

## Comforting Joy

John 20:19-23

Thank you for joining us; we are glad to be here with you today to continue learning from the Gospel of John. We are Heralds of Hope, and our mission is to use media to make disciples of Jesus Christ to accomplish the great commission in our lifetime. Teaching through the Bible is one way we are working toward this goal of making disciples. This teaching is broadcast around the world via radio. And we are thankful to God for His people who share our goal of making disciples and support Heralds of Hope so we can continue sharing the Word of God with you.

If you have thoughts or suggestions for us, we would love to hear from you; just send an email to [mail@heraldsofhope.org](mailto:mail@heraldsofhope.org). It's encouraging to hear from people like you. Today's lesson is *Comforting Joy*, and you will find it in John 20, verses 19-23. Now let's give our attention to Pastor J Mark as he teaches us from this passage.

As I think back over the Bible account of God creating man, I am certain that God wants us to be joyful. If we go to the first book in the Bible, we find that when God created Adam, He placed him in a beautiful garden. Adam was provided with all that he needed. It makes me sure that God desires us to be joyful.

Sometimes, though, because of unfulfilled hopes, our joys may be dampened, and we're not as joyful as God really wants us to be. Then when those hopes are revived, joy is restored.

We are not much different from the disciples in Jesus' day. The disciples on the resurrection day had real reason to be full of joy because their hopes were revived. So we, too, may rejoice in the fact that Jesus is alive today! He conquered death and instilled joy in all believers because of this great fact.

**COMFORTING JOY** came to the disciples as reported in John 20:19-23.

*19 Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.*

*20 And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.*

*21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.*

*22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:*

*23 Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.*

Comforting joy was experienced in the hearts of the disciples of Jesus by several **ACTS** which Jesus did when He appeared to them after His resurrection.

The first Act was: **His Entrance.**

I want you to note carefully, in the Bible, it is stated that the disciples were gathered in a room and the doors were shut. There was no ready entrance. They were there because they were afraid. They feared what might happen to them because the people knew they were followers of Jesus.

So far as they knew, and so far as the people knew, Jesus was still dead. Excepting, of course, that Mary Magdalene had told them, "He is alive!" They felt threatened by their opponents. Then Jesus came into the room where doors were closed. The first thing He said to them was a quieting, comforting word, "Peace be unto you."

Here was the act of Jesus in coming into the room and speaking peace to the disciples. Yes, my friend, the presence of Jesus always brings joy to the believer. Sometimes He comes in unexpected ways into our lives. I can bear testimony to that.

The second Act was: **His Evidence.**

He didn't wait. He immediately showed them His hands and His side. He knew the disciples would need clear proof that He was, indeed, the same person who had been crucified. So He showed them the marks in His hands and in His side the scars that had been made by the nails and by the spear.

Look what happened when He showed them the evidence: "Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord." Comforting joy possessed their hearts when they saw Jesus and were sure that He was the same One whom they had last seen on the cross.

Now listen further to His words, "As my Father has sent me, even so I send you." I want you to catch this because the mission that Jesus began, which the Father had sent Him to begin, now He was transferring to His disciples by that statement, "Even so, I send you."

Comforting joy comes to us when we acknowledge the evidence that the same person who was crucified has risen from the dead and has also spoken to us by this word to the disciples.

The third Act was: **His Endowment.**

We read, “He breathed on them and said to them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit.” We know from the record that the Holy Spirit did not come until ten days after our Lord’s ascension to Glory. Therefore, I conclude that Jesus performed this act in anticipation of Pentecost. He prepared them for receiving the Holy Spirit at the proper time.

Then He went on to say, “Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.” This should never be understood to be an arbitrary act of the disciples because it is very clear in the Bible that the only way for forgiveness of sins is by the shed blood of Jesus Christ. It is only by that way that sins are forgiven. I am sure that Jesus did not overlook that when He made this statement to the disciples.

Comforting joy came to the disciples because they believed on Him. They were glad when they saw the Lord and He gave them this endowment of the Holy Spirit. All who believe on Jesus Christ receive the Holy Spirit.

