

Christ-based Mission

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Date: 03 January 2016

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[0 : 00] We'll return with me now to the passage we read in John chapter 20. We're looking this morning at verses 19 to 23. John 20 at verse 19.

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, Peace be with you. So on through to verse 23. We can imagine these disciples and Mary Magdalene as well amongst them.

At the end of this day really say, well, what a day. What a day it was. Because we read at the beginning of this chapter that early in the morning on that day, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb.

And we read at verse 19 that it was still that same day in the evening of that day when this incident took place that Jesus appeared in the midst of the disciples in this room where they were locked in.

[1 : 04] And appeared to them and spoke to them in this way and showed them his hands and his feet. What a day that was. A day that began with going to the tomb while it was dark and discovering it was empty, at least empty of his body.

And then ending with this appearance of that same risen Christ. To actually do the two things that were being done here in this passage for these disciples.

Firstly confirming that it was indeed himself. That this wasn't a phantom. This wasn't a ghost. This wasn't just a kind of spiritual, ethereal appearance.

This was the real person of Jesus Christ risen from the dead. And along with that confirmation, he commissioned them.

And he commissioned them for mission. He commissioned them to go as he had been sent by the Father. He was sending them. And we know from elsewhere in John's Gospel, from his great prayer in chapter 17, for example.

[2 : 11] And elsewhere too in the Gospels that the sending was the sending for mission. The sending of these people with the Gospel into the world. So as to declare to the world that Christ died and rose again.

In order to give forgiveness of sins to all who believe in him. And that's really our message at the beginning of this year.

This first Lord's Day of the year. What better way to begin that first Lord's Day. As indeed that Lord's Day began. That first day of the week.

Than to consider together the risen Christ. And the significance of the risen Christ for ourselves.

And the fact that that risen Christ, as he has promised. Is with his people to this day.

And that he is still commissioning disciples to be missionaries. To go into the world with the message of the Gospel. So let's look at his arrival first of all.

[3 : 11] As described in that passage. And then we'll look at the assignment that he gave to them. In terms of Gospel mission. On the evening of that day. The first day of the week.

The doors being locked where the disciples were. For fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. And said to them. Peace be with you. Now you notice twice it says here.

In the chapter. That they were together within closed doors. And here it specifically mentions. The doors being locked. For fear of the Jews. As far as the Jews were concerned.

The religious authorities. Jesus had been the leader of this gang. Of this group of people. They had put him to death. They had got rid of him. As they thought. And of course the disciples.

Were now in fear of their lives. That they would come after them as well. So it was for security purposes. That their doors were locked. And yet Jesus came. And stood in the midst of them.

[4 : 07] We're not told. How he actually appeared. They were not told. The mechanics if you like. Of his appearance. It just simply says. Matter of fact like. Jesus came and stood amongst them.

And it's very suggestive. That after this resurrection. And with this new resurrection state. For him bodily. It meant that he was able to do this.

And it projects forward into. Possibilities for our own resurrection state. And our own resurrection bodies. And the properties that will be. Those of God's people in the resurrection.

That they will have capacities and powers. That were not possible this side of them. Of death. We can't speculate. We're not going to dwell on that point.

But it does say. The doors were locked. And Jesus came. And stood amongst them. He didn't unlock the doors. They weren't opened for him. He appeared.

[5 : 09] In the midst of the disciples. And of course that itself. Reminds us of. The tremendous abilities. Of this risen Christ. That wherever his disciples are.

And whatever circumstances they are in. And however unlikely it is. That they will see him again. There he is. And there he is. Right in the midst. Of this group of disciples.

They weren't expecting him. They weren't there waiting. For his appearance. And yet there he is. Appearing. Coming into their midst.

And it's not just an appearance. It's a very real presence of Christ. He came. And stood amongst them. Do we appreciate today.

That while we think of Christ. No longer bodily. With his people. Yet today. We have the promise. That Christ is with us. That Christ is in the midst. Of his church. That he dwells.

