

“SO SEND I YOU”
John 20:19-23
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INTRODUCTION

We Christians often struggle to balance **the emotions** of the Christian life **with the Duties** of the Christian Life.

- Some do well are carrying out duties, but do so with lifelessness and joylessness.
- Some do well at manifesting excitement, joy, and enthusiasm but do so with a carelessness about purity and serious responsibility for godly lifestyle.

Why is it that we believers cannot maintain a balance in the Christian life?

When Jesus rose from the dead, He first guaranteed that believers had the proper emotional response to the most significant and life-changing event in their lives—and in the entire history of the universe!

Then He made clear what their responsibility was once He finished His post-resurrection work and ascended to Heaven.

What Jesus did that Sunday evening after His resurrection has changed everything—it has given Christians **purpose** and **direction** for life and ministry ever since!

You have a mission—and Jesus wants you to joyfully carry it out!

I. THE BELIEVER’S EMOTIONS AFTER THE RESURRECTION (19-21a)

A. Peace (19, 21a)

The scene in the upper room (maybe the same room they had met in prior to Gethsemane) prior to Jesus’ appearance could hardly be described as *peaceful*.

- There was fear—due to the Jews and their continued animosity toward Jesus (reported to be alive) and presumably toward His close followers.
- There was excitement—several had reported the empty tomb, visions of the risen Jesus (Mary Magdalene, the other women, Peter, and now Cleopas and his companion who had come from Emmaus to report their strange experience.)
- There was confusion—some were unconvinced by the reports; some did not know what to think.
 1. It was still Resurrection Sunday—Roman reckoning, not Jewish.
 2. The doors were locked and secured—maybe double doors, or the outside door and the door into the room. *Secured with a large bolt and rings most likely.*
 3. Jesus **stood in their midst** (or “*stepped into their midst*”).
 - We are not told how He got there.
 - Text doesn’t say that He came “right through the door” or even that the door opened by itself.
 - The idea is not that Jesus had been hiding in the room.
 - He had not “sneaked in with the men from Emmaus.
 - He did not enter through the window, or from the roof.
 - His human nature had not become omnipresent. The point is that **Jesus is not limited by closed doors!** “Miraculously He stood in their midst.”
 4. Jesus spoke His words of “peace.”

- This was the usual Jewish words of greeting someone.
- In light of 14:27 and of the last words He spoke with them in the upper room before His arrest—16:33 this was more than a normal greeting.
- Due to their “fear” here they needed “peace.”
- He repeated the words in v. 21a—very significant.
Westcott says that “*the first ‘Peace’ was the restoration of personal confidence; the second ‘Peace’ was the preparation for work*” (p. 294).

B. Joy (20)

1. The Proof of His identity and humanity—shows them His hands and side (Luke adds and His feet). John was the only one to mention the piercing of His side—therefore he is the one to describe this.
 - Thus He *convinced them* it was He—*the same Jesus!* Even with any differences. That there were differences is clear from Luke—“they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they beheld a spirit” (24:37).
 - He had a *real body*.
 - This was *not merely the spirit of Jesus*—it was His body—a real bodily resurrection! Some thought they were seeing a spirit. Jesus spoke to them saying that they should not be troubled or have questionings arise in their hearts. Look at His hands and feet that “it is I myself; handle me and see; for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see me having.” (Luke)
 - Paul shows us that His body was imperishable, glorious, powerful, and spiritual—I Cor. 15:42-44.
 - After His resurrection He was *not always visible* to normal human sight.
 - Luke shows that some “still disbelieved for joy.” Then Jesus asked if they had something to eat there; they gave Him some broiled fish and He ate it before them.
2. “The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.”
 - Note that “the disciples” are not equivalent to the “apostles” or the “12”. In fact, v. 24 mentions the 12 as a separate group. Luke tells us that others were assembled; also Cleopas and his companion had come.
 - Remember Jesus’ earlier words that they would sorrow when the world rejoiced, but would see Him again and have their sorrow turn into joy (16:20-22).
 - Notice that they know Him to be “the Lord”—He is their sovereign and Master.

Now that Jesus had gained control of their emotions, He was ready to impart to them their duty. He gave them their **mission**, their **power**, and their **Message**.

II. THE BELIEVER’S DUTY AFTER THE RESURRECTION (21b-23)

A. His Mission (21)—“*As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.*”

- “As the Father has sent Me”—one of the major themes of John!
- Perfect tense shows His completion of His commission!