Comforting joy can be yours, too, if you acknowledge His presence; accept His nail prints, the evidence of His resurrection; and receive His endowment of the Holy Spirit. Will you do so now?

We are thankful for the comforting joy we can have through God’s Spirit living in us, and we thank you, Brother J Mark, for sharing this teaching with us.

Did you hear verse 23? What did you think of it? At first, the verse sounds as if Jesus is telling the disciples that they can forgive sins or they can tell people their sins are not forgiven. This is what it sounds like, yet this does not hold true with the rest of Scripture.

This brings up an interesting question, what do you do when you read a verse, and if you take it for what it says, it seems like it is contradicting another scripture, and if it doesn’t directly contradict, what it seems to be saying sounds very unusual.

You know we all know what the verse says, it is written right there, and we can see it. The question is what does it mean? What did Jesus mean when He said, “*Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them.*” And in other passages, it’s easy to know what it says; the big question is, what does it mean? And this is a sobering question because how you interpret the Bible will affect the way you live, and how we live determines our destiny.

So, it matters, and we want to get it right. Here are three things to help you get it right. To get it right, we need the Bible. The Bible is the best place to turn if you don’t understand the Bible. Compare it

with other passages; if it is in the Gospels, look in each of them to get more perspective. Charles Spurgeon said, "The Word of God is like a lion. You don't have to defend a lion. All you have to do is let the lion loose, and the lion will defend itself." When the Bible seems confusing, use the Bible to clarify.

Secondly, to get it right, listen to God's people. This can be people you know, or it can be through books or studying online. It is very likely someone else has had the same questions you have. So, look at what other Christians have taught. And God has given us Christian brothers and sisters so we can help each other, so when you have questions, discuss it with others who know you.

Lastly, stay humble if you ever get to the point where you think you have it all figured out. That is a good sign you don't, and it's a sure sign that you are not being humble. With humility comes the recognition that I have a lot to learn, and what I believe now may not be just perfect. All of us are on a journey, becoming more like Jesus; none of us are there yet. Just admit it and be willing to grow.

There you have it, three things to help answer your questions and get your Biblical interpretation right. Wait, you say, so what did Jesus mean in verse 23? Great question, we are out of time for today, but you can use the Bible and learn from other Christians to find out. While you are at it, stay humble, God will guide you, and you can understand this verse more than you ever have, but you can always learn more. The Bible is like that; it's not an ordinary Book. Blessings as you study and experience the joy of learning from God's Word.

Thank you, Pastor J Mark, for this teaching from God's Word, and thank you for joining us. It is a privilege for us to study God's Word and learn from it. Now take what we've heard and put it into practice. The teaching and instruction in the Bible is for us, and it is meant to be lived.

Don't be like the man in James 1 who sees himself in a mirror then goes away and forgets what he looks like; instead, be like the man in v 25 who looks intently into the Word and is a doer of the work. God says, "that man will be Blessed in what he does."

And we bless you as you follow Jesus and share Him with those around you. If you have any questions or if you would like today's teaching, just contact us and ask for it by title or tell us the passage. We also have a study guide available designed to help you learn more from each lesson; it is called the Hope Herald. Please let us know if you are interested, and we would be happy to give you one.

Here are a few ways you can reach us. The quickest and easiest way is through email. Our email is [mail@heraldsofhope.org](mailto:mail@heraldsofhope.org). If you don't have email, you could send us a letter, send it to Hope for Today, Box 3, Breezewood, Pennsylvania 15533. Another way you can contact us is through our website. Our website is [Heraldsofhope.org](http://Heraldsofhope.org). Please look on our website for this teaching and other similar teaching.

There you will also find other resources available from Heralds of Hope. Again, the website is [heraldsofhope.org](http://heraldsofhope.org)

We thank you again for joining us for today's program. I encourage you to join us again next week as Pastor J. Mark continues teaching from the Gospel of John. We look forward to being with you then and will leave you with this blessing from Number 6. The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace.