

# Jesus Prepares His Disciples

**SESSION IN A SENTENCE:** When Jesus appeared to His disciples, He told them that they would go on mission to tell others the gospel and by doing so draw sinners to Him through faith.

**BACKGROUND PASSAGE:** John 20:19–21:25

The Australian swim team reported their training for the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro as follows:

**Monday:** Two-hour swim in the morning and two-hour swim in the afternoon alongside one hour of circuit training.

**Tuesday:** Two-hour swim and two hours in the gym in the morning and one hour of Pilates in the afternoon.

**Wednesday:** Two-hour swim in the morning and two-hour swim in the afternoon.

**Thursday:** Two-hour swim and two hours in the gym in the morning and one-hour cardio and one-hour core work in the afternoon.

**Friday:** Two-hour swim and one-hour circuit training in the morning and two hour swim in the afternoon.

**Saturday:** Three-hour swim and two-hour circuit training.<sup>1</sup>

This list doesn't include warm-ups, cool-downs, providing for nutritional needs, or the other "before" and "after" requirements. They keep this disciplined routine for years and years before attending the games, and it is only excellence in preparation that equates to success in the pool.



What situations in your life require preparation, and how do you prepare for them?

# Group Time

## Point 1: The risen Savior brings His disciples peace and joy (John 20:19-20).

<sup>19</sup> When it was evening on that first day of the week, the disciples were gathered together with the doors locked because they feared the Jews. Jesus came, stood among them, and said to them, “Peace be with you.” <sup>20</sup> Having said this, he showed them his hands and his side. So the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

The grief, fear, and uncertainty had set in with Jesus’ disciples. Would they face the same fate as Jesus? And what were they to make of the empty tomb? Beseated by unanswered questions, the disciples huddled together behind locked doors. But then Jesus entered the room and issued a greeting of peace! After all, grief becomes a temporary malady in light of Jesus’ resurrection and the truth of our own at His return. Fear flees when we look upon the risen Lord who has already defeated death.

### Voices from the Church

“But here we see the peace of God is not the absence of negative thoughts, it is the presence of God himself ... It is a sense that no matter what happens, everything will ultimately be all right, even though it may not be all right at the moment.”<sup>2</sup>

—Timothy Keller



What are some ways the resurrection of the Savior should dispel fear and grief in the lives of believers?

An experience with the Savior will change our disposition, just as it did for the disciples. Jesus had promised in John 16:20 that the disciples would be sorrowful for a time but that their grief would soon turn to joy. This appearance of the risen Savior fulfilled that promise. The transition from grief and fear to peace and joy occurs when we gaze upon the One who is powerful over all—over our sin, over the world, and even over death.

How would you rate the presence of God’s peace and joy in your life?



Nonexistent

Bearing Fruit

## Point 2: The risen Savior gives His disciples a mission (John 20:21-23).

<sup>21</sup> Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, I also send you.” <sup>22</sup> After saying this, he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup> If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

We serve a sending God who sent His Son so that we might be reconciled to Him. As we are united to Jesus by faith, we then are sent on mission by Him. Believers participate in God’s ministry of reconciliation with sinners by offering them His promise of forgiveness of sins. This sending isn’t a “casting out” but a “going with” because the gospel message cannot go forth without the power and help of the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus provides to His followers.



What are some ways Christians can live “sent”?

The mission of sharing the good news of Jesus is not only for those called to be pastors or international missionaries. Rather, it is the mission of every believer, both individually and collectively as the church. The church and its members have received from Jesus, the head of the church, the authority to proclaim the forgiveness of sin. Through the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit, we are called to Jesus in repentance and faith, and through the same work of God, we are sent that we may call others to Jesus as well.

**Mission of the Church:** The mission of the church is to go into the world in the power of the \_\_\_\_\_ and make \_\_\_\_\_ by proclaiming the gospel, calling people to respond in ongoing repentance and faith, and demonstrating the truth and power of the gospel by living under the lordship of Christ for the \_\_\_\_\_ of God and the \_\_\_\_\_ of the world.



How do forgiveness and unity within a church help to support the mission of the church?

### Point 3: The risen Savior calls His disciples to great faith (John 20:24-29).

<sup>24</sup> But Thomas (called “Twin” ), one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> So the other disciples were telling him, “We’ve seen the Lord!”

But he said to them, “If I don’t see the mark of the nails in his hands, put my finger into the mark of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will never believe.”

<sup>26</sup> A week later his disciples were indoors again, and Thomas was with them. Even though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” <sup>27</sup> Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and look at my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Don’t be faithless, but believe.”

<sup>28</sup> Thomas responded to him, “My Lord and my God!”

<sup>29</sup> Jesus said, “Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.”

Jesus showed astounding kindness and care to Thomas. This doubting disciple had heard the reports, but now he saw the risen Savior with his own eyes and touched Him with his own hands. Jesus met Thomas in his unbelief and offered up the proof of His resurrection. In response, Thomas believed and exclaimed, “My Lord and my God!” Questioning is not an assault on the truth, which can stand its ground. Instead, it may be a helpful exercise that results in deep faith, just as it did for Thomas, by God’s grace.



