

December 3, 2017 AM
Pastor Ken Hepner

JOHN'S GOSPEL: JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD:
80. "Jesus Commissions His Followers: He Sends Us to Others"
John 20:20 – 23

Introduction:

The central theme of the Gospel of John is that Jesus is the Son of God who came into the world to make it possible for us all to know God personally. John begins this incredible Gospel by telling his readers that Jesus is the Word of God who came from eternity and entered into humanity. The life of Jesus is no ordinary human life. **It is a life lived in Total Surrender to the Will of the Father for His life!**

John opens this Gospel message with the incredible words found in John 1:14: *"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."* When Jesus stepped out of eternity into humanity He came specifically to address the issue of sin in the human heart and soul, to address what separates us from the heart of God the Father, sin and self-interest!

John tell us the truth, Jesus is the **Way to God**, the **Truth of God**, and the **Life of God** lived out among us so we can see what God looks like and acts like in the human arena. John takes extensive looks at the life of Jesus, the message Jesus spoke, and the ministry Jesus performed on our behalf on the Cross and His resurrection life. Then John asks his readers to make a response to Jesus that is deeply personal. He calls us to **Believe in Jesus!**

The believing to which John calls his readers is not mental ascent to a list of facts or doctrines to embrace. It isn't a once-and-done act of faith. It is more than accepting that something we have been shown by Jesus is true. It is an ongoing, deep **Trust** that moves us to **Surrender** our lives to Him! **This believing we are called to in Scripture is active engagement with the Lord on a daily basis, being inhabited by the Holy Spirit who makes the Word of God alive for us!**

To believe what God has said is something that is really precious to Him. It is apprehending and being gripped by **His Promises**, that He will do what He has said He will do, that the **God who promised is Faithful!** There will always be reasons why we shouldn't believe God's promises are still true today. There will always be evidence to the contrary, but let's believe Him anyway.

II Corinthians 1:20 – 22 *"For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God. Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come."*

Ephesians 1:18 – 20 *"I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his*

mighty strength which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.”

Paul wrote about the central issue of God’s people being called to walk through life in victory in Christ Jesus, in Romans 5:17. *“For if by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God’s abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.”*

In that text Paul calls his readers to Know the Presence and Power of the Spirit of Jesus dwelling in our hearts, enabling us to **Reign in Life!** There can be little doubt about the fact that we are called by the Spirit of God and have been given the capability to walk in spiritual victory today in and through our personal faith in Christ Jesus! And the first place we get to reign in life is in our inner world, the thoughts, and the heart desires we entertain!

However, standing as a barrier between us and our walking in spiritual victory are issues of sin. The Bible clearly teaches us that all of us have sinned and fall short of the glorious intention or will of God for our lives! We all have done unintentional and intentional **Sinful Actions**. We all know what it is to deal with our own **Self-Interest**, which is the essence of sin. Self-interest has first cousin words that travel with it: self-will, selfishness, self-importance, and self-reliance.

Where we left off of the narrative last week was the miracle of new life, dynamic life-change the Risen Lord Jesus did in the life of Mary of Magdala. What we all saw in her life last week was just awesome, powerful, dynamic life-change when she met Jesus for the first time, as she lived with the company of His followers, and then as she met the Risen Lord Jesus Christ. The central message of Jesus’ life, teachings, and ministry for us on the Cross is that we may know the joy of sins forgiven, deliverance from our past! That sweet message of life change is personified in the life of Mary of Magdala!

Jesus spoke to Mary in the Garden outside the tomb. The words Jesus spoke to her are so full of meaning. Listen carefully, to the whispers of the Holy Spirit, in your own heart, soul, mind, and spirit, as we read the text together: *“Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”*

We noted last week that for the first time since Adam and Eve sinned and their spirits were rendered “dead in sins,” a human being heard words from the heart of God about having our spirits **Made Alive** in Christ Jesus! Our spirit, the part of our lives that is at home in heaven to be made a **New Creation** by the life of the Risen Jesus Christ **Imparted** to us.

Mary experienced what Paul would later write about to the followers of Jesus in his letters. First to the Corinthians: II Corinthians 5:17 *“Therefore, **if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!**”*

Then to the Ephesians 2:1, 2, and 5 *“**As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world** and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient... But because of*

*his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, **made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions** – it is by grace you have been saved.”*

As we pick up the narrative this week, notice that Jesus has sent Mary of Magdala to the other followers of Jesus with the news that He is no longer dead, but is alive, risen from the dead. And the content of her message to them was that they are now spiritually adopted, sons and daughters of the Most High God as they believe what Jesus has done for them on the Cross and what He will do in all of them as He lives in them in resurrection life and power!

