

KEY TEXT

Genesis 2: 7 (NKJV) – And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

John 20:19-23 (NKJV) – Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, “Peace be with you.” When he had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” And when he had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

INTRODUCTION

1. COVID 19 and Breathlessness

2. Vivid picture of breathlessness



Title:

'THE BREATH OF LIFE'

Outline:

- The breath of God in **Genesis 2:7**
- The breath of God in **John 20:19-23**
- The reason the breath of God doesn't come to us
- The way out when the breath of God doesn't come to us

MAIN POINT

(1) THE BREATH OF GOD IN GENESIS 2:7

Genesis 2: 7 (NKJV) – And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

The supreme Creator of heaven and earth did two things in creating man.

- He formed him from the very dust of the ground**
- He breathed His own breath into the nostrils of ADAM.**

3 significant facts about man's creation:

1. - GOD ALONE CREATED MAN

The word "Formed" = *yatsar (heb)* ="to mold, shape, or form."

- **POTTER** who has the intelligence and the power to form his creation

- God is the **MASTER POTTER** who had the image of man within His mind and who possessed the power and the intelligence to **bring that image to life.**
- God has both the **OMNISCIENCE** (all-knowledge) and the **OMNIPOTENCE** (all power) to do exactly what He wanted.

2. - GOD BREATHED HIS OWN BREATH OF LIFE INTO MAN

Man is more than "dust" or physical substance.

Man has a spirit.

#1 - The tripartite Being of a man



*1 Thessalonians
5 : 23*

Adam's body had just been formed by God from the dust of the earth – **A LIFELESS HUMAN BODY lying on the ground.**

Then God leaned over and **"BREATHED" His **"OWN BREATH OF LIFE"** into the man's nostrils.**

God is the Source of life and He directly placed life within man.

This breath of life is seen again in **John 20:22 as Jesus imparts **NEW LIFE** to His disciples.**

3. - GOD'S BREATH CAUSED MAN TO BECOME A LIVING SOUL

The word "soul" in Hebrew is *nephesh* which means "an animated, breathing, conscious and living being."

Man did not become a living soul until God breathed life into him.

As a physical, animate, rational and spiritual being, man is unique among all living things upon the earth.

So, what is the breath of God?

It is the life and power of God, given to man to animate him.

BREATH OF GOD

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BREATH OF LIFE

The Hebrew word for “spirit” is *ruach*, which means “wind, breath, air, spirit.”

The life of God lives on and on; the immaterial part of man was designed to live eternally.

Adam became a living soul after God breath His own breath into his nostrils.

Because of this, Adam had free access to God the Father. He could commune with God and he could be in the presence of God in the Garden of Eden.

But after the fall of Adam and Eve, God banished both of them from the Garden of Eve.

Both of them still had the soul and body but after they sinned, the spirit man inside them died and this caused them the inability to commune with God or even to be in the same place as God.

For centuries, human lived as **spiritual zombies, walking around in their body with their **soul** which is will, emotions and intellect alive but with a **dead spirit**.**

In the ancient past like the Old Testament, God used animal sacrifices as a provisional way for man to atone for their sins and to draw near to him.

But 2000 years ago in the New Testament, God sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ to be the **Ultimate Lamb of God to die in our place, so that this barrier between God and us can be atoned by the blood of Jesus to open a way for us to be at peace with God and to experience His presence again.**

When anyone believes in this substitutionary death of Christ for us on the cross and receive Him as his personal savior and Lord, Jesus will send His Holy Spirit, the third Godhead in the trinity into our dead spirit and make it alive again.

Theologically, this act is called **REGENERATION – to be made alive again in our spirit man.**

Ephesians 2:1-2 – And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience...”

Colossians 2:13 – You were dead because of your sins and because of your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins.

Christ was perfect and yet He partook all our trespasses, sins, and disobedience.

The PERFECT IN NATURE became the SINFUL IN NATURE on the cross.

Sinful nature has to be circumcised or cut away.

