

GREAT COMMISSION - 7 APRIL

Q1 Is there anything from last week's Life Group that you were able to reflect on or put into practice? (The theme was Resurrection!)

Q2 What excited you or challenged you in last Sunday's sermon?

Intro

Today's passage happened on the evening of Easter Sunday. It is worth reflecting on what the disciples knew at this time. They had seen Jesus betrayed and arrested in the garden of Gethsemane, and then crucified and buried on Good Friday.

Then on Easter Sunday morning, some of the female disciples reported that the tomb was empty (Peter and John then checked this) and that they had seen angels and that Mary Magdalene had seen Jesus. Though Luke 24:11 says: "But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense". Our passage might have taken place just after Cleopas and his friend had returned to Jerusalem to say that they had met Jesus, Mark 16:13b says "but they did not believe them either." So try and put yourself in the position of the disciples, please consider what hopes and fears were going through their minds at this time.

Please read John 20:19-23

The disciples were understandably afraid. History taught that the Jewish religious leaders were quite adept at getting rid of opponents. Fear is both contagious and debilitating.

Q3 "Peace be with you" was a usual Jewish greeting. – it has a strong sense of holistic peace and wellness that springs from the blessings of God. How do you feel the disciples would have reacted to this greeting?

Q4 John is very specific in detailing incontrovertible proof that Jesus died (see John 19:34) and that Jesus was now alive (see John 20:20). It is therefore not surprising that the disciples were filled with joy. Please share experiences from your own lives, where God has moved you from despair to joy. How can we keep that joy radiant in our hearts today?

Q5 Consider verse 21. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so I send you." How did the Father send Jesus? Think about how Jesus was commissioned, equipped, guided, supported, etc.

Q6 What does this suggest about how Jesus sends us out?

Q7 Jesus's commission is for all the disciples. The other post-resurrection commissions recorded in Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16, Luke 24:46-49, and Acts 1:8 are also for all disciples. Consider where each of you has been sent/are being sent, and where our church has been sent?

Note: The commission in Acts sends the disciples to Jerusalem (*right where they were then*), all Judea (*the surrounding area*) and Samaria (*other parts of the same country*), and to the ends of the earth (*everywhere else*).

Q8 What help is available to each of us so that we can carry out our commission both individually and as a church? See John 20:22

Q9 John 20:23. Why is forgiving others' sins so important?

Action: Spend time praying for each other to:

- Know God's peace especially in the midst of turmoil – Jesus offers the disciples God's Peace twice – where do we need His peace today?
- Understand where God is sending you, or has already sent you, to share the gospel and show Jesus's love and power
- Receive the Holy Spirit – Jesus breathed on them, His Breathe (the Spirit of God) is upon us to equip, encourage, guide and sustain us

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