

John 20:19-31

Context

This week's passage comes immediately after Jesus' first resurrection appearance to Mary Magdalene. The disciples have not yet seen the risen Jesus, but Peter and another disciple have seen the empty tomb. We meet the disciples on Easter Sunday evening, huddled behind locked doors and afraid of persecution. As we read, consider what the disciples must be feeling. Remember, while Jesus had promised his resurrection, they hadn't understood him and didn't expect to see him again.

Hearing: (*Read "Context" and then John 20:19:31. Then pray for God's grace to understand.*)

- Before we dive in, what are some big themes that stand out to you as significant in this passage? Or from the sermon this past weekend?
- Even hearing Mary's testimony, the disciples were hiding away afraid of persecution. Yet, upon encountering Jesus they are "sent out" (v 21) into the world. How are we tempted to be spiritually closed off and afraid? How does an encounter with Jesus empower us to be sent into the world? What does this look like in your life?
- In v 23, we read that Jesus has entrusted us with the power to forgive sins (or not) on his behalf. The sense here is not so much on the forgiveness of sins itself but on the delegation of Jesus' authority. What does it mean for us to now have Jesus' missional/priestly authority in the world? Is that a comforting or a worrying thought?
- In v 31, we are told that this was written so that we may believe the proclamation of Jesus as Christ and Son of God and therefore have life in his name. Jesus is both Israel's promised Messiah and the second Person of the Trinity. How do each of these affirmations influence how you hear the Gospel? How you see God? How do we live in light of these attestations?
- The disciples needed to encounter Christ to believe. Yet, just because we do not see him physically before us, that doesn't mean we can't encounter Jesus today. How have you encountered the Risen Lord this Easter? (ex. Palpable experience of Jesus at Easter worship; God speaking to you through a song, nature, Scripture.)

Obeying (application):

- As you pray this week, imagine yourself having an encounter with the Risen Lord. Visualize Jesus entering the room with you and speaking to you "Peace be with you." Ask him your questions. Feel him breathe his Spirit into your life. Worship him as your Lord and your God.