And so, Christ had His breath cut away in death so that today whenever anyone accept this substitutionary and atoning death of Jesus for him, He can breathe into your nostril the breath of life through the Holy Spirit so that your dead spirit can be regenerated, another word for "born again".

"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." (John 3:5)

(2). THE BREATH OF GOD IN JOHN 20:19-23

John 20:19-23 – Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, “Peace be with you.” When he had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” And when he had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

The disciples shut themselves in a room.

They were adrift, confused and afraid.

They had heard some strange stories from Mary about her seeing Jesus at dawn at the tomb.

Ever since the disciples saw Jesus being taken away, placed on trial, scourged, nailed, hung and buried, they were **TRAUMATIZED and were filled with heaviness.**

The heaviness, trauma, fear and confusion were all so overwhelming that they almost couldn't breathe.

Then suddenly the risen Jesus stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."

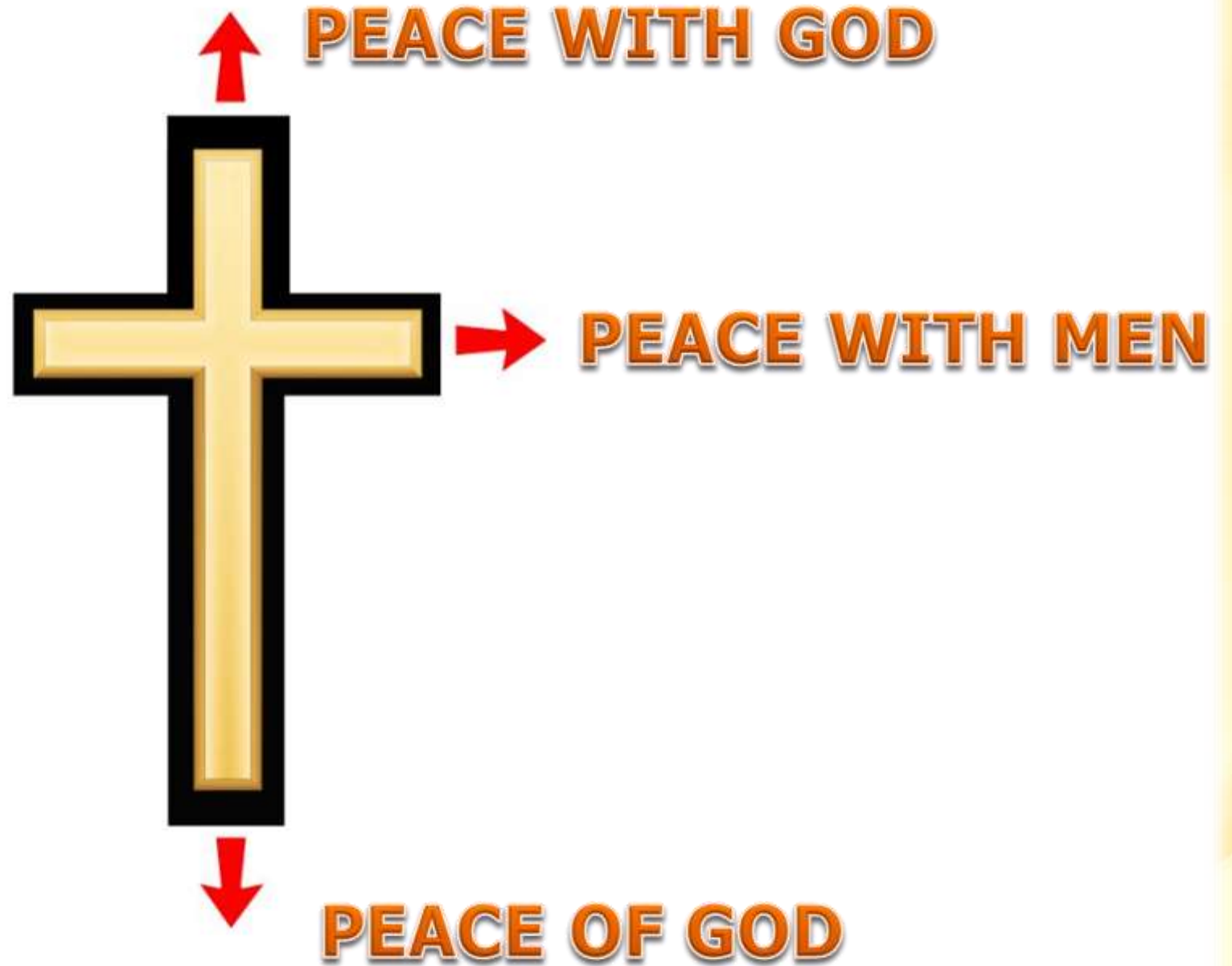
He showed them his hands and feet. And then said, "Peace be with you" again the second time. Then he breathed on them.

