

**SEPTEMBER 12, 2021**  
**LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**  
**THIS IS US WEEK 1 | WE ARE A MISSION**  
**JOHN 20:9-13**  
**FALL QUARTER WEEK 1 OF 13**

EFCC's definition of a disciple: Someone who is learning to live in the way of Jesus with the heart of Jesus.

EFCC's discipleship values: Pursuit, Obedience, Journey, Wholeness, Together, Mission.

EFCC's discipleship model: being WITH (upward focus), becoming LIKE (inward focus), doing AS (outward focus).

EFCC's discipleship methodology: focus on what we need to learn, what we need to practice and with whom we need to be in relationship in order to live in the way of Jesus with the heart of Jesus.

For this week, the discipleship value is **mission** because the main point of the message is that "We are sent ones." We are sent just as Jesus was sent. We are to go as He went and we are to go how He went. In His way, with His heart.

The message will teach us how to be sent ones. On what should we focus? What should we prioritize? Who do we rely on along the way? What should we never forget as we go? This is what we looked at in the message from John 20:19-23.

In the being **WITH**, becoming **LIKE** and doing **AS** paradigm, this week's message focuses us on **doing as** (which is an outward focus). We have jobs to do. There are reasons we were saved. There is purpose through sentness. We don't exist just for ourselves. The church isn't only for us. Jesus said there are lost sheep, and we are sent to reach them. We have a significant, cooperating work to do with God.

#### **Renewed by Grace**

**1. What do you buy way more than most people?**

Watches. Those who know me well know that. Also, Reese's Peanut Butter Cups. And cheap tea bags for my tea needs.

What about you?

#### **Equipped as Disciples**

**2. Take another look at verses 19-21.**

○ **What is the context for these verses?**

It is the night of the resurrection. It was "evening on that day, the first day of the week." The disciples are hiding out (can't blame them). They have heard from Mary M that the Lord has appeared to her and that He said some things to her (vs. 17-18). It's been quite a weekend!

○ **Why do you think Jesus first says what He says and then second does what He does?**

Why do you think He leads with “Peace be with you”? (Probably because they needed to hear it, right!? He knows what they need to hear, so He speaks it to them. There is something here about knowing what the people around us might need to hear and then speaking it to them. There is a good word here that our words matter, that they carry weight, that we should use them when appropriate.)

Are there other things that come to mind?

But why does He show them His scars? It was brought out in the message that He is linking what He has suffered for them to the peace that they can now have. He says, “Peace be with you,” then shows them His scars. Peace through scars. But also I think He shows them His scars to convince them He is Jesus. In Luke’s account he writes, “While they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst and said to them, ‘Peace be to you.’ But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit.” Later in the same passage it says “He showed them His hands and feet.” Because He simply appeared to them out of thin air, He shows them proof that He is not a spirit but is indeed Jesus. Doing this gives validity to His words of peace toward them. It really is Him. They really can have peace.

One other thing I think about is that Jesus has spoken to them about peace before in John 14 (which is part of the Upper Room Discourse). I believe His previous words, coupled with His current words and His scars are intended to prove to them beyond a shadow of a doubt that He has indeed risen from the dead.

Are there any other ideas you have about why He would link their peace with His scars?

- **What kind of peace do you think Jesus has in mind for His disciples?**

There is no guessing here. He has in mind that His scars have brought them peace with God (Romans 5:1) and the peace of God (Philippians 4:6-7). Moreover, I believe He also wanted them to have the peace that comes from knowing that He has risen from the dead just as He said He would, which means He can easily accomplish everything else He said He would.

They were scared to death about the future. He suddenly shows up. That scares them even more. He doesn’t want them to be frightened by Him or by what their tomorrows may look like. He wants them to be at peace because He is not dead and because He has a plan. He wants them to be at peace because He is at peace. He wants them to have what He has. He shows them His scars to prove to them that He actually did what He said He would. He wants this fact to calm them down and settle their souls. They can truly have peace with God and the peace of God. Their future is amazingly bright, even though it will be painfully difficult.

