

APRIL 7, 2024

# "Did Easter Matter?"

Scripture: John 20:19-23 RSV



## AUTHOR

John, one of the original 12 disciples of Jesus, is the author. A fisherman by trade, he was the brother of James and the son of Zebedee. John wrote his gospel around AD 85-90 to new Christians and non-Christians who were searching. His purpose in writing was to prove that Jesus is the Son of God and that all who believe in Him will have eternal life. Jesus' love is a main theme in John's gospel. John also wrote John 1,2 & 3 and Revelation.

## CONTEXT

When our scripture passage opens, it is the evening of the day that Mary Magdalene discovered the empty tomb, saw Jesus resurrected from the dead, and told the disciples that she has seen the Lord. The disciples had been meeting behind closed doors. They were hiding, fearful, and anxious.

## ENCOURAGEMENT

Storms may be all around us, but in the midst of whatever we are going through, Jesus is with us and offers us the peace that passes all understanding.

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do you think the emotional state of the disciples is at this point? Why were they hiding?
2. How did Jesus enter the room?
3. Jesus' words, "Peace be with you" (Shalom) was a common greeting, but took on a deeper and fuller meaning here. What do you glean about the peace Jesus offers in the following scriptures? Read John 14:27, John 16:33, Romans 5:1, and Philippians 4:7.
4. Have you ever experienced peace in the midst of a difficult time? What made the difference?
5. What was the disciples' initial reaction when they saw Jesus? Read Luke 24:37-43. Why do you think Jesus showed them his hands and his side?
6. What is happening in verse 21?
7. What were the disciples commissioned to do? Read Matthew 28:19-20.
8. To carry out their work, what did the disciples need? See Genesis 2:7, John 20:22 and Acts 2:4.
9. What does verse 23 mean to you? Only God can forgive sins but the disciples were given the privilege of telling new believers their sins were forgiven.
10. How do you think Jesus' appearance impacted the disciples' outlook going forward?