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Peace in the Wounds of Christ

The most important fact of life is not simply that something exists, but that the something that exists is characterized by rationality. That it is governed by something nonmaterial, nonsensory and non-provable — the conviction of right and wrong.

Man has a sense of morality, and he's never entirely at rest when he's doing what he knows to be wrong. This conviction is the main distinction between man and animal.

Don't ever let anyone tell you that Christianity and religion are irrelevant. The most significant fact in your existence and mine is that old-fashioned concept called "sin." Human life is happy or unhappy, fruitful or unfruitful, significant or insignificant, because of its relationship not to things, but to this distinctive — are we doing what we know to be right? There's nothing in this world that deals with sin effectively except the gospel.

What makes life matter is friendship, love, fellowship, honesty, purity, truthfulness. You can't cut them up, parcel them up, and send them through the mail. They are all non-tangibles. But these are the things that make life significant. Your present existence is characterized by joy or sorrow according to your love relationships with your Creator, your brother, sister, wife, husband, father, mother, children, the people you work with. This is the most significant thing about existence.

The most terrible and dreadful fact of the universe is the fact of sin. It is the root of all sorrow and the cause of all trouble. It has reversed man's nature. It's robbed him of nobility, brought him down to the dust. It's made him a devil. Sin—it's like a tornado on the loose, like a volcano gone wild. It's like a

streak of lightning flashing toward the earth, a madman on the prowl.

Because of this one thing, sin, every life's cup has been made bitter. Because of sin, the light of every day is darkened to some extent. Because of sin, every stream is polluted, every wind that blows is tainted, every prospect is marred, every memory has a sting in it, every roadway of life is filled with pitfalls. It is the cause of all sorrow and pain, all anguish. This devastating cancer that eats at man, this tremendous scourge of evil which is trying to wipe us all out is the reality of life with which the gospel alone deals.

So, we've tried to set out the problem, but what about the solution. Please notice Luke 24:36-40: Here we are brought before a group of terrified men and women who are visited by a ghost (or so they thought). "While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, 'Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself!...' When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet."

Jesus stood before them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he showed them his hands and side. Why was it that they didn't have peace to start with? Why were they so troubled? Because, like you and me, they had a wrong view of reality. They had some of it straight. They knew they were guilty, they had forsaken Christ. They had run away from him. They had that right. They knew they were surrounded by a thousand enemies — the Jews were out for their scalps. They knew that the grave and the

judgment bar were coming. And they were right when they felt unprepared. But they had a deficient view of reality because they were wrong when they thought that Jesus was dead. And they were wrong when they thought that God was against them.

Now we find the remedy. Jesus appears before them and says, "Peace be with you," and he shows them his hands and side. Please note what this means. His first word, "Peace," reminds us of the many "fear nots" of the gospel. At the birth of Jesus, the angels come to the shepherds and say, "Fear not, we bring you good tidings of great joy that will be to all people." When the disciples are on the sea in the storm, Jesus appears and says, "Fear not." When the stone is rolled away from the tomb, the angel's words are, "Fear not, he is not here for he is risen." There are three hundred and sixty-five "fear nots" in Holy Writ, one for every day of the year. *Fear not*. When he says, "Peace," he's saying the same thing.

Please notice the grounds on which Jesus can say to these guilty men and women, like you and me, "Peace be unto you." The answer is, "He showed them his hands and his feet." In the wounds of Jesus Christ and there only can peace be found. In the awareness that all our sins have been paid for — in the assurance that all guilt has been wiped out for those who believe. Because their Representative has endured all that the broken law calls for. That's the gospel! "Peace be unto you," and "He showed them his hands and his feet." There is only one place of peace, and that's in the wounds of Jesus. There is no other place.

— Desmond Ford