[6 : 05] That he lives. In the midst of his people. That this is his home. That he has made this. A dwelling place. For himself. Where his people are. Not of course just here.

But wherever his people are. And it's the real Christ. It's the living Christ. It's the risen Christ. It's the exalted Christ. Who is still.

With his people. And what a privilege. And what an excitement it is. And should be for us today. That no less a personate. Than the royal Jesus.

The risen Jesus. The glorious exalted. Powerful Jesus. Is actually here. In this humble building. In the midst of us.

Unworthy disciples. That's the reality friends. And all who know him. Know that that's the case. He came. And stood amongst them.

[7 : 03] Now it's significant that. In the chapter you find. That he appears both to individuals. Especially to Mary Magdalene. There as you. As you we've read through the chapter. Where she went to the tomb.

First of all. And saw the stone. Had been taken away. She met of course. With the angels. And then. She actually then.

Went and told. Simon Peter. And she stood outside. She met with himself. And he revealed himself to her. She recognized him. When he spoke to her.

And the way that he. Spoke to her. Mary. We're not told again. Anything of the. Details of how that was the case. And how she didn't recognize him. In the first place. It simply states that again.

Matter of fact like. But we do know that. When he spoke to her. He revealed himself to her. And that again is. The property of this Christ. He reveals himself. As he pleases. To those.

[7 : 58] That come. Seeking for him. But then he comes here. To the group of gathered disciples. In other words. You come across.

In the chapter. The importance. Of Christ's resurrection. For individuals. But also for his church. The resurrection of Christ.

The risen Christ. Is a bearing upon. Our lives. Personally. And individually. And is there significantly. For his whole. Believing people as well.

This community of believers. Comes. To know. The risen Christ. Amongst them. And this individual. Mary Magdalene. As all of them. Individually. Know the risen Christ.

For themselves. Why is that significant? What significance. Does that have. For you and for me today? Well something like this. Certainly is included in it. That. It is in coming to Christ.

[8 : 51] For ourselves. Personally. That. You find. Faith. Beginning. And faith. Being established. Christ. The result.

Of Christ's. Exaltation. And Christ's. Ministry. On earth. Is. The creation. Of a believing. Community. Of people. The creation. Of his believing.

Church. But in that believing. Church. Individuals. Come to know. The Lord. For themselves. It's not just. That Christ. Comes. To a people. All at once. And makes himself.

Known. To them. In that way. Every single. Person. Needs to come. To know. Christ. For themselves. Mary Magdalene. Here. Comes to realize. Who Jesus. Is. That he is risen.

From the dead. And that is really. Something imparted. To our soul. Personally. Your faith. Begins. If you like. By coming. To know. Christ. For yourself.

[9 : 46] By a personal. Relationship. Or entering. Into a personal. Living. Relationship. With Christ. Is that what you have. Today. Because being. A Christian.

Is far more. Than just being. Part of the church. Belonging. To the group. Of people. That acknowledge. Christ. Being a Christian. Is.

Knowing him. For yourself. And coming. To see us. As Mary did. My master. Rabboni. My lord. My commander. Faith. Faith. Begins. There. Faith. Is set. In motion. If you like. By coming. To know. Christ. For yourself. But then. Faith.

Matures. When you come. Then. To be part. Of this. Believing. Community. You don't. Have faith. Maturing. By just. Existing. On your own. As an individual. Isolated.

[10 : 41] Believer. Because. Christ. Saves you. He saves you. Into his church. He saves you. Into this. Community. And belonging. To this. Believing. Community. As these.

Disciples. Then. Were. Mary Magdalene. Made her way. To where. The disciples. Were gathered. She belonged. To that. Company.

And when Christ. Changes. Your life. Not only. Can you not. Exist. Without him. But very. Meaningfully. You say. Well I can't. Really exist.

Properly. At least. Not. In the way. My life. Spiritually. Needs to develop. Without. Being part. Of this. Believing. Church. Of Christ. Your faith. As its. Individual.

