The wound is the place where the Light enters you!*”

Is it possible for us? That the Light can shine through our lives and witness? I read recently of a psychotherapist who observed that *the Bible has two messages for us – the first is that “I am with you” and the second is “grow up”*. On reflection, may I suggest that the second if “*grow old and make your scars work as witness*”!

Many Christians today tend to think of Jesus in almost entirely spiritual terms. Nevertheless, today we cannot help but see him in physical terms, risen before us in flesh and blood. Today we find Jesus coming to reveal that his body, as every human body, is a place where God exists and reveals all that is holy, and just as Jesus' body took on new life through God's power, so we too can come to see in our bodies the same possibilities for new life. We, ourselves, can be raised through the resurrection of Christ's body.

Today's resurrection story proves not only that Jesus rose from the dead, but also that his body could never again be taken away from his followers, could never again be taken away from the world. This is true because the Body of Christ is us. We (the Church) are Christ's hands and feet, arms and legs, eyes and mouth, and his cheque book!! We are everything Jesus is in the Gospel, for we are his body.

The disciples recognized him as the risen Lord when he ate with them. After they had recognized him, Jesus unlocked for them the truths of God. Jesus made it clear at the Last Supper that we would have a way of re-calling him to our presence and by eating from his body to become his body.

Shall we leave the last words to St. Augustine?

You are the Body of Christ. In you and through you the work of the incarnation must go forward. You are to be taken. You are to be blessed, broken, and distributed, that you may be the means of grace and the vehicles of eternal love.

Amen