

April 18, 2004
Easter 2

"Security in the Nail-Scarred Hands"

REVELATION 1:4-7

John, To the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, ⁵ and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, ⁶ and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father-- to him be glory and power forever and ever! Amen. ⁷ Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen.

I am holding in my hands a set of keys that provide security for the doors on my car, the doors in my house and the doors in this church. Before you fall asleep at night you check the doors in your home to make sure that you are safe and secure from someone entering the house and harming you. For added security, some of you even have dogs in your house or in your yard. At the airport you have to go through an intensive security check before you board the airplane and even though it is a hassle you are happy it is there. When you filled out your taxes you were amazed at how much was taken out of your paychecks for Social Security. You hope this will help you out when it comes time to retire. In our government we now have a new department called "The Department of Homeland Security."

This morning we want to talk to you about a very special security or peace that you have in the nail-scarred hands of Jesus. The night of his resurrection Jesus appeared to his disciples who were locked behind closed doors and said, "Shalom Lechem" or "Peace to You." Jesus offered them a security and a peace that this world cannot give.

We just read to you from the Revelation to John about Jesus coming in clouds of glory and every eye seeing him, even those who pierced him. How can you be sure you are safe when Jesus comes back? Your safety is found in the nail-scarred hands of Jesus. As you look these wounds you don't have to fear the past, the present or the future. Let's use these words from the first chapter of the revelation to help us see the "**Security in the Nail-Scarred Hands of Jesus.**"

1) You are safe from past sin

As we look at the hands of Jesus this morning we realize that in those wounds we the punishment for our sin. Jesus is able to protect us by the wounds in his hands because of who he is. The words from our text speak about Jesus as being true God, equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Notice what is said of the Father. "Grace and peace to you from him who was, and who is, and who is to come." The heavenly Father is the one who was, and who is, and who is to come. In the Old Testament the true God reveals himself as the Lord, Jehovah God. He spoke to Moses and said, "I am that I am." When Jesus spoke to

people about himself, he said such things as, "Before Abraham was, I am." He often used the words, "I am" to say something special about himself. What is said of God the Father in these words also apply to Jesus. That is why Jesus made the claim for himself, "I am the Father are one."

Thomas was not with the disciples the night that Jesus appeared. One week later Jesus appeared to Thomas and said, "Put your finger here, see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side." Thomas then responded with the words, "My Lord and God." He believed the person standing in front of him with the wounds in his hands and side was his Lord and God from all eternity.

Jesus is further described with these words, "And from Jesus, who is the faithful witness, the first born from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth." Jesus is the most reliable witness to his heavenly Father because he was in the bosom of the Father from all eternity. He is the firstborn from the dead. He is the only begotten Son. He is able to say to people, "Because I live you shall live also." He is the ruler of the kings of the earth. As the Revelation proclaims so clearly, "King of kings and Lord of lords and he shall reign forever and ever."

Because Jesus is Lord and God as Thomas said, and the words of the Revelation confirm, he is able to take the payment he made for sin and apply it to your life and mine. It says, "To him who loves us and frees us from our sins by his blood." We love our freedom in this land, the freedom to worship, to walk the streets at night, to make decisions and even join in governing our land. Because of Jesus you enjoy the ultimate peace and freedom. You know that the sin you find present in every facet of your life will not come back to haunt you on judgment day and be held against you. As you look at the wounds in the hands of Jesus you see the red marks as the red ink that marks your huge debt "Paid in full."

Sin is like the powerful blast of a terrorist bomb. It blows into zillions of little pieces the righteousness you need to stand before a perfect and holy God and makes you unacceptable to God. Romans 3 says "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." There is no way you can reconstruct yourself and make yourself worthy. There is no peace for the wicked, only eternal death and punishment. Into this helpless and hopeless situation Jesus comes with his nail-scarred hands and says, "Peace to you." With that peace of knowing the past is forgiven, comes the power to say to know to sin and life a new life.

