

John 20:19-23 AM

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[0 : 00] All right, kiddos. So I have a little question for you. Do any of you have a scar or have scars?

Do you know what that is? It's kind of when you get a boo-boo on your body and even after it heals, there's still something left there that shows you once had a boo-boo there.

Does anybody have a scar? Oh, Susie or Annabelle, sorry. Confused my daughter and my wife. Probably not the last time that'll happen. Annabelle, where's your scar? How did you get it? Well, I cut my forehead and I needed to get stitches.

Yeah, that was the night before we were flying to visit family. You tripped and hit your head on the wall and cut your forehead and we had to get stitches. That's right. So that's unfortunate. How about you? I am your uncle.

[1 : 06] Oh, right here. That's a scar. What happened there? I was playing and I put both feet in a shoe and I was holding on to a mirror that was sharp. Oh, no, it got cut by a mirror. Ooh. Okay, this last story, last story. Yeah.

I fell off a chair and cracked right here. Ooh, fell off a chair and cracked your head right above the chair. These are dramatic stories. This is good stuff. I've got three scars.

So one here on my eye, on my arm and on my knee. My eye and my knee, basketball injuries. Not good. In university, my arm, last year I cut myself with a chainsaw.

It was kind of like a chainsaw self-massacre. It was not good, but I still have my arm, so we're good to go, right? So these are dramatic stories, right? But the point is that scars often tell a story.

And Jesus, did you notice what Jesus did when he showed up with his disciples? What did he do? It was kind of a weird thing to do. What did Jesus do when he showed up with his disciples?

[2 : 20] What did he show them? Yes? His scars? Yeah, he showed them his scars. He said, peace? And then he showed him his scars in his hands and his scars on his side, where he's hanging on the cross.

And he said, peace be with you. And those scars tell the story of how God sent his son to bring peace on earth, as it is in heaven.

And the way he did that was through his death on the cross, through his scars. He brings us peace. Why do you think Jesus' scars bring us peace?

Why do you think Jesus' scars bring us peace? Anybody have any ideas about that? I think it's because he takes away all of our sins through his death, and he makes us friends with God.

And that is the deepest peace we can have. No sins, full friendship. All right, so you can come up here. You can come up here now. So I'm going to continue talking with everybody for about 10 or 12 minutes.

[3 : 24] But look, we've got pieces of paper, and we have things to color with up here. So you can take one of those. And what I would like you to do is draw a picture of what it was like, what you think it might have looked like, when Jesus showed up in the room with his disciples?

What did the room look like? What did Jesus look like? What did the disciples look like? Were they, like, really afraid or really happy, or was there both? And what do you think they were feeling when this happened?

If you're in any doubt, you can just draw a Christmas tree. But ideally, we would like you to draw something.

What was it like when the disciples first saw Jesus? What did they see? Were they happy? Were they sad? What did they feel? And then I'll let you know when I'm going to come back to you.

Friends, if you could open up to John chapter 20. I forget what page it's on. 9-0-6. 9-0-6. Just a brief reminder, in case you've forgotten, we're in a sermon series on the meaning of the incarnation for

us.

[4 : 42] So in week one, we looked at Philippians 2, the humility of Jesus, divine majesty in the form of human humility. In week two, we looked at Matthew chapter 1, the promise of the incarnation.

Jesus was given two names, Emmanuel, Jesus, God with us to save us. In week three, we looked at Luke 1, at the mercy of the incarnation, God's endless mercy for the humble and the hungry. In week four, we looked at Galatians chapter 4. It was the goal of the incarnation, that God sent his son into the world so that we might be sons and daughters of God through him.

And now this week, the final week, we look at John chapter 20. And John chapter 20 is, we're looking at the link, the connection between Jesus' incarnation and our mission as the people of Jesus.

It makes sense? Incarnation and mission. It's all there in verse 21. When Jesus showed his hands and sighed to them and they were glad that they saw the Lord, then in verse 21, Jesus said to them, peace be with you, here it is, as the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.

[5 : 54] We have about 12 minutes to just reflect on that one verse. Mission is core, Jesus is saying, to what it means to be my disciple and what it means to be a part of my church.

So being a missionary is not just something that some special people do out there in a far and distant land. Being a missionary is something that every disciple of Jesus does, every place in which Jesus has placed them.

And so there are two things, two main points. First is we are sent by Jesus, and second, we are equipped by Jesus. First, we are sent.