Faith. Matures. In the company. Of fellow believers. That's why. Belonging. To the church. And being part. Of the church. Is so important. And it doesn't. Just mean.

[11 : 34] That we come. To church. It doesn't mean. That we simply. Come. To hear the gospel. And to take part. In worship services. That of course. Is important. But belonging.

To Christ's people. Is more than just. Coming to worship together. It means belonging. To. That group of people. That. In very different ways.

And. Constantly. And we hope. Consistently. Witness to Christ. In their lives. In the way they live. In their homes. In their communities. In their place of work.

Wherever it is. He came. And stood. Amongst them. And then he said. Peace. Be with you. When he said this. He showed them.

His hands. And his feet. Then the disciples. Were glad. When they saw the Lord. Jesus said again. To them. Peace. Be with you. And of course. These words. Are so significant.

[12 : 29] In the context. Aren't they? Because. The peace. That our hearts. Require. The peace. That this world. Needs. Is the peace. That flows. From the resurrection. Of Christ.

Peace. That has actually. Come about. By conquering. Death. By overcoming. Sin. And the death. That's attached. To it. And that peace.

Is now. Pronounced. To these disciples. And it's really. The Old Testament. Word. Shalom. That's behind. This expression. Of peace.

What you find. All the way. Through. The Old Testament. When this word. Shalom. Is used. And it's such a rich. Word. In the Old Testament. Background. To it.

In Hebrew. Because. It really. Effectively. Means. The life. That Jesus Christ. Brings to us. And gives. To his people. Is life. As good.

[13 : 23] As it gets. It doesn't get. Any better. Than the life. That Jesus gives. There is no better life. There is no equivalent. Life.

Life. It's life. As good as it gets. It is life. As we said already. It is life. Flowing from. His resurrection. In other words. It is life. Above death. Life that has conquered death. Life from which death. Is ultimately. And eventually. Expelled.

There is no death in heaven. There is no dominance. Of death. In the life. Of a believer. Even though. They die physically.

As Jesus said. Whoever believes. As I said to Martha. Whoever believes. Even though he dies. Yet shall he live. And whoever lives. And believes.

[14:22] In me. Shall never die. Do you believe this? Yes. That's what he said to her. Yes Lord. I believe. That you are the Christ.

In other words. Yes. I believe. That you are the one. Who gives us this life. The resurrection. And the life. Are we enjoying life today?

Life. This life. Life. This life. That. Jesus himself. Is able. And. Gives to his people.

This life. That looks forward. To eternity. Without death. Without any connection. To death anymore. Life. In which. All things.

Are made new. That's what they are now. Commissioned to bring. To the world. That there is. This life. That there is. This wonderful. Privilege. Of knowing Christ.

[15:21] And therefore. Knowing this life. This peace. This reconciliation. With God. This taking away. Of everything. That's between us. And God. So that this state of peace. Exists between us.

So that we enjoy. That peace of God. Because no longer. Will our sin. Be marked against us. No longer. Will it be down. On our record. No longer. Will it be unrighteousness.

That marks. And characterizes. Our lives. But righteousness. The righteousness. Of Jesus. And having said that.

He did something. Very significant. He showed them. His hands. And his feet. Why? What's the point. Of that. Action.

Of showing them. His hands. And his feet. Well. Of course. It's to do with. The marks. Of his crucifixion. He was. Nailed. To the cross. His hand.

[16:16] His side. Was pierced. With the soldier's spear. And John tells us. From that wound. Proceeded. Blood and water. That was.

What happened. On the cross. That was. Associated. With his death. Jesus. But now. As the risen Christ. I know. There's always been.

Questions. And still are. As to whether. These wounds. Are still obvious. In the risen body. In the exalted body. Of Christ. Christ. Well.

You can spend. A whole lot of time. Over that. And therefore. Miss out. The most crucial issues. Of the passage. Just not to actually. Give us. Such speculation.

