

When Christ Sets the Agenda

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[0 : 0 0] sometimes we know what people are thinking from their words if they don't say anything it's actually very very difficult to know what they're thinking if you're trying to have a conversation with somebody and they never respond it's very difficult when you sometimes go and visit people in nursing homes and there's no response from them it can be incredibly difficult to know what they're thinking and if somebody's going through pronounced grief and they have lost words as it were it's very difficult to understand what they're thinking words are so so important and the beautiful thing is that jesus spoke so many of them god through jesus has spoken so much to us as i've often said i feel as if i know god more than i ever knew my own father on earth he was a man of few words in many ways i knew him as much as i could worked with him loved him he taught me so much but there are so many things that i don't know about him god has revealed to us so much about his heart his purposes his ways his character and it's a great thing to be able to explore scripture to find out these things and jesus on this day of the resurrection you can tell the things that are in his mind that really matters to him from the things that he says to the gathered disciples you'll notice of course that in the each of the four gospels there's mission following the resurrection the most obvious one is in matthew 28 jesus rises from the dead and it's not if it was an orchestra it's not a huge gathering together of all the instruments as if you're reaching the climax of the works of god as tom wright puts it beautifully the resurrection narratives are like a solo flute playing why because the risk climax is not the resurrection that's the beginning of the next stage of the work of god through his church and that's what you find in the book of matthew matthew 28 the resurrection takes place and then jesus sends out his people he sends them out to go and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the father the son and the holy spirit and then teaching them all things that he has commanded them you find the same in the gospel of luke the resurrection narrative leads to this forgiveness of sins must be proclaimed among all nations christ suffered his entered glory you must go out and proclaim the implications of that and here in the gospel of john you find the same emphasis given as the father has sent me even so i am sending you the commission of the church is there in matthew it's there in luke it's there in john resurrection is not the climax it's the beginning interesting though the way in which is presented in the gospel of john here the mission that he sends them out on is shaped by three three words and you and i need these three words and what these words represent peace the holy spirit and sin the church must go out

in mission mode in every generation till the end of the age when is the end of the age when christ returns so between now and then we go out in mission mode with the gospel of the lord jesus christ and jesus says there are three things that you must remember as you go out in mission to the world first of all peace you're shaped by peace you'll notice he said this to them twice peace be with you he says in verse 19 when he stood among them and said peace be with you and then when they're glad jesus said to them again peace be with you as the father has sent me even so i am sending you and you can well imagine these disciples in the other room they would remember you know he said it twice peace be with you peace be with you it's something that really mattered too this isn't just a common greek greeting this is talking about peace he's not just wishing peace upon them he's proclaiming the peace that has been bought at the price of his own death when he says peace be with you or peace to you he knows what he's just come through he knows the suffering that is just undergone he has literally been through hell for his people he's born their sins he's born their iniquities and when he now comes after the resurrection and says peace to them remember what we said in isaiah 53 a couple of weeks ago with his stripes we are healed yep and the chastisement that brought us peace was upon him how true he took all the suffering for your sins and my sins if we are christians and the result peace but what jesus does he's got this amazing way of underlining

the peace he doesn't just take it as red he doesn't just say well they'll know they have peace because i suffered for them no no he says it to them peace peace be with you as it says in the esv here peace be with you again see jesus when he was bearing the chastisement that brought us peace did he have peace was there calmness in his own soul when he endured the torments of god's wrath was he somebody that experienced peace at that moment the cry of anguish that he cried out my god my god why have you forsaken me that wasn't cried out in peace because he knew what he was bearing he actually appears showing them his hands and his side he shows them the hands he says look he says he's not ashamed of the sufferings he shows them the hands and both these hands will have a hole in them where the nail had been and his side where they thrust the spear in he says look at the side you see jesus can't forget his suffering he'll never forget his suffering if we think of rome and revelation 5 as the lamb in the midst of the throne it's a lamb as it has been slain

