

Sermon: The Generosity of God  
2 Easter, Year A  
John 20:19-31

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In John's gospel passage for today it is still Easter day! It is evening and the disciples are locked in their house. (Sounds familiar?) They've locked themselves in because they are afraid they will come to a similar fate as Jesus, that the religious leaders will come after them as followers of Jesus, and possibly kill them. They don't yet know that Jesus is alive, that he has been raised from the dead. Now, if they'd only believed the *women*... No doubt they are disappointed, grief stricken, worried about their future.

And somehow Jesus appears to them. Even through a locked door. Somehow, some way Jesus is there with them, saying "Peace be with you." And he shows them his hands and his side. The disciples must be shocked. They've been through an emotional roller coaster, no doubt. Their ideas about Jesus have been upended. Their ideas of a Messiah, one who would be a political and military leader liberating them from the oppression of Rome have been squashed. This Messiah suffered and was crucified, and is suddenly appearing to them.

Theologian Verna Dozier said that *our ideas about God are not God*. I'd say the disciples would agree with her! God is ever surprising us. Even though the disciples abandoned Jesus in his hour of need, the generosity of Jesus overwhelmed them. A locked door would not keep Jesus away from them. Their faithlessness would not block God's generosity. This Messiah was way more than they expected; he was alive, he forgave them and was patient with them as they wavered in their loyalty and understanding.

Today, like those disciples, most of us find ourselves in locked rooms or houses. At the least we are disappointed that our plans have been upended, that our calendars have been disrupted and at worst, we are seriously ill or are deeply grieving. And we're worried about our future. We are frustrated that we can't be together in church. We can't be with our elderly parents or our infant grandchildren. Working from home has its challenges. We're worried about the economy which some have suggested may get as bad as during the Great Depression. Things are not going as we planned. It feels as though we are in some Stephen King novel!

But we have been given the same gift as the disciples who were locked in their room, the gift of the Holy Spirit. And that gift comes from a God whose generosity will not be blocked. With God's generous spirit, comes a spirit of forgiveness and patience. I wonder if we can pray for those same gifts. Can we be generous with one another? Financially, if we have the will to share? Can we be forgiving? Can we be patient?

Queen Elizabeth recently addressed her subjects and said she hoped that one day they'd look back and be proud of how they responded to the pandemic. Will we be able to look back and say, God was generous with me? And through the gift of the Holy Spirit I was able to be generous and forgiving and patient?

God has given us a way forward. Like the disciples in that locked room, we have only to welcome God's breath into our lives, to receive that gift of the Holy Spirit. God is overwhelmingly generous with us, lavishing his love that has no boundaries upon us, that no locked door can keep out. May we emulate that same amazing generosity!  
Amen.