

“Peace”
Christ’s Show and Tell Gift

One of my favorite things about elementary school was “show and tell.” I loved it when I could bring something in to “show and tell” my friends and classmates. As you can probably remember from your own show and tell days, there was always a little bit of *unspoken competition* with the classmates. Who had the *coolest* thing to show and tell this week? The newest Hot Wheel or Transformer or anything to do with the “Dukes of Hazzard” was sure to bring about the envious “oohs and aahs” of the rest of the class. God have mercy on you if you forgot to bring something to show and tell. Nobody is interested in your eraser or your lunch box! Everyone else has one of those too. If you did forget to bring something for show and tell the best thing you could do was lay low and hope that nobody else noticed how un-cool you were that week. I remember one time when I was in second grade I decided that I was not going to be outdone that week. I was going to have the show and tell item that no one would ever forget. So what did I bring to share with the group? *It’s not nearly as bad as you think!* I brought, with the help of my mom, my brand-new baby sister for show and tell. She wasn’t much to play with at the time, considering the fact that she was only a week old or so, but she still scored me the *top spot* for the week. In fact, no one else topped me the rest of the year (probably because no one else’s parents had any babies that year).

Now, why share this with you? What does show and tell have to do with our meditation for today? As we look to the Gospel lesson this morning we can see Christ having a little “show and tell” with His disciples on that first Easter Sunday. But...that brings up a good point. Show and tell, while certainly understood in terms of sharing, is not the same sort of sharing as the giving of a gift. In show and tell in school we shared our special something with the class, but we didn’t share in the sense that everyone received the same exact thing as us. *Our gift to the class was, basically, the gift of envy.* “Look at what I have and you don’t.” Our show and tell item was special and unique. It was ours. No one else had one. This is why we shared. This is why we competed.

Now, at first glance, this same sort of reality kind of fits with Christ, doesn’t it? After all, what exactly is Christ showing and telling? *His wounds.* Those are pretty *unique and specific*, aren’t they? No one else in that room had nail holes in their hands and feet or a spear hole in their side. Truth be told: This is a good thing. Our salvation is grounded in the fact that Christ Jesus took our place so that we would never have to suffer the wrath and punishment of God. That’s the “show” part. Then there’s Christ’s “tell” part—the proclamation of “peace.” Well,

that makes sense too, right? This is Jesus. This is Almighty God Himself. He's was dead but now He's alive. He has peace with His God and Father. ***But...what about us? Do we have peace like Jesus?***

I guess that depends in how you understand the term. Peace, as we know it, is often nothing more than a ***vague concept; a good idea.*** Peace is often understood simply in terms of ***“the spirit of getting along.”*** Who doesn't want that? But...take a good honest look in the mirror of your life. ***We don't have that sort of peace in our lives, do we?*** We have pains and sorrows and worries and struggles. We can all name people with whom we have **conflict, not peace.** When Christ appears before the disciples in that locked room, the very first word to them is, ***“Peace.”*** Then He shows them the wounds of the crucifixion in His hands and His side, and states again, ***“Peace.”*** Is Jesus simply showing and telling to the disciples things that are only specific and unique to Him? Maybe you never thought of it in such a way, but here in these simple words and actions, the risen and victorious Christ Jesus is not only showing and telling, but actually **giving** to His frightened disciples the ***eternal gift of God's peace.***

Folks: ***What does it mean when we talk about the “peace of Christ?”*** You have to admit: It comes up a lot throughout the service. ***Is this just a churchly, sanctified way of getting something for nothing?*** You know...you come to church, you volunteer, you put your money in the plate and ***in return...*** God's peace be with you. ***“God's peace is with me...okay...that's great and all, but let's face it—that and a dollar will only get you a cup of coffee nowadays.”*** ***“Hey, what did you get out of going to church today? I received God's peace! Really? What does that look like? How's that working for you? As near as I can tell, you were duped. You gave of your time, talent, and treasure, and in return you get God's peace.”*** I have to admit: When it's put this way, God's peace certainly has a ***cheap, empty feel*** to it. ***“Instead of getting you a gift, I made a donation in your name to this charity.”*** Gee, thanks. You shouldn't have.

