

204. The Gospel of John 20:19-22

Sent By The Son-Part 1
A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier
(1-8-23)

Find this weeks' sermon audio and video message [HERE](#).

In our study in John's Gospel, we have come to Chapter 20—which focuses on the Sunday after Jesus was crucified.

Some call it 'Easter Sunday'—but here at Calvary Elk Grove we like to call it, '*Resurrection Sunday*'—the day Jesus rose from the dead.

We have already looked at the events that took place that *morning* in detail. A few weeks ago, we looked at the events that transpired the *afternoon* of Jesus' resurrection as recorded in Luke's Gospel (and only in Luke's Gospel) Chapter 24. Now we come to the events that took place Sunday evening as recorded in John's Gospel Chapter 20.

In verses 19-23, John records some things that many Christians casually read and then move on—without really understanding the importance of the things mentioned in this passage.

First of all, John tells us that some of Jesus' disciples (including 10 of the apostles minus Judas who had hanged himself and Thomas who was not there) were assembled together somewhere in Jerusalem—perhaps the same upper room where they had met three nights earlier to celebrate the Passover.

You see, they were fearful that the Jewish leaders and the Roman soldiers would be coming to arrest and crucify them next—

I. Jesus Revealed His Person to Them—verses 19-20

John 20:19–20 (NKJV)

¹⁹ 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." ²⁰ When He had said this, He showed them *His* hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

As we said last week—we need to understand that Jesus' resurrection body was a real body of '*flesh and bones*'—yet He had the power to pass through walls, doors and other physical barriers contrary to any of the known laws of physics as we understand them.

As we noted last time, when Jesus first appeared to them—they thought He was a ghost and were terrified.

No doubt, that was one of the reasons He told them (the first time) "**Peace be with you**" (verse 19)—He was trying to calm their fears.

Then we read—"He showed them *His* hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw [it was really] **the Lord**."

What John means of course is that Jesus, trying to convince them He wasn't a ghost, showed them the nail prints in His hands and the spear wound in His side—Luke records the events this way:

Luke 24:36–40 (NKJV)

³⁶ ...Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you." ³⁷ But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit [*'a ghost'*]. ³⁸ And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹ Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have." ⁴⁰ When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.

Jesus appeared to His disciples so that they would all know for sure that He had risen from the dead—He Himself, the crucified Jesus was now the risen Lord—that it was really Him!

➤ ***Why was it so important that Jesus appeared to His disciples after His resurrection?***

It was important because the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the central doctrine of the Christian faith. In fact, it is so foundational to Christianity that anyone who denies the physical, bodily resurrection of Christ cannot be a genuine Christian.

So, in that regard—the resurrection is an essential doctrine of the Christian faith for salvation:

Romans 10:9 (NKJV)

⁹ that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

Jesus in John 20 verse 21 (as we're about to see) was authorizing and commissioning His disciples (not just those in that upper room but all those who had followed Him over the course of His earthly ministry) to go into the world and preach the gospel—of which His resurrection from the dead would be the central truth!

He knew that they would be greatly persecuted, and many would face violent deaths—and they needed a message to the unbelievers they would encounter based on their eyewitness testimony of seeing the risen Jesus.

Our whole system of jurisprudence is built on eyewitness testimony—even as God established in *His* law:

"You must not convict anyone of a crime on the testimony of only one [eye] witness. The facts of the case must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses." (Deuteronomy 19:15)

Yet, the resurrection of Jesus Christ had hundreds of eyewitnesses who testified they had seen the risen Christ—even as Paul talked about:

1 Corinthians 15:3-8 (NKJV)

³ For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. ⁶ After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷ After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. [*Most of them the first night of the resurrection in the upper room, and then Thomas a week later.*] ⁸ Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time [*Jesus appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus in Acts 9*].

As I just said, eyewitness testimony is what our whole system of jurisprudence is built upon. If two or more people witness you committing a crime—you're probably going to be convicted—how about 500?

That's how many saw the risen Christ at one time after His resurrection up in the Galilee—and not only that they went around testifying to everyone that Jesus was alive! Skeptics and flat out atheists claim—*"They lied!"*—Listen, nobody is willing to die for a lie.

If the disciples had stolen the body of Jesus and gone around telling everyone He had risen—when Rome started killing them for their testimony surely one of them would have 'spilled the beans' to save his skin.

Satan made the observation in the book of Job, *"Skin for skin all a man has will he give for his life"*.

You must understand that the reason those early Christians were willing to die for their faith was because they had seen the risen Christ.

The fact that they were willing to die for what they believed (and the way they died—singing praises to God!)—was used by God to bring many unbelievers to Christ in the first century.

II. Jesus Commissioned His Preaching to Them—verse 21

John 20:21 (NKJV)

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

We call this the *"Great Commission."*

The dictionary defines 'a commission' in part this way: *"an authorization or command to act in a prescribed manner or to perform prescribed acts : a charge."*

This Great Commission was given by Jesus to all His disciples that would ever believe in Him down thru the centuries—not just those in the upper room the night of His resurrection.

Matthew records Jesus' commission to His Church this way—

Matthew 28:18–20 (NKJV)

¹⁸ And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

I've called this second main point of our outline in verses 19–23—**"Jesus Commissioned His Preaching to Them"**—because this commission was not going to be new to His disciples—in other words, it wouldn't start with them.

The Great Commission, as we refer to it, was something that started with Jesus Himself—something His Father had sent Him into this world to do.

As He was preparing to return to His Father in heaven after His resurrection—it was a commission He was now passing on to them from His Father—which is why He said, **"As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."** (verse 21)

You see, Jesus was first commissioned by His Father to bring the good news of God (the gospel) to the people of this world.