“Peace be with you”:

3 kinds of peace here:

- The **peace with God** = Forgiveness of God through Jesus as He has made peace with God for our sins through His death
- The **peace of God** = Wholeness of God – ***“shalom”*** that is released within our spirit
- The **peace with man** = Forgiving the sins of any man = Not retaining the sins of any man

The cross



What does Jesus mean when He said "Peace be with you" to the fearful disciples?

- **Jesus uses PEACE to address FEAR**

He knew the disciples were afraid and He gave them peace.

So many times in life we are like the disciples, "locked in a room" because we are afraid.

When you are afraid, you do what the disciples did – you lock everything down.

Yet Jesus, knowing how you feel, can show up to give you peace in your situation.

In fact, His words “Peace be with you” means “you can be at peace with your past.” Jesus can help you get past your past.

- **Jesus pursues to give PEACE through CHALLENGES**

The disciples were in the room with a LOCKED DOOR.

Yet the locked door did not keep Jesus from finding them.

He was purposeful in meeting them because He had to speak peace to their hearts.

When you are broken, anxious, worried or fearful, it is in those moments that God looks to hold you close.

In your moment of greatest fear, He is waiting to give you peace.

This peace not only calms your emotions, it **WALKS WITH YOU THROUGH THE CHALLENGE.**

- **Jesus uses PEACE to secure PURPOSE**

John 20:21 -So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

The peace Jesus gave them was designed to move them from behind the locked doors of fear and into the purpose that Jesus had for them.

Jesus' peace for us is not designed to make you static but to get you moving.

He has no intention for you to stay trapped by your unrest and fear.

He will give you peace which in turn can give you the confidence to move forward.

Therefore, when Jesus says "Peace be with you", He is actually saying 'LET GOD'S REST, COMFORT, WHOLENESS AND ASSURANCE GO WITH YOU.'

Next, let's focus on this breath.

When life is normal for us, we can breathe normally.

But what about the time when we are plunged into the waters of despair, heartache, depression, fear and hopelessness?

We will feel breathless.

And we will need strong intervention to cause us to catch a breath.

Jesus placed his mouth on their mouth and He breathed into them.

In the creation account in **Genesis 2:7, God brings Adam to life.**

But here in **John 20:19-23, God brings people **back from death** by using Jesus to breathe the Holy Spirit into people who have lost hope and reason to continue living – like the disciples.**

This breath of God here in **John 20:22 becomes an image of **Easter Hope**.**

It offers **HOPE OF THE RESTORING LIFE-GIVING BREATH OF CHRIST TO COME AND FILL OUR LUNGS.**

Application: Today if you find yourselves as Christians deep under water – unable to breath like the disciples, Christ will come and say to you, **“Peace be with you. Receive the Holy Spirit.”** This breath of the Holy Spirit will keep you going. It will restore you.

The greatest aspect of this Easter **HOPE** is one day when we finally lose our breath, when we have breathed our last on earth, when we think all is over, we will be awakened once again with the **breath of Christ** filling our lungs and we will rise from the dead.

That is our ultimate hope with the breath of life.

Application: Christians, are you parched today? Dehydrated? Bone dry? Burned out? Lifeless? Pointless? Hopeless? Dead?

