**Text: Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-23**

**Subject: What’s Your Underlying Condition?**

 Recently, there has been a lot of talk about underlying conditions. What we have learned is that physical underlying conditions increase the likelihood that the Coronavirus will have a severe, if not deadly impact on those who contract it.

 Even more, it has been determined that African-Americans are most likely to have these type of conditions. Specifically, according a recent article in National Geographic, African-Americans suffer higher rates in eight of the top causes of death in the United States of America to include: heart disease, stroke, cancer, influenza and pneumonia, diabetes, HIV, kidney failure and homicide.

 Of these conditions, at least 6 of them are informed by our habits, diets and behaviors. And what that means is that, for the most part, they are preventable.

 Of course, each of these conditions are made worse by a lack of health care and a lack of information. However, that does not mean that we do not have some power over our own destinies individually and collectively.

 On the one hand, we can change the negative trajectory of our destiny simply by paying attention to our bodies, as they are constantly informing us of our conditions. At the same time, once we have discovered a condition, we must take action by eating better, by practicing self-care, and by seeking professional and medical help when it is needed.

 On the other hand, there are some other underlying conditions that we must aware of. Those underlying conditions are Spiritual underlying conditions which linger deep down in our hearts; our souls and our minds.

 It is important to identify and then allow God to deal with these conditions because, like the physical underlying condition that may increase the possibility of more severe circumstances if we contract the coronavirus, underlying spiritual conditions may cause us to experience more severe spiritual consequences that might inhibit us from receiving the fullness of peace and joy that God has already made available to us through Christ Jesus.

For example, in our text, in John 20:19-22, we find 10 of the 11 disciples shut in behind closed doors, after the crucifixion and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, because they were afraid that the Jews were going to put to death because of their relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

As a result, while shut in, we can easily conclude that they were at their lowest point emotionally, psychologically and spiritually. However, right when they were at their lowest point, The Lord Jesus Christ showed in the midst. And when He showed up, the first thing He said to them was, “peace be with you.”

Now, let’s pause here for a minute because I would imagine that that’s the first thing He said because He must have known that the disciples were in a state of mind that was no where close to being peaceful.

First, they were not peaceful because they had disserted The Lord Jesus when He most needed them. They had all but denounced Christ and had run for their lives instead of standing by Him like Mary Magdelene, His Mother Mary, and the others who stood close by Him while He hung up on the Cross.

Therefore, the Lord Jesus must have known that the disciples were suffering from the underlying spiritual condition of shame and as a result, they found themselves in a state of un-peacefulness.

Then, as He spoke peace to them, He knew that the disciples were also suffering from the underlying spiritual condition of fear.

We know this because the corresponding text found in Luke 24:36-37, it says, while they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst. But they were startled and frightened.

So then, to add their shame, they were also startled and afraid because the Lord Jesus Christ had just miraculously showed up in their midst. Not only that but they also suffered from the underlying spiritual conditions of being troubled and being filled with doubt in their hearts.

We know this because in John 20:38, the Lord Jesus Christ said to them, why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?

Now, if we think about it, each of these underlying spiritual conditions were located in their hearts. This is important to know because the heart is the place where all of our emotions are stored and processed. Therefore, whatever we have in our hearts will eventually inform what we say or do.

We know this is true because Matthew 15:17-18 says, do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is eliminated? But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man.

Then in Matthew 15:19 it says, for out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, and slanders.

As a result, with these underlying spiritual conditions living in our hearts, we will not be able to fully experience the fullness of joy and peace that God wants us to have.

Now, if you don’t believe me, then let’s look closely at our text for a minute. In Luke 24:39-41, the Lord Jesus said, see My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.

As He spoke, He showed them His hands and His feet. Still they stood there in disbelief, filled with joy and wonder.

Let’s pause here for a minute because what we just heard is that Lord Jesus Christ just got finished proving that indeed it was Him standing there in the midst by showing the disciples His hands and His feet. Yet, even though they were glad to see Him, they still stood there in disbelief.

In other words, because the disciples were harboring underlying spiritual conditions of shame, fear, trouble, and doubt in their hearts, they were not able to fully rejoice or fully believe that the Lord Jesus Christ was standing right there in their midst.

Now, what we should know is that God does intend to have the fullness of peace and joy notwithstanding whatever circumstances we may be going through.

First, we already know that God wants us to have peace because our text, in John 20:19, the first thing the Lord Jesus said to the disciples and also to us was—Peace be with you.

Then, after He showed the disciples His hands and His feet, in verse 21, He said—Peace be with you.

Then, a little bit later, when Thomas finally showed up, in verse 26, again He said—Peace be with you.

