

## Calling People Into Fellowship with God

John 20.19-23; Luke 24.36-49

It's evening of resurrection day. Jesus appears to a group of disciples and intimate friends. They are overjoyed, even as they are incredulous to see Him alive! Jesus now begins preparing them for their future mission to the world...calling people into fellowship with God.

### Final Events on Resurrection Day

- Jesus reveals Himself to men on road to Emmaus, then vanishes
- They return to Jerusalem, find disciples, and tell of meeting Jesus
- Jesus miraculously appears in the room, proving He is alive
- Jesus begins preparing disciples (apostles) for their ministry
  - *He quashes any lingering doubts (Lk. 24.37-43; Jn. 20.20)*
  - *He commissions the disciples (Jn. 20.21)*
  - *He gives them spiritual insight (Jn. 20.22; Lk. 24.45)*
    - \* This anticipates the Day of Pentecost! (Lk. 24.49)
  - *He gives them their message (Lk. 24.47; Jn. 20.23)*

Understanding V.23: Calling people into fellowship with God!

- Normal interpretation: *Apostles preaching the gospel*  
 Problem: *Only reference to forgiving sin in John (and John never mentions repentance) – and John is all about the gospel!!!*
- Better interpretation: *Calling people into fellowship with God!*

*Repentance is not about relationship...it is about fellowship.*



1. In his Gospel, John recorded just two encounters with Jesus on the day He rose from the dead: The first, in the morning, with Mary Magdalene (Jn. 20.11-18), and the last, in the evening, with His disciples (Jn. 20.19-23). Happily, Luke records the events – and the encounter with Jesus by two men on the road to Emmaus – which are connected with this final appearance of Jesus on Resurrection Day. Read Luke 24.13-35. Imagine what walking and talking with Jesus was like for those men! Notice that they were prevented from recognizing Jesus at first (v16). Why do you think this happened? What kinds of things from the Old Testament do you think Jesus told them about (v27)? What caused them to recognize Jesus (vv31 and 35)? After returning to Jerusalem and finding the disciples, why did the disciples still doubt? (Don't be too hard on them!)
2. In His comments to the disciples, Jesus picks up on two themes that were part of His Upper Room Discourse (John 13-17) on the night He was betrayed (three days earlier). Twice He says to the disciples, "Peace to you!" (19, 21), separated by Him overcoming their doubts by proving to them that it is really Him, in the flesh! What did Jesus have to say about *peace* in John 13-17? In v21, He commissions the disciples for their ministry ("As the Father has sent Me, I also send you"). Where did Jesus speak of this in the Upper Room?
3. Verse 23 has been a trap for theologians for centuries. Some think Jesus *actually* gave the Apostles power to forgive sins, but that this was just for the first Apostles. Roman Catholics think it was passed on through the Apostles to their successors – and that RC priests still have this authority today. Some cults claim there are "Apostles" still around today. Many evangelicals apply this to presenting the gospel, that those who believe have their sins forgiven, and those who don't are still in their sins. But what does John say gives eternal life (see John 1.12; 3.16; 4.39, 41-42; 5.24; 6.29, 47; etc.–almost 100 times)? In Luke 24.47, Jesus says that "repentance for forgiveness of sins" will be proclaimed. As a Christian, do you ever repent of sin? Why? What does it produce in you spiritually? How is this different from what believing in Jesus produces?