



# “The Advantages of Assembling”

John 20:19-25

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***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. 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 ye the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."***

***Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"***

- **Question: What is the value Christians receive when assembling together?**



# We Experience God's Presence With Us

- **Matthew 18:20, “*For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am in the midst of them.*”** Jesus says that where His people meet in His name, His presence will be experienced
  - **Shortly after Jesus was resurrected, 10 of the disciples gathered together on the evening of the first day of the week, John 20:19**
  - **They were afraid and were on “lock-down” in a way, for fear of further repercussions from the Jewish leaders**
  - **Jesus, their leader, was already dead, they thought. Judas had hung himself, not being able to deal with his own betrayal.**
  - **So the disciples were all troubled and broken with the same issue: “*What is going to happen to ME?*”**
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# Then Jesus Shows Up!

- Verse 19 tells us that when they were gathered together, having locked all of the doors because of their own fears, Jesus came and stood among them (Jesus is immune to human barriers) Locked meeting doors don't stop Jesus, Rom. 8:35, "*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?*"
- *If God will give His own son up for you and me, what will He not do?*
- The first words He says to His disciples are the same words he said to the tumultuous sea storm in Mark chapter 4

***PEACE! BE STILL! (Calm Down)***

***(Some of You Have Heard Those Same Comforting Words at times in Your Life)***





# Observations

- **When you were about to undergo major surgery**
- **When abnormal lab test from your doctor has startled you**
- **When you were are about to receive an infusion of a chemotherapeutic agent to prolong your life**
- **When you send your child off to college, or the military, or to married life**

**Then Jesus Showed Up In Your Circumstances!**

- **Sometimes He calms the, “Sea of Your Circumstances”**
- **At other times He calms YOU in the “Sea of Your Circumstances”**





## Thomas Was Not Present or, “In Church” That Sunday, and Missed What the Other Disciples Received

- Thomas, no doubt, was hurt and brokenhearted like the other disciples, but chose not come to meet with his fellow disciples at their Sunday night meeting (self-isolated)
- Too much isolation is “not good” for a human being, Gen 2:18
- Had Thomas been there with the disciples, he would have experienced what Jesus meant for him to experience as well. What did He miss?

**Jesus’ presence and His personal encouragement**

**A renewing of his faith, Heb. 11:1, and a decrease in his anxiety**

- Jesus knew His problems like He knew the disciples’ problems and knows ours (stress, anxiety, nerves, insomnia, loss of appetite)
- Jesus came there to say in so many words, *“I’ve got you Thomas,” but Thomas wasn’t there to hear or see Him!*



So Jesus Comes to Their Next Gathering, Verse 26 (no personal evangelism to Thomas) He came where he expected Thomas to be

- Thomas wasn't missing this time, but he was still skeptical
- Jesus answered Thomas' skepticism exactly the way he desired. Thomas had said to the other disciples:

*“Unless I see the nail marks in His hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand in His side, I will not believe.”*  
*John 20:25*

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- The words, “Reach out and Touch,” were said by Jesus to Thomas long before the recording star, Diana Ross, attached those words to her famous song
  - Jesus asked Thomas to, *“Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”* John 20:27. Thomas inspected Jesus and cried:



***“My Lord and my God!”***



# Understand This:

## The Church is the Visible Manifestation of the Kingdom of God!

- There is a “Spiritual Dynamic” that occurs when God’s people get together expressing unrestrained affection for Him
- We come together to declare, as a group, the greatness of God in a world that wants to *Get Rid of God!*
- We come together and sing, making melody in our hearts, proclaiming the goodness of God in a world that mocks His supremacy and its followers
- Together we study, listen to, and internalize His principles, knowing that they are applicable to our lives; 2 Peter 1:3
- Together, on each Lord’s day, we remember the death and suffering of Jesus by partaking of symbols of His body and blood



***BUT...***





# Be Extremely Careful About the Ramifications of the “Virtualization of the Church”

- Remember that Jesus came to the earth “live and in person,” and not hidden away in a safe place in heaven
- Because He took risk for you and me, He paid the price for you and me
- I know that the internet has improved our conveniences, especially coming out of the Pandemic
- Streaming has become the “in-vogue” activity now
- Stream Meetings
- Stream Worship services, Bible classes, Weddings, Funerals

**Streaming Advantages: Convenience, Time, and Money**

**Streaming’s Huge Disadvantage: Lack of Personal Contact**









# What if Jesus Had Streamed From Heaven and Not Come in Person?

- What if Jesus' Death, Burial, and Resurrection were virtual?

No fuss, no bloody mess, no real nails, spear, or body,  
(1 Corinthians 15:50-says flesh and blood can't enter heaven)

## **But We Know His Effort Was Real (Isaiah 53). What About Our Efforts?**

- What happens is that now we can turn the church into our "virtual convenience store!"
  - We develop a "consumer mentality" for what WE want and what WE don't want (we worship with coffee cups or orange juice in hand and pancakes and sausage on our T.V. Trays)
  - We switch Jesus' principle around in Acts 20:35 and it becomes better to receive than to give
  - As one writer put it, we become, "educated above our level of obedience." Worship becomes, "ala carte" - pick what you want!
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# Observations

- Streaming an assembly may be the best that some of us can do (illnesses, whether acute or chronic for example, may jeopardize one's ability to gather and serve with the saints)
- But **NEVER** should it be used to conveniently not obey a command of the Lord when able to do so, Hebrews 10:25

*And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*





# The Plan of Salvation

<b>Hear the Gospel</b>	<b>Acts 15:7</b>
<b>Believe the Gospel</b>	<b>Acts 15:7</b>
<b>Repent of Sins</b>	<b>Acts 17:30</b>
<b>Confess Christ</b>	<b>Acts 8:37</b>
<b>Be Baptized</b>	<b>Acts 8:38</b>