And such questions. That we can spend. All that time. On them. And not saying. They're unimportant. Or there's wrong. To go into them. But the point. Of the passage. Is that. In his risen life.

[17:12] Jesus brings. With him. All the benefits. Of his death. All the benefits. Of his suffering. All the evidences. Of his sufferings. For the benefit. Of these disciples.

He's showing them. His hands. On his side. And he's saying to them. Look. And see. Who this is. This is. Myself. It is me.

It is I. I'm the Jesus. Who died. I'm the same person. I'm now above death. I have come through death. I've overcome death.

Here are the evidences. That it is. No else. No one else. But myself. That it is indeed. Myself. That's what he's saying to them. He's confirming. Who he is. But as he confirms.

Who he is. They see that. What he suffered. If you like. Is being carried. With him. Into. This situation. Where they.

[18:09] Are meeting. With the risen Christ. He's not left. This experience. That he had. Of his sufferings. Behind. And. In that great letter. To the Hebrews. You find.

A lot more of that. Of course. As. The priesthood of Christ. Is brought to you. And as. The writer there. Explains something. About. The priesthood of Christ.

One of the things. That he emphasizes. More than once. Is that. This is something. Jesus. Now. Occupies. As he occupies. Heaven. He occupies. The ministry.

Of a comforter. Because. He is able. To help. With those. Who are suffering. He is able. To succor. To support them. Because he himself.

Has suffered. In being tempted. You've probably. Come across. The poem. By. Edward.

[19:02] Shilito. Who. Wrote this poem. Shortly after. The horrors. Of the first world war. And the devastation. And the massive. Loss of life.

And the cruelties. Of that terrible time. It's called. The Jesus. Of the scars. And his. Intention in writing.

Was to. Really show. That. This risen Jesus. Really still. Connects. With our pains. And with our wounds. And with our situation. Here in this world.

In all the pains. And in all. The devastation. That comes. Upon us. As human beings. Nothing of that. Is lost on him. This is how he put it.

If we have never sought. We seek thee now. Thine eyes burn. Through the dark. Our only stars. We must have sight. Of thorn pricks.

[19 : 57] On thy brow. We must have thee. Oh Jesus. Of the scars. The heavens. Frighten us. They are too calm. In all the universe. We have no place.

Our wounds. Are hurting us. Where is the balm? Lord Jesus. By thy scars. We claim. Thy grace. If when the doors.

Are shut. Thou drawest near. Only reveal. Those hands. That side. Of thine. We know. Today. What wounds are. Have no fear. Show us.

Thy scars. We know. The counter sign. The other gods. Were strong. But thou wast weak. They rode. But thou did stumble.

To a throne. But to our wounds. Only God's wounds. Can speak. And not a God has wounds. But thou alone.

[20 : 55] Jesus. Of the scars. Immensely powerful. But so hugely compassionate. And understanding.

Why? Because he's been there. He's taken the scars. Of our sufferings. He still has them. In his ministry. To us. He brings us.

The benefit of his. Experience. As a sufferer. He shows us. His hands. And his side. How thankful. You are today.

As a Christian. That the Jesus. You worship. The Jesus. Who ministers. To you. Is not a Jesus. Isolated from your pain. Is not a Jesus.

Who stood at a distance. And looked down. On you pitifully. As he saw you. In your suffering. And in all the consequences. Of your sin. But didn't really enter. Into these situations.

[21 : 50] For himself. How thankful you are. Today. That the Jesus. Of your life. Is the Jesus. Of the scars. The Jesus. Of suffering. The Jesus.

Who knows. Your pains. There is the arrival. This risen Jesus. This Christ. Who understands. So well.

More than we do. Ourselves. Of what we go through. At times. In this life. And secondly. There is his assignment. Having arrived.

Having spoken. These words to them. Having showed them. His hands. And his side. And of course. All of that. Backs up. What he is now going to say. By way of. Assignment. To them. By way of. Commissioning them. As missionaries. When he has said. To the. To this. To them. I said. As the father. Has sent me. Even so.