John 20:17, 18 “Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’ Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: ‘I have seen the Lord!’ And she told them he had said these things to her.”

I. Locked Away for Fear for Their Lives:

John 20:19, 20 “On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you!’ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.”

We can only imagine what it had been like for these closest followers of Jesus since the death of Jesus on Friday afternoon. They have witnessed clearly what these wicked men who held the priestly offices had done to their Lord. They saw with their own eyes the nails go into His hands and feet, heard His cries of love and agony from the Cross and His final cry of victory as He died!

They saw what the religious leaders were capable of doing to the One they knew to be the Christ, the Son of the living God. As they gathered together in that room, they were behind locked doors in absolute terror and fear that the next footsteps they heard coming up the stairs might be the officers who would come to arrest them and kill them too!

They remembered with complete clarity what Jesus had been saying to them all along about how much **Hatred** He and they would experience at the hands of the people who live by this **World** system’s values. These words rang in their ears after the death of Jesus on the Cross!

John 15:18 – 20a “If **the world hates you**, keep I mind that **it hated me first**. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is you do not belong to the world but **I have chosen you out of the world**. That is why **the world hates you**. Remember the words I spoke to you: A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me they will persecute you also.”

And those powerful words they heard Jesus pray in John 17:14 – 18 “I have given them your word and **the world has hated them**, for **they are not of the world** any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your Word is truth. As you have sent me into the world **I have sent them into the world**.”

As they all gathered together in that room, full of fear of the bitter hatred the Sanhedrin leaders had shown for Jesus, they wondered if the next knock on the door would be the temple police sent by these hate-filled, venomous leaders to arrest them. Now in that atmosphere of fear they have bewilderment about what Mary Magdalene had just told them. **How often do we followers of Jesus find ourselves between Fear of human opinion and Telling Others about the wonderful things the Risen King Jesus has done in us?**

As they sat there together in wonder Jesus was suddenly in their midst! Jesus the Risen Son of God came and stood in the room while the doors were still locked! Jesus gave them the standard greeting that everyone in Israel spoke to one another when they met on the street corner. “Shalom, peace to you!” This greeting means so much more than the wish for peace, meaning the absence of malice and harm. **It really means: “May God give you every good thing!”**

Then, in order to remove all doubt that it really was the Risen Lord Jesus, He showed them all His hands, His feet, and His wounded side! This is Jesus, not another Jesus. The emblems of His suffering for us all are in His body! The Jesus who had died for us on the Cross was now Risen Lord, Savior of the world, and Jesus had power over sin, death, and all the powers of Hell! His spiritual body was like His physical body, but vastly different, because Jesus simply suddenly appeared in that room!

Look at the response from His followers: *“The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.”* The word John uses to describe what everyone in the room was feeling is the Greek word: echaesan, meaning exceedingly joyful, glad, great elation, bliss! **Experiencing the presence of the living Jesus Set their Hearts Ablaze** with a joy and deep holy love that no amount of beatings or persecution would be able to remove for the rest of their lives!

Every one of these men in that room that day will be called upon to love Jesus so deeply and carry the message of Jesus so faithfully to their spheres of influence, that the authorities in the world will beat them, imprison them, kill them all the while thinking they were serving God by getting rid of them!

II. His People Will Embody His Message:

John 20:21 – 23 *“Again Jesus said, ‘Peace be with you! As the Father sent me, I am sending you.’ And with that he breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.’”*

What Jesus did with His disciples in that room immediately after they saw the proof of His resurrection life and victory was to tell them what He had been telling them from the first day many of them began to follow Him. *“Come follow me and I will teach you how to fish for people!”* It was the same message they heard from Him when He sent them out with His authority to proclaim the Gospel of the kingdom of God in Matthew 10. *“Go to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves!”*

But in this text there is an immediacy and an urgency that has not been given to them before. In this text Jesus says to them, *“As the Father sent me, I am sending you.”* As the Father God sent

Jesus into the world to embody the message through His **Surrender** to the **Will** of the Father, even so Jesus is sending His followers into the world to **Embody** the Gospel in their lives of loving **Obedience** to His **Will**, absolute surrender of their hearts, minds, wills, to become the habitation of the Spirit of Jesus!