Now, Biblically, whenever God repeats something over and over, that means that is something that God really, really intends. Therefore, it is safe for us to conclude that God wanted them to have peace even when the disciples were shut in behind closed doors.

And let me just say, if that is what God intended for them, then that is what God intends for us during this time when we are shut up behind closed doors.

This is so even if we are not sure when this season is going to be over; and this so even if our patience is running thin; and our money is running short. God still intends for us to have peace.

At the same time, God wants us to have rejoice—which means that He wants to have joy even if there doesn’t seem like there is much for us to rejoice about.

We know this because 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 says, Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.

Then, in Philippians 4:4, the Apostle Paul said, Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say rejoice.

Also, 1 Peter 1:8-9 says, Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

And finally, in John 16:24, The Lord Jesus Christ said, until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be made full.

Therefore, let’s put this thing together. God commands us to rejoice always; to rejoice, then rejoice again; that we are filled with joy; and that our joy can be full when we ask Him for it.

However, the truth of the matter is, we are not able to fully experience peace or joy if we are simultaneously suffering from underlying spiritual conditions in our hearts such as shame, fear, doubt, which cause us to be chronically startled, worried, or troubled.

So it was with the disciples in our text. They had all of the evidence they needed—that indeed the Lord Jesus Christ had risen from the dead and that He was standing there in the midst.

However, they could not fully rejoice nor did they fully believe because most likely, their underlying spiritual conditions diluted and polluted their inner man—their spirits and souls—with negativity.

As a result, I can almost here you thinking to yourselves, if that’s the case with them, then there is no hope for me. If that’s what you’re thinking, then what I want you to know is that on that day that the disciples were shut in behind closed doors, the Lord Jesus gave them something to assure them that they could always rejoice and that they would always have peace.

In John 20:21-22, Jesus therefore said to them again, peace be with 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.

Let’s pause here for a minute because it is real easy to miss what just happened.

What just happened was The Lord Jesus Christ breathed on the 10 disciples and gave them a deposit of the Holy Spirit which is an impartation of the presence of God inside of their hearts, minds and souls.

And it is with this impartation that they were able to have peace and joy even while they were in the midst of a tough situation. Now, what we know is that this particular dispensation of the Holy Spirit was a special but incomplete dispensation just for those were in that room, at that time.

However, the Lord Jesus made a promise to them, that they would be fully clothed with the power of the Holy Spirit soon thereafter.

We know this because in Luke 24:49, the Lord Jesus Christ said, and behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.

In other words, these disciples were given a special dispensation of the Holy Spirit that day but they were about to receive a full dose of the Holy Ghost not many days after that.

And that dose was not must for them, but that dose was also for you and me. This is key because receiving our dose of the Holy Ghost is what makes it possible for us to have peace and joy even though we are in the midst of a rough and tough situation.

If you remember 1 Peter 1:8-9 which says, though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

And also John 16:24, which says, until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be made full.

In other words, when we receive a dose of the Holy Ghost, we will be filled with the presence of God which will then produce the fruit of peace and joy deep down in our souls.

We know this because Galatians 5:22-23 says, but the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

That means that we can still have peace when we are in an un-peaceful situation; and that we can still rejoice, and again I say rejoice, even when there is nothing to rejoice about.

Also, what that means is that once we receive a dose of the Holy Ghost, we are forced to make a choice to either be led by the Spirit or be led by our negative underlying spiritual conditions such as shame, fear and doubt.

Church, really the is choice by made by what we give into. Galatians 5:16 says, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh.

Therefore, today, we have to ask ourselves if we going to give into the flesh during these difficult times that we are now going through, or if we are going to give into the Spirit which wants to give us peace and joy no matter what and no matter when.

If we give into the flesh like the disciples did before they received a dose of the Holy Ghost, then we will not be able to experience the fullness of peace and joy that God intends for us to have.

But, if we yield our hearts; our souls and minds to the presence of God who lives in all who believe in Jesus Christ, then we will have the peace that surpasses all understanding; and we will be filled with and inexpressible and glorious joy—a joy, unspeakable joy, that can only come from God—and a joy that the world can’t take away.

Therefore, today, I want to ask you—what do you choose?

Do you choose to be driven by your underlying negative spiritual conditions?

Or do you choose to be led by the dose of the Holy Ghost that God has given to all who believe in the life; the crucifixion; the burial; and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead?

If you choose the latter, then just know that it doesn’t matter what we are going through right now;

And it won’t matter what we may have to go through in the future, a dose of the Holy Ghost, will cloth us with power that will get us through whatever we are going through and it will produce the fruit of peace and joy, no matter what we are going through in our lives.

Therefore, I must ask: What’s Your Underlying Condition?