Notice here how there's a comparison between the way in which the Father sent Jesus into the world and the way in which Jesus himself is sending his disciples into the world.

Jesus himself makes this link, this spiritual connection between his incarnation and our mission.

Just as who Jesus is and what Jesus does is meant to be an expression of the Father's love for the world, God so loved the world that he gave his only son.

[7 : 04] So also, who we are as disciples and what Jesus has called us to do and be in the world is meant to be an expression of Jesus' ongoing love for the world he has come to seek and save.

And it's actually quite an incredible truth that we have here. Jesus wants to include us in his mission to the world. Now, could he do it all alone?

Surely he could. He could have found another way to do it, and it probably would have been much easier, more straightforward, and more efficient if he just did it on his own. But that's not what Jesus wants.

He wants to invite us into the work that he is doing. Now, why? Why does Jesus choose his kind of sad and fearful and doubting and often denying disciples? And there are just a couple thoughts here.

One is that I think by including us in his mission, Jesus highlights something very special about his glory. It's that his glory is at work in and through human weakness and has the power to bring transformation in and through normal, ordinary human lives.

[8 : 13] Do you remember what Jesus' first miracle was in the Gospel of John? Anybody remember? What was it? Yeah, water into wine, right? At the wedding in Cana of Galilee.

Oh, no, Jesus, there's no more wine. Oh, don't worry about it. Just fill the pots. He changes water into wine. It's an example of extreme transformation.

And at the very end of it, this is the first miracle, John tells us that Jesus did this. This was a sign to show, to reveal his glory. So right at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, we're told that the sort of glory that's going to be revealed in Jesus' ministry from beginning to end is going to be a glory that brings radical transformation into people's lives.

When people see the transformation that comes in other people's lives, they're going to think, how did this happen? There's no way this was humanly possible. And they'll be right because it will be God's glory and his work and his grace on display.

So, if you look at John chapter 20, for example, everything that surrounds our passage, Jesus sends a sad and sorrowful Mary to tell the apostles that he's alive. Jesus sends fearful disciples to be the messengers of his forgiveness.

[9 : 28] He sends a doubting Thomas to bear witness to his resurrection. And he reinstates a denying Peter to be the shepherd of his people. In each of these, Jesus is not diminishing his glory,

but he's revealing something about its special beauty.

He doubles down on the central message of the gospel by including us in his mission. He is telling us that Jesus' glory has the power to save and transform and work through anyone.

So, including us in his mission actually reveals something magnificent about Jesus' glory. glory. But it also, by including us in his mission, Jesus is just simply trying to meet people where they're at.

Think about all the places that you are at in a week. In a boardroom, in a coffee shop, at a computer desk, at a grocery till, in apartments, in hospital rooms, on the sidewalks, you name it.

By sending his disciples to the world, Jesus is continuing his father's missional impulse. He's not waiting for people to figure out and come to him. He's saying, no, I want you to go to where people are.

[10:40] I came to seek and save the lost, so now I am sending you so that my grace can meet people right where they are at. It's all there.

Verse 21, as the father has sent me, so I am sending you. And that's the first point. We are the sent people of God, sent by Jesus, just as Jesus was sent by his father.

But the wonderful truth of this passage, and this is the second point, is that the one who sends us is the same one who equips us. And this is really good news, friends. It's not like Jesus just says, here's your mission, now I'm going to leave you to your own creativity and resources and power and ingenuity and wisdom to figure out how to do it.

Because the reality is is that if he just left us to our own resources to accomplish the mission that he gave us, we'd become very discouraged very quickly and probably throw out the towel pretty promptly, throw in the towel pretty promptly.

But I think the logic of verse 21 goes deeper than just a logic of similarity, like God sent Jesus and so Jesus sends us. I think the logic of verse 21 leads us to a logic of dependence.

[11:51] I think Jesus is saying something like this. What he accomplished through his incarnation, that is his death, his life, his miracles, his resurrection, has provided us with everything we need for our mission.

So let me put it another way around. What we do in the world, what Jesus sends us in the world to do, depends on and flows from what Jesus has already done in the world.

Does that make sense? So I think that's part of the point of Jesus' scars, which I started with, with the children. Did you notice how it's a chiasm? Jesus says, peace be with you and then he shows him his scars and then he speaks again, peace be with you.

Peace and the scars in the middle. And I think the scars are not just meant to be evidence that Jesus is alive now, the one who died is alive. He's risen, although it is that for sure. The scars are meant to be a sign from Jesus of his completed mission.