2) Safe from present uncertainties

In the nail-scarred hands of Jesus you know that your present situation is not a question mark. The words from Revelation make that clear to us, "He has made us to be a kingdom of priests to serve his God and Father." Jesus has given you a job that is secure every day of your life. You are a kingdom of priests to serve his heavenly Father. You have this 24/7, whether you are a child in first grade or quickly approaching the age of 100.

The Old Testament priests had the job of offering sacrifices to the Lord in the temple. They held up the bodies of sheep and goats, sacrificed them, and sprinkled their blood on

the altar. That pictured the blood of Jesus that would be shed for us. Now that Jesus has risen from the dead, every Christian becomes a priest before God. 1 Peter says, "You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belong to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."

Our job is carry about in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our job is to be like John the Baptist and point people to Jesus with the words, "Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." Our job is to take people by the hand and show them the wounds we have seen in the hands of Jesus. The night of the resurrection Jesus told his disciples, "If you forgive anyone their sins they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." We have a job to tell people they are hopelessly lost without Jesus, and that in Jesus they have hope. That job has security. In Luke 24 Jesus told his disciples of every age, "You are witnesses of these things." The King of kings and Lord of lords has chosen your feet and my feet to bring the gospel of peace to people. That job will never be taken from us.

3) Safe for the future

The sin of the past has been forgiven. The present is always safe for we live and work for the King of kings and Lord of lords. The future is also safe, when Christ comes in glory. "Look, he is coming with the clouds, and everyone will see him, even those who pierced him." On judgment day there will be a resurrection of the just and the unjust. The bodies of all will be raised to life again. The Roman soldiers who nailed Jesus to the cross will be raised to life, and so will all who refused to believe in Jesus and despised those nail marks in his loving hands and thought this was all a bunch of foolishness and nonsense. It will be an awful day for those who do not believe. Revelation 6 says, "They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb." For you my dear Christian this will be a day of great joy as you see Jesus face to face for the first time in your life. Jesus said of that day, "When that hour comes, lift up your heads for your redemption is drawing near."

This past week a young lady and her mom were driving down the freeway and they pulled over to the shoulder with a flat tire. A careless driver slammed into them at 70 miles per hour and killed the young lady as she was sitting in the car with her mom, waiting for help. We don't know when our last hour will come or when judgment day will suddenly be upon us. What a blessing it is to see our pardon, our peace and forgiveness in Jesus "who freed us from our sins by his blood." What a blessing to life each day, 24/7 serving him in his kingdom. What a blessing to wake up each morning and pray, "Even so come Lord Jesus, come quickly."

Longago a mansoughttheperfectpictureofpeace. Notfindingonethatsatisfied, heannounced a contest to produce this masterpiece. The challenge stirred the imagination of artists everywhere, andpaintingsarrivedfromfarandwide. Finallythegreatdayofrevelationarrived. Thejudgesuncoveredonepeacefulsceneafteranother, whiletheviewersclappedandcheered.

The tensions grew. Only two pictures remained veiled. As a judge pulled the cover from one, a hush fell over the crowd. A mirror-smooth lake reflected lacy, green birches under the soft blush of the evening sky. Along the grassy shore, a flock of sheep grazed undisturbed. Surely this was the winner.

The man with the vision uncovered the second painting himself, and the crowd gasped in surprise. Could this be peace? A tumultuous waterfall cascaded down a rocky precipice; the crowd could almost feel its cold, penetrating spray. Stormy-gray clouds threatened to explode with lightning, wind and rain. In the midst of the thundering noises and bitter chill, a spindly tree clung to the rocks at the edge of the falls. One of its branches reached out in front of the torrential waters as if foolishly seeking to experience its full power. A little bird had built a nest in the elbow of that branch. Content and undisturbed in her stormy surroundings, she rested on her eggs. With her eyes closed and her wings ready to cover her little ones, she manifested peace that transcends all earthly turmoil.