Why do you think Jesus would seem to prioritize faith that comes without seeing?

Thomas believed when He saw the object of His faith—the risen Jesus. We don’t have the privilege to see Jesus with our eyes today, at least not yet, but we don’t trust Him in blind faith either. We have eyewitness accounts in the Gospels that testify to Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. So Jesus said those who believe in Him through the word of these eyewitnesses are blessed. But how can they believe if they haven’t heard about Jesus? The good news of Jesus must be shared, and all believers have been sent into the world with this gospel (Rom. 10:14-15).

**Evangelism:** The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the \_\_\_\_\_ to all \_\_\_\_\_. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by \_\_\_\_\_ witness undergirded by a Christian \_\_\_\_\_.



# Daily Study

## Day 1: Read John 20:19-20

One look at the risen Savior and the disposition of the disciples changed immediately.

Knowing the truth of the resurrection and trusting Jesus to fulfill all of His promises results in peace and joy. These characteristics should be the marks of a Christian who fully understands the depths from which they have been saved and the victory that is sure in Jesus!

Christ is our peace and has secured our eternity (Eph. 2:14; 1 Pet. 1:3-5). There is nothing for us to fear because we trust that He is in control and powerful over all things. He is our joy because He is also our goal, as we fix our eyes on Him and enjoy a relationship with Him today that will be perfected in eternity. Death loses its sting and frustrations lose their pain in light of what He has promised for those who love Him.

We don't have to live as the world does, with cynicism, chaotic busyness, negativity, and complaints. We can enjoy every breath God gives us with joy and rest in peace because Jesus is Savior and Lord, reigning over all and interceding on our behalf. We know that a day is coming when we will be with Him in the fullness of His kingdom.



What does your disposition reveal about your beliefs?

## Day 2: Read John 20:21-23

Jesus was sent by the Father to reveal His plan to reconcile people to Himself. Jesus humbled Himself and willingly died on a cross to pay the penalty we deserved for our sin. And as He was sent, so are we.

We are sent as lights into a dark world to announce God's plan of reconciliation, the good news of Jesus! This doesn't mean that every person should prepare for international missions as soon as they become a Christian, but it does mean that every Christian is called to be a missionary in the context of their daily lives. Thankfully, this isn't a calling we complete on our own. It is through the Holy Spirit's power that we may offer the good news of salvation through Jesus. Every believer is to live a "sent" life, proclaiming Jesus as Savior and forgiveness of sin offered through Him.



Are you living "sent"—intentionally seeking opportunities to share the gospel? Why or why not?

## Day 3: Read John 20:24-29

Jesus didn't shun Thomas for his unbelief. Instead, He invited him to touch the wounds in His hands and side as proof of His resurrection. Thomas saw and had faith. Although we don't get to see and touch the wounds of Jesus as a testimony to His resurrection, we don't trust blindly. Our faith is seeing faith through the eyes of those who saw the risen Savior, like Thomas. He proclaimed the truth of the gospel message in his response, "My Lord and my God!"

Jesus indeed is who He said He was: He is the Son of God who would die for sin and rise again, defeating it forever. This is the substance of our faith. We may not see with our eyes, but we live as those who trust in faith the same truths Thomas realized. Jesus is risen! God's promises find their yes in Him (2 Cor. 1:20).



How does the historical reality of Jesus' resurrection affect your everyday faith?

## Day 4: Read John 20:30-31

Don't you wish we had a record of every sign and every statement of Jesus? Yet as John 21:25 says, "If every one of them were written down, I suppose not even the world itself could contain the books that would be written."

The four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) reveal to us the truth about Jesus—His life, death, resurrection, and ascension—and are sufficient to reveal that He is the Son of God and is to be trusted as Savior and Lord. In this passage, John revealed why he chose to include what he did in his Gospel: So people would believe the good news brings life in Jesus' name!

This was John's goal in writing and also should be our goal in living. May every moment of our lives point others to the One who can save and redeem.



What steps can you take to make a priority of showing others the truth about Jesus?

## Day 5: Read John 21:1-25

Jesus revealed Himself to hundreds of people during the forty days between His resurrection and His ascension (see 1 Cor. 15:5-8), but one of the most moving moments was when Jesus restored Peter. Peter had denied knowing Jesus three times after He was arrested (Luke 22:54-62), a fact that surely brought shame on Peter. His name means "rock," but he was far from immovable on that occasion.

Yet three times Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him. Jesus expressed to Peter that the way he could show his love was to feed Jesus' sheep. Of course, Jesus didn't have a flock of fluffy sheep to care for but a growing group of followers who would need a shepherd.

Peter and his confession of faith would be the rock upon which Jesus would build His church (Matt. 16:18), and Peter would need to be a wise shepherd. This is also a way we proclaim our love for Jesus today, through faithful and encouraging service to Jesus' church and making disciples of all nations.



What does it look like practically for us to feed Jesus' sheep?



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