Think about this with me. The first words about Jesus ever spoken in the Gospel of John are from John the Baptist, behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

[13:03] And then the last words of Jesus that he ever speaks from the cross are, it is finished.

And so I think what we're seeing here is that Jesus, as he sends his disciples, he is showing them the signs of his completed work and the mission that he has fulfilled because he wants them to know that the efficacy of what they will do in the world depends at every moment and in every place on the sufficiency of what he has already done.

that he is going to supply everything the church needs, that he is everything the church needs. And we see this, I love this, because as Jesus sends us, everything, all the gifts of Jesus surround the sending.

So you look in verse 19, he just shows up, it's the comfort of his presence. In verses 19 and 21, it's the courage of his peace be with you. In verse 22, it's the might and the power of his spirit that he breathes upon you.

And then in verse 23, it's the message and the hope of his forgiveness that he extends to you. So Jesus gives us a mission and then he surrounds, he surrounds us with everything we need for the doing of that mission, his presence and his peace and his spirit and his forgiveness.

Just a moment. Hey kiddos, we've got just two or three minutes left. So put your final touches on your masterpieces. And then if a couple of you want to, I'd love for you guys to share what you've drawn with us.

[14:39] So just to end for a couple of minutes here, I want to summarize what I said and then try to apply it very briefly. Summarize. We are a missionary people. That's the point. We're sent by

Jesus and Jesus makes our mission very clear to us and we're equipped by Jesus.

He gives us everything we need for the mission he's given us. Now, what does this mean for us as we head into 2025? I don't know about you, but when looking down the corridor of 2025, I was talking to somebody after the 730 service and I was like, looking down the corridor of 2025, are you somebody that kind of looks at it and goes, oh, it's full of possibility and potential.

I'm so excited to see what can happen or are you somebody that's like, ooh, I'm not sure what's going to happen. And she was like, oh, I'm definitely one of those ooh, I'm not so sure people. And I know that many of you sitting here just knowing some of your circumstances in life, when you look at 2025, you have no idea what's in store for you.

You just don't and you can't predict it. And even as a church, if we just think corporately and we look down 2025, we know 2025 is going to be a big year of transition.

Like, we know there's lots of transition. There's going to be tons of celebration. Woo, 100 years.

David, you know, Bronwyn, like, there's all the, God's faithfulness to us is going to be magnificent.

[16:01] But there's going to be a lot of transition. And in transition, there's all these temptations to like fight or flight or freeze. And if we freeze, we could forget our mission.

And that's a real temptation. We could hunker down and focus inward and say, let's just pause and wait until we get our next rector and until we get a youth pastor and a children's minister and a building and so on and so forth.

It's always, or even in our lives personally, you could be in that freeze mode saying, I'm just pressing pause until this thing and then I'll really live my life according to the mission that Jesus has given me.

And what I want to encourage you in as we head into 2025 is that don't do that. I think in 2025, God, through the Lord Jesus Christ, by the power of his Holy Spirit, contextualized in his infinite love and wisdom is giving us two opportunities as a church.

The first is an opportunity to remember and remain focused on our mission. To whom is Jesus sending you this year?

[17:19] Where has Jesus already placed you? And who is he drawing to himself in that place? How can you be a part of what he's doing in their lives?

Who in your life needs to hear the message of forgiveness, maybe for the first time and maybe maybe he's others for the hundredth time? Because no matter who our rector is or what other changes come our way, the message and mission that Jesus has given to his church will not change.

And the second thing is I think the Lord has given us an opportunity to lean more heavily into the gifts that Jesus has already given us for our mission. So like how is Jesus himself equipping us for the mission that he's giving us?

Are we trusting him to meet us where we're at and are we looking to him to provide us with what we need? He's reminding us constantly of his presence.

He's inviting us constantly into a deeper experience of his peace. He's filling us constantly afresh with his spirit, spiritual gifts for ministry, spirit-led creativity and wisdom and peace and patience and boldness and he's constantly by his spirit centering us on the forgiveness that come from the scars of the Lord Jesus.

[18:40] By his blood he has brought us peace. Brothers and sisters, in the end, the good news of this passage is that it's the faithfulness of Jesus to his God-given mission that will hold us in faithfulness to our Jesus-given mission.

As the Father has sent me, says the Lord to us, even so, I am sending you. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.