that's how it's presented in rome in revelation 5 and that's how jesus thinks of himself he is always the lamb slain slain before the foundation of the world slain in time and then always slain for all eternity that's how he is he is always the one who has the marks when he presents himself to his people he never says the cross is just behind me it's always a reality for him and that's the reason that he can say see my hands look at my side peace be to you so peace because of the crucifixion peace because of the resurrection i mean in many ways the crucifixion does bring peace because you know you will never need to suffer for your sins but peace without the risen jesus no you want the risen jesus notice what they say then the disciples were glad when they saw the lord of course they were glad yes they were glad when they saw him alive yes they are glad that they saw the same jesus who had been crucified on the cross but he is alive and he's alive forevermore as he puts it in romans keep on saying romans for revelation revelation one remember he is the one who became dead and is now alive forevermore they see the lord and jesus says peace peace be with you because i died for you peace is yours because i live for you and peace therefore shapes the mission that he sends them on see as the father has sent me even so i am sending you we are asked to go out as those who have peace to proclaim the gospel of peace to others you couldn't do it if you didn't have peace have you ever tried sharing the gospel with someone when you don't have peace yourself it's just not really possible but when you are experiencing the peace with god because of what jesus did on the cross as a sinless son of god bearing your sins and then rising for your justification when you realize how much he has done and the peace that you have with god then you are ready to be sent out by the father put it this way notice what jesus says as the father has sent me who sent jesus into the world the father did when the father sent jesus did he have peace yes he did did he have a relationship with god yes he did did he love god yes he did could he speak of god with loving authority yes he could did he understand

god's character in his own experience as god's son yes he could so when jesus came to speak about god on earth during his years of ministry he was speaking as somebody who knew the father remember what he says in john 10 as the father knows me and i know the father see that's the thing there's this peace between them the father and i are one this beautiful peace that jesus himself experienced it's on the basis of that peace that he could go and say you know what god has arrived on the scene the kingdom of god has come god's at work he's going to bring the world back to himself he has come in my passion i know him i trust him and he has that sense of peace with god as he speaks to us as the father sent me so he says i am sending you you now share in that mission that was mine the father sent me i am still sent by the father but now what i am doing as one sent by the father i'm sending you it's still my mission given by the father but i am now sending you as part of my mission see if jesus had refused to send us out he would be in breach of the mission he had been given by god but jesus is not like that he wills god will with the whole of his will as the father has sent me i am sending you but i'm sending you as those who have the experience of peace the experience of peace how can you preach peace to those who are near peace to those who are far off when you don't know that peace yourself now let's not get it wrong is peace to do with everything going right in your life if it is i don't have it is peace meaning that every day you wake up and you feel you've got it all together and there's this sense of calmness that just permeates the whole of your day if that's peace i doubt any of you have that but if it's peace in the sense of wholeness safety security if it's peace in the sense of i have a relationship with god though i am a sinner and god is holy there is peace between god and myself if that's what it is then by god's grace i can say i have peace with god through the lord jesus christ i actually have peace with god that means that if you were to be taken away from this world

in the next two minutes you would be absolutely fine because god has nothing against you the chastisement that brought you peace came upon christ and christ says peace be with you peace be with you you see the church we are facing all sorts of issues in ukraine just now in europe and you watch the tv screens and you think peace so far off you see things going on in your own work in your own family and you think peace so far off that's why you've got to come to this book every single day and you have to remind yourself of things that you will never see on social media perhaps certainly the ungodly form of it or on the tv stations peace are you shaped by peace as you go out in mission sometimes it's when you're going through the most difficult hardships that you're able to say all is well with my soul do you know why because and you speak about christ sometimes the lord will allow his people to go through the most terrible sufferings just so they can speak about the gospel he or she can share the gospel of peace with them so jesus says peace let that shape your mission it's the foundation of it your experience of it and your proclamation of it the second thing the holy spirit the father has sent me even so i am sending you and when he had said this he breathed on them and said receive the holy spirit two things here first of all the spirit and jesus secondly the spirit and the disciples of jesus the spirit and jesus jesus is the one who breathes on them and he says receive the holy spirit jesus couldn't have done that in eternity he couldn't have done this before the incarnation he couldn't have done it as a little baby he couldn't have done it as a twelve year old boy in jerusalem he couldn't have done it at any stage in his public ministry he couldn't even have done it on the cross he could not have breathed out and said receive the spirit he could only do it once the cross was over and he has been resurrected and he has been glorified jesus says in the gospel of john he says

