

## **Bible Study John 20:19-23**

**19 Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you." 20 When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.**

**21 So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." 22 And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."**

**As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.**

This is central here.

God does not want the world to perish (John 3:16!). The apostles must go out and preach the gospel of God's love, and of salvation, to proclaim that Christ is King and Saviour.

With the sending of Jesus Christ into the world by God the Father, everything changed. This is the great turning point, this is the change over from OT to NT.

In the OT: Israel separated from the world: under constant attack.

In the NT: God's people go out into this world to proclaim that Christ is Lord!

God's Word teaches us that the head of the serpent is crushed and Jesus Christ is Saviour.

**No longer behind closed doors**

God's Word is stronger than the words of this world.

The peace of Christ and the peace of God is with them.

**Vs. 20: The Lord Jesus showed them His hands and His side.**

The signs of His suffering are still present in His new body. As the signs of His victory!

Christ had taught the disciples, during all the years they were with Him on earth.

Now that Christ's work on earth was fulfilled, now they were able to see the full picture, and now they understood. Now they are also able to proclaim it to others.

It is the Word of the Lord of Life, the God of Creation, that they and the Church proclaim.

**As the Father has sent Me, I also send you (2).**

Jesus preached with authority. Christ is sending His disciples and in them the entire church to do the same. To preach the Word of God, with divine authority.

The Word will always work out something: faith or rejection.

**Peace be with you!**

We read this two times. God does not want this world to perish.

The resurrection of Christ brings peace. And this peace they must proclaim to this world. The peace of Christ will go with them.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said during the time that He was on earth, that He did not come to bring peace. Mark 13 and Matthew 24. Not the peace the world is longing for.

Jesus Christ came on earth to restore the peace between God and us. And peace with God, is only possible when we are justified. It is the peace, the apostle Paul speaks about in Romans 5: *‘Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.’*

That peace changes our lives, completely.

**He breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.**

The Word of God went into the world. It spread all over the Roman empire, through the work of the apostles. How is that possible? Only through the Holy Spirit.

They (and we) don’t need a high academic education to understand the Bible. James 1: *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.*

**If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”**

Christ gives to the church the keys of the kingdom of heaven. The preaching of the Word of God. But also the authority to exercise discipline. Church discipline, because the Church has the Word of God.

Church discipline is being exercised with the Word of God and according to the Word of God.

Christ gives the authority to His Church to speak on His behalf, also when they have to admonish sinners, and when they speak of forgiveness to those who repent.

Question:

1. We all have the task to be witnesses of Christ. We all have different gifts. That means that we don’t have to do it in the same way. And we should not tell others that they should do the same as we do. But it is important that we all, each in his own situation, know what the gifts are which the Spirit gives to us and that we use those gifts to fulfill our task.

What are your gifts and in which way can you be a witness of Jesus Christ in this world?

2. Vs. 20: the signs of Christ’s suffering are still visible and have become the signs of His victory. Can we say this about the cross itself also? Not all Christians (among them John Calvin) agree that we should use the symbol of the cross as a symbol for Christianity or the church. What could be their reasons? What can be good reasons to use it? Do you know the difference between the symbol of the cross used in the Roman Catholic Church (crucifix) and the cross as it is used by Reformed churches?

3. Why is it so important with church discipline that we clearly and unambiguously show from the Bible that a sinner is wrong and why he is wrong? Can church discipline be based on personal opinions about the Bible or personal interpretations of the Bible?