It is really important that we all see and understand this is not an afterthought to Jesus. This is the mission of Jesus to the world. Every person who chooses to follow Jesus in life is called upon to be inhabited by His holy love and full of joy about what Jesus is doing in us so that we can't help ourselves. We have to speak about this Jesus and what He is doing in our lives!

Listen to His words in a companion passage to this text in Matthew 28:18 – 20 “*Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **Therefore go and make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit., and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’*”

Jesus is not telling us that if we forgive people He will forgive them too. He is telling us all the vital truth that the way we choose to **Live**, how we choose to **Respond** when someone hurts us will **Embody** the **Message** of the forgiveness of sins Jesus Christ came to make available to us all. The message cannot just be spoken. It has to be lived in the midst of people in the world system who think God is mad at them, the Cosmic Killjoy who hates them and is just waiting for them to make mistakes so He can judge them!

And so that we won't miss the fact that none of us can live this kind of kingdom lifestyle on our best grit, will, and determination, Jesus told His followers then and He tells us now today, you need to experience the presence and the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit of God to be enabled to embody the message of love, grace, and forgiveness of heaven on earth! **There must be a love imparted to you that is more than something humans create!**

III. The Indispensable Source of Divine Power Living in a Human Being:

John 20:22 “*And with that he breathed on them and said, ‘**Receive the Holy Spirit.**’*”

Luke 24:46 – 49 “*Jesus told them, ‘This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised, but **stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.**’*”

Acts 1:4b, 5, and 8 “*Do not leave Jerusalem, but **wait for the gift my Father promised**, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in few days **you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.**’ ... “**But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you** and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*

Let us be crystal clear about two things we can't afford to miss in this text. In a clear parallel with the old creation, God breathing on Adam and Eve became living and breathing spiritual beings. Even so, John says Jesus breathes into His followers the new creation, life by His life! The first vital truth we need to see is Jesus is telling us that He needs us, **Jesus is Dependent on His Church**, His body to be message-bearers to the people in our spheres of influence.

The second vital truth we need to see is Jesus telling us that we need Him **Invading** us and **Capturing** our **Hearts** with His holy presence in order for us all to be enabled to do things in our lives that embody the message of love, grace, and forgiveness! We are **Dependent** on Jesus to pour out into our lives His holy nature, His divine love so we can live it and share it with those we love!

The life Jesus lived on earth was lived in deep communion with the Father, lived in absolute surrender to the will of the Father for His life. We have seen that truth modeled in His life time and time again in our study of John. **Jesus lived a life that demonstrated the Necessity of Relational Love with the Father.** Here He says, in the exact same way the Father sent me into the world to embody the message of His holy love, a life that was lived relationally with the Father, even so I am sending you to live a life of relational love from me and for me!

When the Bible calls us to live a life of holy, self-emptying, other-oriented love we are not expected to be able to accomplish that in our human strength, grit, will, or determination. The love of heaven is not our human love on spiritual steroids. The love of heaven is **Imparted** to us, **Poured Out** into us by the invasion of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 5:5 *“And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.”*

Ephesians 3:16 – 19 *“I pray that out of his glorious riches, he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. And I pray that you being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”*

These breathed on and invaded men and women in this upper room are now given the authority of life-based love, sent out into their world to demonstrate the sweet presence of the Spirit of Jesus living in them and flowing through them. The witness of His presence in them is how they treat one another when someone does something to break their hearts or cause them to feel offense!

Jesus said three times in the texts we read earlier, “Don’t just go out and try to do this on your own strength. Wait for the Promised Holy Spirit to invade your lives!”

Their humanity wants to get even with the person because it will teach them a lesson. But the presence of the Holy Spirit capturing them brings them to see the other person through the eyes of Jesus on the Cross, bearing that sin they have felt from that person. The Holy Spirit says forgive them, it will teach them a lesson!

Through the indwelling Holy Spirit these believers will be able to share the message of love, grace, forgiveness of sins because they have experienced it first hand in their own hearts and souls!

JOHN'S GOSPEL, JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD:

80. "Jesus Commissions His Followers; He Sends Us to Others"

John 20:19 – 23

Introduction:

We are studying the Gospel of John. It is the story of Jesus, whose life is no ordinary life. Jesus is God the Son come to earth. He lives in T_____ S_____ to the W_____ of the Father.

John begins with John 1:14. He tells us Jesus is the W_____ to God, the T_____ of God and the L_____ of God. Then John asks for a response from the reader: To B_____ in Jesus!

The believing to which John calls the reader is active engagement with the Lord every day. It is ongoing T_____ and S_____!