This was a ministry He faithfully *started*—but then turned over to His Church to carry on.

Acts 1:1–3 (NKJV)

¹ The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, ² until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, ³ to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

The ministry of Jesus was a supernatural endeavor conducted in the power of the Holy Spirit.

If Jesus' disciples were to effectively bring the gospel into all the world and carry on the ministry Jesus had started—they would need the same power of the Holy Spirit that He moved in as well.

I'm sure Jesus' disciples were thinking to themselves when Jesus commissioned them to take the gospel into the known world of their day—

➤ *“How are we as simple Galileans going to take the gospel into Athens, Alexandria, Rome—into the most sophisticated and learned places in the world being uneducated farmers, ranchers and fishermen?”*

But don't you know, as someone has said—“*God's commandments are God's enablement's.*” Or in other words, “*Those the Lord calls He empowers and equips.*”

Which I believe is why Jesus said the second time “**Peace be with you**” (verse 21) in the context of sending them into the world to carry out the Great Commission. **He wasn't sending them out in their own strength, ability and power.**

Which brings us to the third point of our outline for this section of John's Gospel—

III. Jesus Fulfilled His Promise to them—verses 22-23

John 20:22–23 (NKJV)

²² And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they are retained.”

Let's hold off on verse 23 (which the Roman Catholic Church uses to teach that Jesus empowered Catholic priests to hear confessions and forgive sins)—and just focus on verse 22 for the rest of our time this morning.

When I say that Jesus fulfilled His promise to them—I mean the promise He made to them in the upper room the night before His crucifixion:

John 14:15–17 (NKJV)

¹⁵ “If you love Me, keep My commandments. ¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—¹⁷ the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

Then in John 20:22 He breathed the Holy Spirit into them—and at that point, the disciples became official N.T. believers.

You see, up until this point they were believers (and saved) in the Old Testament sense—but were not yet New Testament Christians when they followed Jesus before His crucifixion. There are 2 reasons for that:

1. *Jesus had not yet died for their sins;*
2. *They had not (up until resurrection Sunday) been believers in His resurrection.*

When Jesus appeared to them after His resurrection, they finally became believers in the N.T. sense and that's when Jesus breathed on them and the Holy Spirit came inside of them—officially making them born-again, N.T. Christians.

Remember, this is all in the context of Jesus commissioning them to take the gospel into the world—and therefore essential doctrine that we must know and understand if we are going to fulfill the Great Commission also.

John 14:15-17 (NKJV)

¹⁵ "If you love Me, keep My commandments. ¹⁶ **And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever--** ¹⁷ **the Spirit of truth...**

The word “**Helper**” is the Greek *parakletos*—it comes from 2 Greek words—“*para*” (alongside) and “*kaleo*” (to call).

So very simply, a *parakletos* is someone who has been called alongside for the purpose of helping or comforting (often used for a defense attorney who comes alongside a person charged with committing a crime)—which is why some translations call Him the *Comforter*.

Jesus Himself was the first Parakletos—the first Comforter.

God the Son who became a Man, came alongside the disciples physically to help them and teach them God's truth—and to train them for the work of the Kingdom (the Great Commission).

Upon returning to His Father in heaven, the Father sent back the Holy Spirit—another Helper. This Helper would be an indispensable source of power in the work Jesus commissioned us to do for the Kingdom. Now, in John 14, Jesus was talking about leaving them soon, but He promised that He wasn't going to leave them alone like orphans—He would send to them another Helper to be with them.

He had commanded them to live a certain kind of life and commissioned them for a specific kind of work—both of which would have been impossible for them to accomplish without the supernatural Helper known as the Holy Spirit.

Now the most important thing that Jesus ever said with regard to our understanding of just who or ‘*what*’ the Holy Spirit is (mention J.W. doctrine—‘*the Holy Spirit is not a Person but a force*’) comes to us in His use of the key word “**another**”—

“He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever--the Spirit of truth...” (John 14:16)

There are 2 words for “*another*” in Greek.

Heteros—another of a *different* kind. (Heterosexual)

Allos—another of *exactly the same* kind. (Ice is exactly the same as water it's just in a different form)

Here Jesus used the phrase "*allos parakletos*."

In other words, "*I am going to send you another Helper—another One exactly like Me only in a different form*"—God the Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity.

Again, Jesus was the original Parakletos Who for 3-½ years came alongside the disciples to help and comfort them—in fact in John 14 alone He spends the entire chapter comforting them because they were broken-hearted He was going away and they could not go with Him. (John 13:33)

Which is why He went onto say to them—

John 16:5, 7 (NKJV)

⁵ "But now I go away to Him who sent Me...It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.

So why go away at all if He was just going to send them the same kind of Helper (i.e., 'the same God in a different form') back to take His place? The answer to that is that when Jesus was on the earth physically—He was limited by that physical body to one place at a time (Galilee, Jerusalem, Jericho etc.)

God is an omnipresent Spirit—and so was Jesus before His incarnation (back then He was called 'The Word').

But when He became flesh and walked among us—He took on the limitations of that physical body (He got hungry, tired—and was no longer omnipresent). When Jesus returned to the Father and the Holy Spirit was sent back in His place (Pentecost—Acts 2)—the Holy Spirit inhabited every believer in Christ and together they make up one Body—the "Body of Christ."

Once the Holy Spirit took up residence in every believer in Jesus—the Body of Christ would be in many places at once and work more works than He could during His earthly ministry when He was limited to one locality at a time by His physical body.

John 14:12 (NKJV)

¹² "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and *greater works* than these he will do, because I go to My Father.

We'll continue next week in this study, "**Sent by the Son-Part 2**".

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower— please, reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Reach out to us [here](#).

Want to know more? Click [here](#).