

Rev. Janet R. Doyle
Elmer Presbyterian Church
2nd Sunday of Easter
April 24, 2022
Scripture: John 20:19-31

Sermon: We Need Peace!

Do you know what the word Mulligan refers to in the game of golf? The basic definition of Mulligan is a "do-over," a "second try" after your first has gone awry. Every weekend golfer has taken a few mulligans in their lifetime, and there's no shame in that.

Where did this term mulligan come from? There are a number of different theories about how the term started, but it started with the last name Mulligan. David Bernard Mulligan, a Canadian amateur golfer and hotelier, who may have made the term famous in the 1920s, hit a poor drive off the first tee, then simply re-teed and hit another ball, telling his amused playing partners that he had taken a "correction shot." That "correction shot" soon became known as "taking a mulligan."

There is a movie in the theaters now that Dwayne and I just saw entitled "The Mulligan: A Parable of Second Chances" from the book by the same title written by Golf Pro Wally Armstrong and Chaplain to the Golf Pros Ken Blanchard.

It is an interesting movie about a man named Paul that doesn't have faith in God, doesn't believe that Jesus is alive, and doubts God was ever there for him when he was a child going through a difficult time. Paul only believes that success in life is measured by how much money you can make.

Pat Boone is in the movie and plays a wise "old golf pro" that teaches the character, Paul, that success in life is more than money and golf and that God is a God of Grace and forgiveness. He also teaches him about "the Mulligan" of "second chances" with God on your team to be able to have a "do over."

God knows we need second chances and that we need to begin again, and that is why he sent Jesus into our world to tell us again that he loves us, forgives us and wants us to follow him.

Jesus gave his disciples “a Mulligan” that Easter morning when the disciples were told by Mary that Jesus was gone from the tomb. She later told them that she had seen the Lord and he had called her by name. The disciples, who had fallen asleep in the Garden, one had betrayed, and another denied, were confused as to the meaning of all this. They forgot that Jesus had told them that after three days he would rise again.

The disciples were in Jerusalem. They were together in a room except for Thomas. They were a group of fearful disciples still huddled together, mourning and weeping, not knowing what to do now that their leader, their teacher, their Savior was not there guiding them to the next step.

They were not at peace with the whole last few days. It was all too much to take in and to understand. All of Jesus’ teachings and words to them were all muddled together.

They locked themselves in, afraid that the Jewish authorities would come looking for them there. All the women had told them were just idle tales to the disciples, and they refused to believe them. His body was gone but what happened to Jesus?

Two disciples on the road to Emmaus had even told them how a stranger had joined them on their journey from Jerusalem to Emmaus that afternoon, and how he explained to them all about the Scripture passages which foretold the resurrection of Christ. But when they reached Emmaus and sat down to eat with him they suddenly recognized this stranger as Jesus, and then he just disappeared before their eyes.

All of this was really too much for those fearful, anxious disciples who sat there worried and not at peace. How in the world could they believe such bizarre reports about Jesus walking and talking? How could it be possible for Jesus to be alive and well when he had died such an agonizing death just three days before?

But as the disciples wallowed in their fear and unbelief, the Lord Jesus suddenly appeared right in their midst and showed himself to them. Only then did they believe that he had risen from the dead.

However, Thomas, was not present when this happened and he continued to live in doubt and fear and unbelief until the following Sunday, when the resurrected Jesus appeared to the disciples again with Thomas present. Then he joined all the rest in believing that Jesus had truly risen from the dead. Thomas and the disciples had a “do over” a “second chance” to change their unbelief and to have peace in believing that all he said would happen did happen. The disciples were given grace, a Mulligan, which brought them peace and hope.

Jesus knew his disciples needed to see him again. They were afraid and troubled in their souls and were anxious about the future.

So, Jesus, the one who calmed the storms on the Sea of Galilee two years earlier, calmed the storms that raged in their hearts that day. When Jesus calmed the Sea of Galilee he said, “Peace, be still” (*Mark 4:39*). And now, his words had the same calming effect on his nervous disciples. In verse 19 Jesus says to his fearful disciples, “Peace Be with you.” He repeats it in verse 21 and verse 26. “Peace Be with you.” It is a special peace that the Lord brings to his disciples.

What a wonderful peace this is! It is the same peace that Jesus had mentioned in John 14:27. Jesus said, “I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid.”

Now in Chapter 20, something new is revealed about this peace, because the body of Jesus now bears the marks which testify of this peace. The nail-pierced hands and the spear-wounded side, which the Lord showed his disciples, bear permanent testimony to His completed work on the cross—the work which is OUR source of peace as well.

In John 16:33, Jesus said to them before his death, “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

In Romans 5:1, the Apostle Paul writes, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” And in

Colossians 1:20 it says, "He has made peace through the blood of His cross."

This peace that Jesus gives to us is needed in this world and in our lives. This peace that Jesus gives to his disciples is a peace we need that the world cannot give us.

This peace is ours if we believe in Jesus who died on the cross for us and rose again. We need Jesus to breathe that peace on us as well. We need the breath of peace. We have peace with God through him. And when you have peace with God, you can also have the peace of God, which passes all understanding, to keep our heart and mind through Jesus Christ.

This peace does not depend on having peaceful circumstances. It is a peace from within, a peace that you can always have even when circumstances are not peaceful at all. It is a peace of second chances, of a Mulligan, a peace of knowing the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is a peace we pray our brothers and sisters in Christ in Ukraine and around the world will have in the midst of chaos and war. This is the peace we need when living with Covid and its variants. It is a peace we need when dealing with our economy and rising prices. It is a peace we need when dealing with health issues, and the list is endless. We need the peace of God in our lives!

As Christ followers, we do know that we will have trouble in this world, but He has overcome the world! (*John 16:33*) There will be times of pain and heartbreak, death and mourning, loss and tragedy because we live in a big, broken, messy world of sin. But Jesus wants us to remember that he has defeated the enemy. We can't see eternity yet, but we can cling to the truth that, once and for all, God is victorious, and we are a resurrection people of hope.

In a world of worry and unrest God can give us his peace. God can give us new life and reminds us that we can always have a Mulligan and try again because of his Grace of Second Chances.

You can have that peace with God in the midst of the storm, and when you have peace with God, it is a peace which passes all

understanding, to keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus
(*Philippians 4:7*).

Perhaps you or someone you know needs this peace and the grace of God. You or someone you know that needs a “Second chance” of forgiveness.

Perhaps you or someone you know has a troubled heart because of some difficult trial you or they are facing, or something in your life has shaken your faith, and you are a doubter, or someone you know that doesn't have any faith in God.

It is time to cast all our burdens and cares upon the risen Lord Jesus. Come to him. Don't doubt but believe! Encourage others to believe in the Risen Lord of Second Chances.

Jesus said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don't be faithless any longer. Believe!” Thomas exclaimed, “My Lord and my God!” Then Jesus told him, “You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me.”

John 20:31 ends by saying “But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name.”

Jesus wants us to have life. Jesus wants us to have his peace, and Jesus wants us to know we can begin again because he is a God of Second Chances.

In this world of unrest, it is wonderful to know the Prince of Peace.