

**INTRO:** Turn your Bibles, or turn them on to John chapter 20. If you are new to church life, John is the 4th book of the New Testament. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and then the book of ST. JOHN. If you see Acts and Romans, you've gone too far. If you don't have a Bible, the scripture will be on screen for you to read along. If you don't have a bible and you would like one, it would be a great joy for me to give you a copy of God's Holy Word. Just let me know following the service today.

**ILLUS:** In the 1840s, John Geddie left the pastorate of a church in Canada to take his wife and two small children to the South Sea Islands to begin a mission work there. After a voyage of more than 20,000 miles, they arrived in the New Hebrides Islands. The island chain was filled with cannibals, and more than twenty crew members of a British ship had been killed and eaten just months before the Geddies arrived on the mission field.

They faced the difficulty of learning a language that had no written form and the constant threat of being killed. Slowly at first, a few converts came, and then soon many more received the Gospel. Geddie continued his ministry faithfully, including translating the entire Bible into the native language and planting twenty-five churches. For many of those years, Geddie labored with little help and little word from home, but God was faithful to His servant. In the pulpit of the church Geddie pastored for so many years stands a plaque in his honor which says: "When he landed in 1848, there were no Christians here, and when he left in 1872 there were no heathen." **OH MY, THAT TOUCHES MY HEART!**

**I want this church to have that kind of impact on our community and world! Today, I want to preach on the subject, TELL THEM THE STORY OF JESUS.**

**ILLUS:** According to George Barna, in his book called, "Evangelism That Works," most churches have only a small group of people who have a passion for evangelism. Barna asks 3 probing questions to churches like ours:

1. "Do people "own" evangelism as the heartbeat of the church?"
2. "Is evangelism deemed the highest priority of the church?"
3. "Have the people caught a vision for reaching nonbelievers that gives the church definition, energy and direction?"

He concludes by saying, "If not, the organization is not truly a church but is simply a group of people intrigued by religion." (Page 129).

**ILLUS:** In his book *The Purpose-Driven Church*, Rick Warren reports on a survey that found 89% of church members believe the church's purpose is to "take care of my needs and those of my family." Only 11% said, "The purpose of the church is to win the world for Jesus Christ." (Page 82).

Let's read together for John's gospel...

**John 20:19-23** *"It was the first day of the week, and that very evening, while the disciples were together with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them. "Peace be with you!" He said to them. 20 After He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. 21 Again Jesus said to them, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, so also I am sending you." 22 When He had said this, He breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you withhold forgiveness from anyone, it is withheld."*

Notice...

**I) HE CONFIRMS US:** vv 19-20 *"It was the first day of the week, and that very evening, while the disciples were together with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them. **"Peace be with you!"** He said to them. 20 After He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord."*

In our text we see the disciples huddled together in a room. It's Resurrection Sunday and it has been an eventful day for everyone involved. It's now evening and they're excited, yet afraid. The door was locked because rumor had it that the Jewish leaders wanted to arrest and dispose of anyone who had been associated with Jesus.

Suddenly, without warning, Jesus appears and says in verse 19, **"Peace be with you."** I don't imagine those were the words some of the disciples were expecting. There is no rebuke, no "how could you?" The disciples, all but one, had run and hidden themselves as Jesus was being crucified. But Jesus doesn't scold or shame them. The first words out of his mouth show His deep and abiding love for them. **HE CONFIRMS THEM!**

**APPLICATION:** Have you ever failed God utterly and pathetically? If you're like me, you find it hard to pray after that. But when you finally humble yourself, and you call on the one you have so wronged, you are met with amazing grace. God extends mercy when you expect His wrath. **GOD IS SO GOOD AT LOVING HIS CHILDREN!** If you are here today and have turned your back on Him, you need to know, He has never turned away from you. **HE STILL LOVES YOU!** He will **CONFIRM YOU** today if you will come to Him.

Not only does He confirm us, **NOTICE...**

**II) HE COMMISSIONS US:** v 21 *"Again Jesus said to them, **"Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, so also I am sending you."***

**John 17:18** *"As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world."*

SO YOU MAY SAY, yeah, okay, but He's speaking to and about His disciples. He isn't speaking to me in those verses. But when we rightly divide the Word of truth, we see that it's God's will for all His children to share the gospel message. Look at 2 Corinthians 5.

**2 Corinthians 5:18-20** *"All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ Jesus and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men's trespasses against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ: Be reconciled to God"*

We are God's Ambassadors, His representatives of the Gospel of Christ! We are responsible for sharing the message of Truth. He **CONFIRMS US, HE COMMISSIONS US,...**

**III) HE CONDITIONS US:** v 22 *"When He had said this, He breathed on them and said, **"Receive the Holy Spirit..."**"* Jesus not only entrusts us with the responsibility of proclaiming the gospel to others, He also equips us for the job, He gives us His Spirit!

**I) HE CONFIRMS US:** vv 19-20

**II) HE COMMISSIONS US:** v 21

**III) HE CONDITIONS US:** v 22 CONTINUED At this moment of greatest need the Savior promises to place His Spirit in each of us individually. Listen to what the Bible says the Holy Spirit will do.

- He gives us the words to say: **John 14:26** *“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”*
- He convicts of sin: **John 16:8** *“And when he has come he will convince the world of its sin, and of the availability of God’s goodness...”*
- He converts a hard heart: **John 6:44** *“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them,(by the Holy Spirit) ...”*

If we do not live our lives as SENT, some will never hear that they can be set free. Some will never know the joy of salvation. Some will never know of the Spirit’s strength in the difficult times. If we don’t tell the people we come in contact with about the Gospel, then we’re not living out our mission and calling as children of God.

WALKING POINTS TO LEAVE WITH:

- 1) Honestly evaluate your heart for evangelism and your concern for those that are lost:**
- 2) Pray for opportunities to share Christ with others:** **Colossians 4:2-3** *“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ...”*
- 3) Follow God’s leadership in sharing the Gospel:** **Colossians 4:5-6** *“Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.”*

THINK ABOUT IT

- Ten little Christians, standing in a line, one disliked the preacher, then there were nine.
- Nine little Christians stayed up very late, one slept in on Sunday, then there were eight.
- Eight little Christians on their way to heaven, one took his own road, then there were seven.
- Seven little Christians chirping like some chicks, one disliked the music, then there were six.
- Six little Christians seemed very much alive, but one lost his interest then there were five.
- Five little Christians pulling for heaven’s shore, but one stopped to rest, then there were four.
- Four little Christians, busy as a bee, one got her feelings hurt, then there were three.
- Three little Christians knew not what to do, one couldn’t forgive another, then there were two.
- Two little Christians, with much to be done, but life was kinda busy, then there was only one.
- One little Christian, can’t do much it’s true; but he brought his friend to Bible study – then there were two.
- Two earnest Christians, each won one more, that doubled the number, then there were four.
- Four sincere Christians worked early and worked late, each won another, then there were eight.
- Eight happy Christians, if they doubled as before, in just seven weeks, we’d have 1,024.