Catch that breath from Jesus through the Holy Spirit and you will be revived again.

When the Spirit breathes upon those who are unbelievers, regeneration takes place.

But when the Spirit breathes upon Christians, it is called revival.

(3.) THE REASON THE BREATH OF GOD DOESN'T COME



DOUBT AND UNBELIEF

John 20:24-28- Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here and look at My hands; and reach your hand here and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving but believing." And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

Thomas is called the **Doubting Thomas**.

Why did Thomas doubt?

His traumatic memories were far too present to be changed simply by hearing his friends say, "He is risen."

Application: Sometimes it is very difficult to set aside the **BRUTAL REALITIES** that we have seen and experienced in this fallen life.

But Jesus appeared. He said, "Peace be with you."

Why Thomas refused to believe the disciples in the first place?

Thomas saw the torn, lacerated body of Christ. He saw him spit up blood. He saw the whites of Jesus's eyes as they rolled back. He saw the water and the blood pour from Jesus' side. He heard his ragged, shallow, watery breaths as the work of crucifixion slowly suffocated him.

Thomas became present to the challenge to believe as he stood there with his fingers in the side of Jesus, perhaps, feeling Jesus' lungs rise and fall with His breath.

In that moment, Thomas was challenged to believe that **God worked through the trauma.**

Resurrection is not simply about a pretty little **RESET, making it as though bad things never happened.**

If that is the case then Jesus would not still have **wounds in his hands and side.**

If resurrection was a **RESET, Jesus would have appeared complete and whole – without a scratch on Him. That is not what happened.**

The first thing Jesus did after giving Thomas his peace, was to show them His **WOUNDS.**

Jesus had Thomas insert his finger into his side to underscore this point:



GOD BRINGS LIFE THROUGH TRAUMAS

Not in spite of trauma, but **THROUGH traumas.**

Isaiah puts it this way, "By his wounds we are healed."

Resurrection faith is **TRUST THAT GOD BRINGS LIFE THROUGH TRAUMA, LOSS, SORROW, GRIEF AND DEATH.**



**RESURRECTION FAITH IS
TRUST THAT THOSE VERY
TRAUMAS AND LOSSES AND
SORROWS AND GRIEFS AND
DEATHS SOMEHOW BECOME
SEEDS FOR LIFE WHEN THEY
ARE IN GOD'S HANDS.**

(4). THE WAY OUT WHEN THE BREATH OF GOD DOESN'T COME

Why doesn't Christ's life-giving breath always come when we need it?

Why is it that sometimes we become mired in trauma, loss, grief, sorrow and death without a sense of relief?

Because we are **RESURRECTION PEOPLE.**

And resurrection means you must walk through the **VALLEY OF DEATH.**

John 29:29- Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Believe in what?

Believe that Jesus has risen from the dead – but this requires that God redeems grief, trauma, loss, sorrow and death – God redeems this brokenness into life.

That is the CHALLENGE OF FAITH.

- **To hold fast to resurrection hope** during the storm, when we have capsized and been thrown under water.
- **The challenge of faith as you feel your lungs screaming for breath.**
- **To hold onto that HOPE as you feel life ebbing away.**
- **To hold onto that belief as you drift towards death.**

- **The challenge is to believe that this too is not beyond the resurrection power of God.**
- **The challenge is to believe that the same resurrection power is at work in us that was at work in Christ on Easter morning.**

So when we find ourselves like Peter sinking into water and crying out, "Lord save me," we know the end of the story – as we keep sinking, we know we will breathe once again.

And as His breath gives us life, He will greet us with these gentle comforting words: "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"

CONCLUSION

We will all die.

Unless Christ returns in our lifetime, we will all die.

We will all experience the sinking, breathlessness from which there is no earthly hope of return.

Yet we will all be awakened with the breath of Christ – our suffering will be transformed as we are greeted with these words: “Peace be with you.”

Time to catch a breath of life from the Holy Spirit.