[20 : 10] that i must be lifted up he came down and then he goes back the gospel of john one to twelve jesus comes from the father the gospel of john 13 to the end jesus returns to the father but he returns to the father only through the cross and the resurrection and the ascension to the throne of god that's the only way he can return to the father he has to die he has to rise from the grave and then he will ascend to heaven he will ascend to heaven you remember in john 7 and verse 39 you can read the verse 38 whoever whoever believes in me says jesus as the scripture has said out of his heart will flow rivers of living water so here are believers and out of the hearts of believers refreshing rivers of living water will flow and this he said about the spirit whom those who believed in him were to receive for as yet the spirit had not been given why because jesus was not yet glorified and the glorification of jesus begins with the cross the resurrection and it will be crowned with the ascension and enthronement in heaven over the universe very interesting the way jesus does all this in that last evening in the upper room when he was with his disciples what did he talk about he certainly talked to them about the suffering that was going to come his way he talked to them about the need to bear fruit once he has gone he talked to them about the hatred they're going to face from the world and so on he talks about the exclusiveness of the gospel i am the way the truth and the life no one comes to the father but by me in that upper room he talks of disciples he talks of the father he talks of the spirit in the old version it was the comforter the helper the paraclete and he talks about mission jesus in that last conversation with his people he teaches them five times about the coming of the spirit now that jesus has died and risen from the dead the age of the spirit has begun the spirit is ready to be given by jesus and received by his people does that mean they never had the spirit before of course they did they couldn't be born again without the spirit but now the spirit of god is given to them for a whole new purpose and jesus is in a position to grant the spirit to them he breathes on them symbolically and says to them receive the holy spirit this is the age of the spirit of god it's a brand new ministry

for the holy spirit see there were things that jesus did on earth that he couldn't have done in eternity past and there are things that the spirit of god did from pentecost onwards that he could never have done before that moment he's equipping people to go out with the gospel to the nations in a way never before done and jesus is the one through whom the father sends the spirit onto these people he breathed on them he breathed on them you can't help but think here of two passages i think one is genesis 2 7 remember the first man he's made from the dust and then once he's made god breathes into him and he becomes a living being god kisses him into life itself well here there is something equally new there is this creation of a people who are commissioned to serve god so genesis 2 verse 7 the second passage of course is ezekiel chapter 37 remember the valley of the dry bones ezekiel is given a tour of a valley and the valley is dusty and is full of bones scattered all over the place and by the end of that day these bones have come to life why because god through

the prophet spoke to these bones and they lived and they were ready to serve well that's what you have here Jesus breathes on them what's he doing here he's saying to them you have a mission you have peace and you have a mission to perform as those sent by me and you cannot engage in that mission unless I send the spirit upon you and I am able to breathe that spirit upon you the spirit and Jesus but then there's the spirit and the disciples they need the spirit they cannot possibly do the work that Christ expects them to do unless they receive the spirit just like Jesus unless Jesus had been equipped by the spirit on the day of his baptism he could not have taught what he taught he couldn't have performed the miracles that he performed he could not have engaged in his public ministry he could not have served unless he had received the spirit the spirit of the Lord is upon me he gives them understanding gives them wisdom gives them to know what to say how to say it how to act with authority that's what Jesus received and not just the spirit but the Holy Spirit so when Jesus engaged in his work as God's servant he was aware of being equipped by the spirit who is the Holy Spirit