[22 : 45] I am sending you. There are three things. About mission. That you find. Packed into. These words. And the following words. In verses 22. And 23. As well.

First of all. That gospel mission. Is of the highest. Importance. It's of the highest. Importance. You notice the parallel. That's built into these words.

As the father. Has sent me. Even so. I am sending you. In other words. There is a very. Very close. Relationship. And likeness. Indeed. Between. The father. Sending Jesus.

Into the world. His son. Into the world. And the son. Sending us. As his missionary. People. Into the world. There's a very close. Relation. And a close likeness.

And if you ask the question. How important. Was his mission. To Jesus. What was his mission. His mission. Was. That he had come. To seek. And to save. That which was lost.

[23 : 41] And John's gospel. Puts it. In different terms. For example. Chapter 10. The shepherd. Coming for the lost sheep. Coming to bring his sheep. To be saved. To bring them in. To gather.

Gather them together. Securely. As his flock. That was the mission of Christ. How important was that mission. You hardly need to ask the question. Christ gave that mission.

Just look throughout John. To go no further than that. Of how he speaks. Of this being sent. By the father. And of the way that the father. Loves him.

Because he's laying down his life. For these sheep. Nothing was of greater importance. To the Lord. Than to fulfill his mission. To actually do the will of his father.

To complete the work. That his father had given him to do. And now he's saying. As that was the case with me. Even so. I am sending you.

[24 : 36] Into the world. How important. His mission to us. When you ask the question. How important was his mission to Jesus.

We know that. There are aspects to the mission of Jesus. That do not apply. To the mission that is given to the church. We are not. In the place of Christ. To go and render. An atonement for our sin. We are not in the position. Of suffering as he did. He suffered. In bearing the sin of his people. But the parallel. With his mission. Is that. It was of such importance. To him. That his mind.

Was set from beginning. To end. On finishing it. On accomplishing it. On fulfilling. This. Will of his father. That. Included his death on the cross. And his resurrection.

From the dead. And if you ask. How important. His mission to us. You've only got to ask. Well how important was it to Christ. Because there is a parallel. Well. It's of huge importance.

[25 : 38] To his church. There's only one thing that you place above it. And that's worship. And the two are linked anyway. You don't put evangelism.

Or mission. Before worship. Worship. Does not grow. Out of evangelism. Although there's a. Sense of caution. Which you can think about. That relationship.

Being true. But. Ultimately. Ultimately. It is worship. That leads to evangelism. The more you engage. In the worship of God. In the worship of this risen Christ.

The more you come to adore this God. And to study this God. So that you fall down. And adore him increasingly. And more and more. The more your heart will be moved. To evangelize.

To mission. To go out to lost souls. And to take account of the fact that. As the father sent Christ into the world. So Christ is sending you as a Christian.

[26 : 36] And us as Christians. Into the world. He's commissioning us. As the father commissioned him. In like manner. We speak about being Christ like.

And that's not an easy thing to define. But we think about it. Probably mostly. In terms of personal holiness. And there's nothing wrong with that. Because that's really.

Very much at the heart of it. But you cannot leave this. Out of being Christ like. If you want to be Christ like. If it's your desire.

To be Christ like. Then you've got to include this in it. That as Christ engaged. In fulfilling his mission. So we. Have to fulfill the mission.

That he's given to us. To be Christ like means. To seek the salvation of lost souls. We can't save them. We don't have the capacity.

[27 : 35] To convert them. But we have to. Engage. In mission. To them. And towards them. Because that brings us.

Into this parallel. With Christ. And with his mission. It is. Gospel mission. Of the highest importance. And you can of course. Have all of these. Different branches.

Of looking as to how you do that. That's not. Our position at the moment. It's this. It's the principle. Of the thing. It's the. It's the doing. Of the thing. It's the commitment. To. This gospel mission.

