

Game Changers, Week 4

CANDYLAND Luke 24:36-48

We're in a series called Game Changers. Each week we're looking at a different board game that represents one of the struggles of life. And then we're seeing how the resurrection of Jesus *changes the game*.

The game for today is CANDYLAND. It's a very simple game that you can play with very young children. All you have to do is draw a card with a color on it and then you move to the next space of that color. Candyland – The World of Sweets – A child's first game.

Now, remember that in this series, the games represent a NEGATIVE aspect of life. Which raises the question: WHAT COULD POSSIBLY BE WRONG WITH CANDYLAND? I mean, c'mon, we play this game with our children! It's fun, it's simple, it's innocent!

And that's the problem. Candyland is an immature game played by people who aren't in touch with the real world. It's a game played by people who expect life to be a candy land – who want life to be all gumdrops and sweets, and then get mad, become disillusioned, curse God and lose their faith when they find out it's not.

You see, we want our lives to be a stress-free journey from the Cupcake Commons to the Candy Castle. We want walk through the candy cane forest, and hang out on Gum Drop mountain. And we expect God to give us that. And when God doesn't, we get mad.

In Candyland, the characters are all nice, sweet people. You have...

- Queen Frostine and Princess Lolly
- Grandma Nutt who lives in the peanut brittle house
- Mr. Mint, the candy cane woodcutter
- Plumpy, who lives under the gingerbread plum tree
- And who could forget Gloppy the Molasses Monster, keeper of the Molasses Swamp.

Even Lord Licorice, the villain of Candyland, is still a relatively sweet guy! And a lot of us expect that these are the kind of people we should get to live with in real life.

Pleasant people – pleasant places – that's what we all expect – not want, expect. And when we don't get it, we get mad – and we blame God.

And that's the game of Candyland.

Open your Bible to Luke 24. And let me set the stage here: This takes place on the first Easter Sunday. The disciples have watched Jesus die. Some of them have been to the tomb and seen it empty. But none of them is aware of or convinced of the resurrection. They're anxious. They're scared. They're huddled behind locked doors. They are definitely not in Candyland!

And then all of a sudden in verse 36, we have the Game Changer:

³⁶ *While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."*

Luke 24:36, *New Revised Standard Version*

In a lot of the post-resurrection appearances, when Jesus shows up, the first thing he says is "Peace be with you." But what we need to see is that when he says that, he's not saying, "Oh, look around you, everything's wonderful, the sky is blue, the grass is green, everything is peaceful..." And he's not saying, "Look, I've fixed everything. So be at peace, 'cause you'll never have problems again."

When the risen Jesus says, "Peace be with you," he's saying it *in the midst of trouble*. He doesn't change what's going on. He doesn't turn the world into Candyland. But he does bring *peace*.

Catherine Marshall tells the story of a king who offered a prize to the artist who would paint the best picture of **peace**. Many artists tried. The King looked at all the pictures, but there were only two he really liked and he had to choose between them.

One picture was of a calm lake. The lake was a perfect mirror for peaceful towering mountains were all around it. Overhead was a blue sky with fluffy white clouds. All who saw this picture thought that it was a perfect picture of **peace**.

The other picture had mountains too. But these were rugged and bare. Above was an angry sky from which rain fell, in which lightning played. Down the side of the mountain tumbled a foaming waterfall. This did not look **peaceful** at all.

But behind the waterfall the artist had painted a tiny bush growing in a crack in the rock. In the bush a mother bird had built her nest. There, in the midst of the rush of angry water, sat the mother bird on her nest ... in perfect **peace**.

And that's the picture the King chose. Because, *"Peace does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble, or hard work. Peace means to be in the midst of all*

those things and still be calm in your heart. That is the real meaning of peace”
(Catherine Marshall).

Jesus promises peace in the midst of trouble. In John 16:33, he says, *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble...”*

Did you get that? Jesus didn't promise a peaceful world! But he did promise peace in the midst of trouble.

He says, *“In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”* --John 16:33, New International Version

And the way he overcomes the world is by defeating death itself.

How does the risen Christ bring peace? **Let me show you four ways from Luke 24...**

First, look at verse 36: *While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them ...* --Luke 24:36a

(1) Jesus brings peace in community.

In all but one of the post-resurrection appearances, Jesus shows up when the disciples are gathered together. They experience the risen Christ in community. Walter Wink says, “The resurrection is not a fact to be believed, but an experience to be shared.”

If you're looking for peace, then join the community of disciples:

- Come to worship
- Come to Wednesday Night Live
- Come join my Bible Study on Wednesday nights
- Serve with us
- Socialize with us

Jesus brings peace in community.

Next, look at v. 44:

⁴⁴ *Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the*

psalms must be fulfilled.”⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures
 --Luke 24:44-45

(2) Jesus brings peace through the Scriptures.

He helps the disciples understand that his death is not just a random event or a senseless act of violence. It's part of a larger story. God is acting in history to save his people and advance his kingdom.

And when they look at the Scriptures through the lens of the resurrection, everything makes sense.

If you're looking for peace, then find a way to study the Scriptures:

- Come to my Bible study on Wednesday night at 6:40 in the chapel
- Or join one of our Sunday School classes
- Or sign up for Disciple Bible study this fall

Jesus brings peace through the Scriptures.

Then, look at verse 46

and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day,⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations...

--Luke 24:46-47

(3) Jesus brings peace through forgiveness.

Forgiveness of sins is the primary benefit of Jesus' death and resurrection. This is why he did it – so that you can stand before God clean, fresh, and forgiven.

Jesus died on the cross to give you peace with God. And peace with God is the most important peace there is, because it lasts forever, and nothing can take it away from you.

If you're looking for peace, then make peace with God,

- Confess your sins
- Receive forgiveness
- Drop your guilt

Jesus brings peace through forgiveness.

(4) Finally, Jesus brings peace through his presence.

Dr. Gary Morsch is a medical doctor who joined the Army Reserves in 1993. In 2005 he was called up and put on active duty in Iraq. One day he had to take a prisoner of war with a severe abdominal infection to the hospital in Baghdad.

So on a Sunday morning he found himself crammed into the back of a Humvee -- one of several in a convoy that was traveling together. They stayed right up on each other to keep the suicide car bombers from getting between them. They moved just as fast as they could to avoid being easy targets.

Dr. Morsch was wearing what they call the “battle rattle” – 50 pounds of body armor, weapons, and a helmet. Standing next to him was the gunner with his head sticking out the roof, looking for snipers, pointing his machine gun at anything that moved. Sitting in front of him was a soldier on the radio, shouting instructions.

And all this was after their convoys had been bombed three times in the last five days.

As Dr. Morsch sat there in that Humvee in Iraq, he was anxious, he was worried, he was homesick, and he was depressed. He decided to listen to some music on his MP3 player. And the first song he heard was by the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir:

“Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place”
 “Sure ly the presence of the Lord is in *this* place”

And Dr. Morsch says that all of a sudden, he felt the presence of God like never before. Later he wrote, *“As tears ran down my dusty cheeks...I felt enveloped by the presence of God – God around me, God above me, God in me...This sense of peace and contentment lasted throughout my time in Iraq.”*

In the middle of a war zone, Dr. Gary Morsch experienced the Peace of Christ -- peace in the midst of trouble – peace that transcends understanding.

Jesus doesn't turn the world into Candyland. But he does show up in the midst of our troubles and say, “Peace be with you.”

Jesus brings peace through his presence. LET'S BOW OUR HEADS.