To believe what God has said is really precious to Him. It is being gripped by His P_____, that the God who made the promises is F_____ II Corinthians 1:20 – 22, Ephesians 1:18 – 20

In Romans 5:17 Paul calls the followers of Jesus to K_____ the presence and power of the Holy Spirit D_____ in or hearts. And because He lives in us Paul says we may R_____ in life!

Standing between us and spiritual victory in life are issues of sin: Both S_____ A_____ and S_____ -I_____ the essence of sin.

We left the narrative last week as we studied the miracle of new life Jesus gave to Mary of Magdala!

We noted that for the first time since Adam and Eve sinned and their spirits died in sins, a human being heard words about being M_____ A_____ in spirit as a N_____ C_____ of God the Holy Spirit. II Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 2:1, 2, 5

As we pick up the narrative this week Jesus has sent Mary to "His brothers and sisters," sons and daughters of the Father. John 20:17, 18

I. Locked Away Out of Fear for Their Lives: John 20:19, 20

We can only imagine the fear these people were living in, since the awful events of Friday. They saw Jesus die on that Cross and heard His agony, and His cry of victory when He died. They knew what these religious leaders could do!

They remembered well Jesus' words about how they would be H_____ by the W_____. John 15:18 – 20a and 17:14 – 18

As we see the followers of Jesus fearfully barricaded in, we are shown pictures of what F_____ of human opinions can do to us T_____ people we love what Jesus has done in us!

But as they were locked in Jesus was suddenly in their midst. He greeted them with Shalom! Peace be to you!” He showed them the marks in His body.

Look at the expression of His followers: O_____ when they saw the Lord! John uses a word that means, “exceeding joy, great elation, bliss!” E_____ the Risen Jesus Christ produced in their hearts a joy and deep love that no amount of beatings or death could drive out of them.

II. His People Will Embody His Message: John 20:21 – 23

The truth is from the beginning Jesus had been preparing these people to be sent out with His message!

Jesus came into the world to embody the message: To S_____ to the will of the Father. Now Jesus was sending His followers to embody His message, to live a life O_____ to His W_____ for their lives.

Every person who chooses to follow Jesus is called to be inhabited by holy love and full of joy compelling us to speak! Matthew 28:18 – 20

Jesus is telling us the way we choose to L_____, how we R_____ when someone we love hurts us will embody the message of F_____ of sins Jesus came to make available to us all!

III. The Indispensable Source of Divine Power Living in a Human Being: John 20:22, Luke 24:46 – 49, Acts 1:4b, 5 and 8

Two vital truths for us to know and live out: 1. Jesus is D_____ on His Church His body to be message-bearers. 2. We depend on the Spirit of Jesus I_____ us and C_____ our hearts with love!

We have seen the truth modeled by Jesus again and again in this Gospel: He demonstrated the necessity of R_____ L_____ with the Father.

The holy, self-emptying, other-oriented love of heaven is not human love on steroids! We must have the Holy Spirit invade us, and I_____ or P_____ O_____ His holy love in us. Romans 5:5 and Ephesians 3:16 – 19

His love is life-based authority to love. So when someone we love hurts us...

Discussion Starter Questions for Home Groups

1. John wants the readers to know what happened after Jesus rose from the dead. Why do you think he writes such vivid accounts?
2. Why do you think John tells us the story of Mary Magdalene and her meeting with the risen Lord Jesus?
3. John tells us Jesus' followers were paralyzed with fear, locked behind closed doors in hiding from the men who had crucified Jesus. What does he want us to understand about the thoughts and fears of His followers?
4. Why do you think John goes to such great lengths to make sure his readers know he was right there and saw Jesus simply appear in a room they had securely locked themselves in?
5. John tells us the disciples were overjoyed when they saw Jesus and He showed them His marks of suffering in His body. Why did Jesus do this?
6. What do you think Jesus was trying to accomplish in the hearts of His followers when He breathed on them and told them to experience the presence of the Holy Spirit?
7. What message do we receive from the disciples being filled with the Holy Spirit's presence and power for service?
8. Read together aloud I Corinthians 15:1 – 11. What insights do you see about the testimony of the followers of Jesus from this resurrection account?
9. Read together aloud I Corinthians 15:12 – 34 and discuss insights you have from Paul's teaching on our gift of life from the Risen Lord Jesus.
10. Is there anything about these accounts of the risen Lord Jesus that has impacted you in a new way? Would you please share your thoughts with your Home Group members?