To bring the gospel. To a lost world. To bring Christ. As the risen Christ. In witness. And not just in preaching. But in. In the witness of.

His church. To the world. In which we live. Secondly. This gospel mission. Was not. A new mission. See. You mustn't think about.

[28 : 31] Christ having. His mission. And then he's giving to the church. Another. An entirely different mission. Even as the father sent me.

Even so. Am I sending you. There's this connection. Built into that as well. That. As Christ's mission. Was to save. So it is still.

This Christ. Who is. The savior. And who is doing. The saving. Not you and I. He sends us. As missionaries. Into the world. He sends us. On the mission.

Of gospel mission. But it is he. Who still saves. Saves. And he saves. Through the church's mission. Not saying. Of course. It's impossible for.

Not at all saying. It's impossible. For God to save. Even. Outside. If you like. Of the gospels. Of the church's mission work. But. The fact is. That's how God.

[29 : 27] Has chosen. To do it. You go to the likes of. Acts. And you see that. It's Jesus. Who actually. Poured out the spirit. On the day of Pentecost.

It was Jesus. The Lord. Who opened Lydia's heart. It is Jesus. Who is active. In bringing. People. To know himself. Savingly.

But he is doing it. Through his church. And through his church's mission. In gospel mission. That's one of the great things. That impels us.

That motivates us. That this exalted Christ. Not only does he still save. But he still saves. Through the gospel mission. Of his church. And that the great aim. And purpose.

Of engaging in gospel mission. Is that it is through. That. That Jesus comes to save people. You see. That means that. If I'm thinking.

[30 : 20] Of not doing mission. As a Christian. What I'm really saying. Is I don't belong. To this method. And to this means. By which Jesus comes.

To save people. And he has commissioned us. To go forth. With the gospel. And you see. That gives. The mission of the church.

Validity. And authority. It's not just the fact. That it is Christ. Who commissions us. To do mission. But it's his mission. That's still being carried out. In a sense.

Through the church's gospel mission. His mission. As the savior. His mission. In saving souls. His mission. In bringing people. To know himself. That's what gives. The church's gospel ministry.

Its authority. And its validity. Because. You and I meet. As you well know. With objections.

Objections.

[31 : 16] To. The whole idea. Of people being converted. That the church. Should not actually. Go about seeking. To convert Jews. Or to convert. Convert Muslims.

Or to convert atheists. Or secularists. Now you mustn't. Capitulate to that point of view. However strongly. It's put across. However much it forms.

Part of. The general thinking. Of people in our age. Because. For one thing.

To engage. In mission. For Christ. Means. Aiming at people's conversions. And what people say to you.

When they say. But you've no right. To actually. Say to me. That I ought to convert. To be a Christian. That I ought to convert. From Islam. To Christianity. From following.

[32 : 10] The teachings of Muhammad. And coming to. Be a Christian. To be a follower of Christ. To give my life. To the Lord. But you have a right.

You have a mandate. You know that Christ lives. You know that Muhammad is dead. That Buddha is dead. That all of these things. Are just false religions.

You know that this Christ. Is the Lord. Of the universe. You know that this Christ. Has commissioned his church. You know that this Christ. Has given us this mandate. To go forth.

And to make disciples. You know that part of that. Is that people will be converted. And if they're not converted. Then they're lost. Doesn't matter what religion. They belong to. And when somebody.

Accuses you. Of having no right. Or objects to. The way you're going about. Witnessing to Christ. And saying. You've got no right. You have to say. Certainly within yourself.

[33 : 06] Even if you can't show it. Demonstratively to people. I have the right. We have the right. As God given. As Christ given. As Christ appointed.

The right to evangelize. Which means the right. To seek people's conversions. Even though we can't convert them. We do still nevertheless.

Want to see them converted. To know Christ. To know salvation. To know who Christ. We do still. We do still. We do still. We will still ■■■ nearest. And fell to theodo. To knowmanship.