now the church they are the ones who need the spirit of God to engage in their mission for God so Christ sends them out as the Father has sent me so I am sending you and when he said this he breathed on them and said receive the Holy Spirit they need you need he says the Holy Spirit the interesting thing here is that verb is an imperative Jesus doesn't say he breathed them and said you will receive the Holy Spirit six weeks from now on the day of Pentecost he says receive the spirit it's a command and you think how can it be a command but it is a command Jesus and his baptism received the spirit was he willing to receive the spirit did he say to the Father listen I can do it myself you know I'm quite self-sufficient I am God the Son you know no see when the heaven split open and the spirit of God came down as a dove and rested upon him Jesus took it all he received the spirit and see the church we should never be in a position where we say we don't need the Holy Spirit you know we we know how to do it we know how to get to people we've got our psychologists we've got our techniques we know the way to do it we can read stories about revival we know what happened with Jonathan Edwards we know what happened with David Brainard we know what happened in Korea we know what they did so we can just replicate that and again and again and again we are told no no no receive the spirit you need the spirit are you willing to receive that spirit Christ knows how much how much of the spirit he needed and we need the spirit and Christ knows it too he knows it more than we do but we need to know we need the spirit and don't get this wrong it's not that we need the spirit so we can do our work you know it's the spirit that needs us to do his work you see the difference it's his work it's the Father's work it's the Son's work and it's the Holy Spirit's work we are the tools we are the people we are the channel that he uses yes he gives us gifts and he expects us to use these wonderful gifts and he gives gifts to you to raise a family to share the gospel he gives you gifts in some ways to reflect the character of

God and you roll at school or in home or in the community he gives you so many gifts but it's always always always his work receive the Holy Spirit I'm sending you you're on mission you're in mission mode see on this day on this day the disciples you could ask the question where they changed once Jesus breathed on them and then said as the Father has sent me I'm sending you and receive the Holy Spirit did anything change for the disciples in one way no they would soon just carry on fishing you could say six weeks from now or fifty days on the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit comes upon the church and when the Holy Spirit came upon the church then what did they begin to do they began speaking and they've never stopped speaking since that changed them the day of Pentecost totally changed them so what's all this about then in John 20 and verse 22 they're commissioned they're commissioned see God the Son was commissioned in eternity before he was equipped by the spirit to do his public ministry on this world and we are commissioned even before we receive the spirit it's going to be fifty days after this before the spirit is finally given but these

Christians they are from that moment viewed by Christ as commissioned by him he's committed to them expressed in this breathing out on them and they are committed to him as they are willing to receive the spirit whenever whenever Jesus pours out the spirit on them he's got the ability to do it he breathes once he's to heaven and he's seated on the throne next to God at the right hand and he is all authority in heaven and on earth and then he breathes and he pours out the spirit upon the gathered church and upon every believer thereafter the moment they're converted they receive the spirit no

[35 : 00] Christian can say I'm not on mission and no Christian can say I retire from mission you know that this and I are coming to the stage in life where I will be retiring in a few months but we're in mission mode and will be we trust till the end of our day and if we're in mission mode we need the

Holy Spirit commissioned commissioned shaped by peace equipped by the Holy Spirit focused on sin notice notice what he says if you forgive the sins of any they are forgiven if you withhold forgiveness of sins from any it is withheld what's the mission to do with the mission is to do with sin when Jesus came into the world did he speak of sin yeah he did did the

Holy Spirit enable him to speak about sin yes he did did the father who sent him want him to speak about sin yes he did were there many other things he could have commented on in the world in the first century were there terrible heartaches going on yes there were but Jesus was given a proclamation and he had to speak about sin even the baptism with which his public ministry began was one in which sin was at the center John the Baptist ministry was to do with a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins and everybody gathered to hear and they wanted to be washed and they wanted to be forgiven and Jesus comes right in among them though he has no sin of his own why because sin matters to