- So He sends His followers (present tense—continuous). He sends them, and it begins now.
- He says “just as” to compare the two sendings, as well as “I also”.
- The latter term stresses Christ’s activity.
- **The solemnity of their commission is seen in its comparison with Christ’s!** Their mission proceeds from His!
- *Precisely because He has accomplished His mission, they are sent to do theirs.*
- *There is a **link** between the two.* (See John 17:18—“As you sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.”)

Note the Similarities of Christ’s Mission and Ours:

- Same *commissioning authority*
- Same message—except now that He had accomplished His atonement the message is fulfilled; they simply proclaim it.
- *The people* to whom the message is proclaimed are the same.
- They are not beginning a new mission; they carry on *Christ’s mission*.

B. His Power (22)—“When He had said this *He breathed on them and said to them: Receive the Holy Spirit.*”

1. The Spirit would equip them for their mission.
2. The Spirit would empower them for their mission.
3. The Spirit would bring them real life.
 - Compare Jn. 3:8 for the wind/Spirit analogy.
 - Same verb as used in the LXX of Gen. 2:7—God breathed into Adam the breath of life. Here we now **have a new creation.**
 - Also, the verb is used in Ezek. 37:9 of the spirit of the Lord breathing upon the dead that they may live.
 - **Here the Spirit brings a new creation, and life from the dead**
 - That Jesus breathes, shows that **He has the Spirit as well as the Father!**
 - This is the HS as manifest in and through the risen Christ.
 - This incident is a necessary condition for the Spirit’s descent on the day of Pentecost. The Spirit He imparted was His Spirit—i.e. the Holy Spirit indwelling Him. Here Jesus in some sense “quickened them”; later He would send the Paraclete to fully indwell them and empower them.
4. This was a real impartation of the Spirit in some sense.

Note the verb “take, receive.” The recipient may welcome or reject the gift—he is not a mere “passive receptacle” See the repeated expression of “receiving” the Spirit in Acts 8:15, 17, 19; 10:47; 19:2.
5. The Spirit’s connection with Pentecost.
 - We need not see a contradiction between Luke (10 days later on the day of Pentecost) and John. The circumstances are completely different.
 - Acts 2 is followed by signs and preaching; no such events here.
 - The main characteristic evident in the disciples as a result was “the new faith by which the disciples were gathered into a living society” (Luke 24:45).

- *There is only one day dispensationally when the Spirit comes to form His church.*
- I appreciate Hoskyns' view of this passage in the light of 14:16, 26; 16:7, 13. He shows that John thought of "one gift of the Spirit which would be given after Jesus' return to the Father."
- "There is therefore a distinction between the two gifts of the Spirit. The Resurrection scenes in the Fourth Gospel are all preparatory scenes, preparatory for the mission. What the Lord will do invisibly from heaven He here does visibly on earth. The mission is inaugurated, but not actually begun. The disciples still remain in secret, behind closed doors. The actual beginning of the mission lies outside the scope of the Fourth Gospel.

C. His Message (23)—"If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained."

1. Forgiveness is granted or retained through preaching—see Luke 24:47. This passage shows us that through the message and preaching of the Apostolic church people's sins are forgiven.
2. This passage also shows us that forgiveness or retention of sins can only be the affirmation of a decision having been made already in Heaven—perfect tense in Greek.
3. This passage does not teach the individual absolution of sins, with or without a human priesthood.
 - Note that groups are in view here—"any" is plural both times.
 - Jesus address all the believers present—not merely the apostles.
 - Moreover, Thomas was not even present here.
 - Those who wish to argue for "remission" or absolution of sins here, must equally argue for the "retention" of individual sins. If we cannot perceive how this could apply to individual retention, neither can we argue for individual absolution.
 - This passage has a relation to the passages in Matt. about "binding and loosing"—which are connected with the rabbinic practice of teaching binding responsibilities or non-binding duties.
 - The Church—primarily, though not exclusively, through its officers—is responsible to teach with authority and to proclaim the way of salvation in order to have full pardon through the work of Christ.
4. Only the indwelling of the Spirit makes this possible—as the Spirit applies the Word of God. This promise gives a living and abiding power to declare the fact and the conditions of forgiveness.

CONCLUSION

The Lord has given us our **Mission, Power, and Message**. In the risen Christ we have new life, **peace**, and **joy**. *Because Christ is risen, my life has meaning, value, joy, and peace.*

Because Christ is risen, I have mission, power, and a message to proclaim.

Why are you here? What should you be doing?

LIFE IS TRULY WORTH LIVING—no matter what you lose of this world in health, wealth, success, fame, acceptance, etc.