My friends: I want you to think about what the peace of Christ really is. I want you to think about what the peace of Christ really means for you and your salvation. Maybe you don't think it's such a big deal that ***Jesus' first word*** to His disciples after His resurrection was **“peace,”** but it was. It was a big deal for them, and it's still a big deal for us. If you examine your text, you find that Christ's proclamation of peace isn't just a ***“holy howdy”*** like you might see at the beginning of some worship services nowadays, where everyone goes around and catches up with friends and relatives to say “good morning,” but no one ever bothers to take that time to seek out the one ***who has something against them in an attempt to reconcile and make peace.*** No one ever bothers to take that time to show forth Christ by **forgiving as they have been so richly forgiven.** Make no mistakes: Christ's peace is not a simple greeting; it's a pronouncement; it's a

demonstration; it's living proof that what He did on Good Friday on His bloody cross was complete. ***It is finished!***

Jesus' declaration of peace was very much like a "***show and tell***" in which ***everyone receives the same gift***. His declaration of peace necessarily included the "show and tell" of the wounds He suffered for all mankind while laying down His life on the cross. He told them—***He proved to them and assured them***—of God's peace with them, the proof being in the very wounds He bore on His body.

In this way, Christ's pronouncement of peace is also an **absolution**. If you remember, the last time these guys had seen Jesus was as they were fleeing for their lives, ***running away and deserting Him***. Despite all their sinful failures; all their damnable errors, ***Jesus was showing them and telling them that all was forgiven***. No hard feelings. No letting it go for now, but being sure to file it away for later so He could hold it over their heads or throw it back in their faces when the time was right. ***That's how we act. Thankfully, that's not how our unconditionally loving Lord and Savior acts.*** Jesus told these men that all was peaceful with their heavenly Father, and He **showed them exactly how that peace came about—the wounds He received in His suffering and death**. Then He told them ***again exactly*** what those wounds meant for them and mean for all mankind—**peace; God's eternal peace**. Recognized in this light, you get the feeling that Jesus really wanted to make this core salvation truth ***crystal clear***. He didn't want there to be any doubt whatsoever about the standing between them and their heavenly Father.

Folks: Nothing has changed! Christ Jesus still comes to us showing and telling this same peace—our eternal peace. ***If only people would stop being so stubborn and simply believe what Christ Himself shows us and tells us!*** He brings to us His Word, His Baptism, His Body and Blood, pronouncing—***declaring***—that our heavenly Father is completely at peace with us because of Christ's all-redeeming death and resurrection. ***His pronouncement of peace is still divine absolution for our souls***. Just look at it through the lens of Holy Communion. Every time you take communion, you are receiving the very body and blood of Christ Jesus—***the very same body and blood that was put to death and raised victorious for you***. Every time you take communion, you are receiving Christ's sure and certain "***show and tell***" ***promise*** that your heavenly Father is at peace with you because of Christ alone. Your sins are completely covered over in His blood and remembered no more. This is precisely why you ***always*** hear after the consecration and after receiving the consecrated elements, "***Depart in peace.***" **It's not a suggestion. It's not a nice, godly-sounding way to transition to the next part of the liturgy. It's faithful proclamation of Gospel truth.** Christ Jesus died and rose again for you. Your sins are remembered no more. You are completely covered over in Christ's righteousness. That means peace—now and forever.

And that brings up one final point: ***This peace should mean something.*** This is where our gift-giving show and tell comes into play, and not just on a Sunday morning here at church, ***but all the time.*** Our lives are to show forth and proclaim the forgiveness and peace and love that is found ***only*** in Christ Jesus, the crucified and resurrected Son of God. Our words, thoughts, and deeds are to ***show forth and proclaim and point*** to the life-giving wounds of Christ and His peace; peace which He freely shares with the whole world. “*God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son to die for it....*” In a very real way, the show and tell of Christ is our show and tell. The gifts of Christ’s peace and love and mercy ***are our gifts of peace and love and mercy.*** We forgive ***because*** we’ve been forgiven. We love ***because*** we’ve been so unconditionally loved. We show and tell and bring the gift of the peace of Christ, not to be saved, ***but out of the joy and peace of being saved by Christ alone.***

And may this true peace, which surpasses all human understanding ***and is recognized and understood and shared only in saving faith,*** be and remain with you always.

AMEN