Jesus these people want to be forgiven they want the waters of cleansing I'll take the waters of judgment so that they will have the waters of cleansing and washing I'll have the baptism remember what Mark 10 38 I have a baptism he says to be baptized with and he's talking there we're told about his coming death it's a baptism I'll take that deluge of God's judgment so that the people might have the forgiveness of sins did sin matter to Jesus it did it shaped his ministry it shaped the way he approached people he would go to the woman of Samaria he wanted a drink and he didn't say well that's really good you've given me a drink I'm so refreshed maybe in four or five weeks or four or five months time we can get round to talking about sin no no he goes straight in and he says where's your husband he goes right in but he does it in the most loving non harsh way he deals with sin he's able to expose it in others who are quite hypocritical but he's able to find a a a a a who's messed up his life and he's able to rescue him and save he deals with sin he deals with sins forgiven when that man in

Mark chapter two was brought to him and he's carried on a stretcher what's Jesus's first priority well it's obvious isn't it heal him from his illness but Jesus says son your sins are forgiven you and that's because sin matters even though that man would soon be made well that's not the biggest thing the biggest thing is son I can forgive your sins and I am forgiving your sins and these people when they go out as missionaries and the church is a missionary body if you forgive the sins of any that forgive them it's the same message that I have that you have it's the same cross that is the foundation of forgiveness the same resurrection

I am the one sending you you don't go out to make your own message I am sending you and when you go out with my Holy Spirit then you will declare this gospel I am the way the truth and the life no one no one will come to the father but to me so on the basis of this gospel it's your business to talk about sin and about sins being forgiven that's the church's task talk about sin talk about how sin can be forgiven not ignored not passed over not redressed talk about sin he says and about how sins can be forgiven and notice the beautiful word if you forgive the sins of any this is not talking about special people any do you have anyone in mind and you think surely that person's too far gone surely that person is so much in the darkness he's under the sway of the evil one he's corrupted to the very core surely that person could never be forgiven no no no

[41 : 23] Jesus says if you forgive the sins of him see the gospel that you're going out to talk about it's about sin it's about forgiveness and you tell them that people can be forgiven sins and tell that to the whole world they are forgiven and part of the task of the church is to not only proclaim forgiveness of sins to all who repent but to assure them sins are forgiven strangely we need that reminder we need that reminder but then there's the other side if you withhold forgiveness from many it is withheld in other words see the gospel that you go out to share if they ignore it and say my sins will be forgiven in some other way then your task is to say no it won't I am the way the truth and the life no one comes to the father but by me

I am the good shepherd I have come to give them life more abundantly there's no life to be found anywhere else if you withhold forgiveness it is withheld what trust what trust Jesus has in his people in his church but he knows he knows the secret he knows he's sending them and he knows the Holy Spirit is at work in them and through sin you can't have mission in the 21st century in Elliburn and West Lothian without peace the experience of peace the foundations of peace the proclamation of peace without the

Holy Spirit and it's the holiness of the Spirit that we haven't focused on it tonight that also matters and sin because it's the Holy Spirit of course he's going to be concerned with sin when I was on the

way through to leave this morning I was listening to the Sunday morning service and a lady was preaching and literally said nothing I thought what a waste to be given prime time and there was just nothing said it was literally just empty water and that's sad because we are called to go out to our world and its main problem is that it's under the judgment of God because of sin that's the biggest problem in every generation and we cannot change that we cannot alter it we must take account of it and by

God's grace we shall let us pray heavenly father we are thankful that you are the one who commissions and equips you are the one who calls and you are the one who never leaves your people you say I will be with you always to the very end of the age Lord all be with us we willingly receive of your spirit grant your spirit to us day by day hour by hour may we be instruments in your great mission for your glory we ask it amen