- **How does “seeing the Lord” bring gladness and peace to you?**

Verse 20 says, “He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord.”

Some additional questions:

- Putting yourself in their shoes, how would knowing you weren't seeing a ghost have caused you to rejoice? How would it have given you peace?
- In what ways does seeing Him bring you peace? In what ways does it bring you gladness?
- How do you usually end up seeing Him? How does He usually let you know everything is going to be alright, even if it doesn't necessarily go your way?
- How and why is it that seeing Him is always enough? What is it about that reality for Christians?

### 3. Take another look at verse 21.

- **Why do you think Jesus goes from "peace" to "mission"?**

In verse 21 He says, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you." So it goes: **peace, scars, peace, I send you.** I think He goes from *peace* to *mission* because the peace is for the mission. The peace is something they will take with them as they are sent. The peace was for them, but not for them to simply hoard and do nothing with. Yes, He wanted them to have internal peace, but He didn't want them to have inactive or inert peace. The peace is given both to comfort and strengthen them for engagement. They will need the peace in order to be focused and effective as they do the things they are sent to do. If they are worried about *this* they won't be able to focus on *that*. So it is that He gives them the blessing of peace through His death and resurrection, which is proven in His scars. His peace is both for them to soak up and enjoy, but it is also for the sake of others. This peace will enable them to fulfill their mission.

Do you see it this way, or do you see it another way? Does your group have additional thoughts?

- **How do you see peace being linked to mission?**

Peace is part of the power behind our ability to carry out the mission. People whose hearts are troubled won't be as effective as people whose hearts are at peace. People whose hearts are troubled won't be as focused as people whose hearts are at peace. People whose hearts are troubled will be distracted by what troubles them. People whose hearts are troubled may have a difficult time sharing the gift of peace with others who need it (because they are not thinking of sharing it, but are focused almost exclusively on living in the peace they have already received). People whose hearts are troubled will spend time trying to get the peace, rather than sharing peace. People whose hearts are troubled will have a difficult time convincing others that God offers them the peace they want/need. There is strong power in example (though perfection is not needed, but honesty and growth are.) Simply put, peace allows mission to be more successful.

But then also, peace is part of the message of the mission. (Which is why it's so important that the messengers are living in peace themselves.) It's hard to be a witness to others to the peace Jesus gives when you don't have it yourself. (This may sound harsh, but it is true. Of course, I am mindful that there are lots of people who have chemical imbalances which need to be addressed through medication, and there is no shame in that. And God is well aware of who His people are who need some help from a doctor.) In John 14:27 Jesus was pretty clear - "Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful." That is hard to do sometimes, I get that. I struggle too!!! Yet He has told us

and He has given us the Holy Spirit to be able to do it. What the world certainly needs to see are people who have a peace that passes understanding, and only Christians have that. And they need to see Christians who are honest about their struggles around the area of a peaceful heart and who are growing in their ability to walk in the peace Jesus has given them. We'll never reach perfection. We'll all have good days and bad days. So this isn't about faking it and acting like we have peace when we don't. It's about having that genuine peace He promises us, and growing to have it more and more. And we can be honest in how we are growing, even as we admit we have not arrived and have far still to go. I know that is my story. I still have so much growing to do, but I am seeing how He is bringing maturity in this area. While I can't speak of perfection, I can speak of movement and advancement by His grace. What I have to wrestle with is this - If having an untroubled and unfearful heart were not possible, then Jesus has lied to me. Peace is part of the mission.

How do you see peace being linked to mission? Do you see other points? Do you agree with my thoughts? Disagree? I hope you can pick up the spirit in which I've written my notes. I was afraid of coming across as too harsh or critical or judgmental. I have family members who struggle with anxiety and depression, and so I don't want to be insensitive or thoughtless there. And I have areas where I struggle to walk in the peace of God. I suspect we all do. But I want to grow, and I know you do too. And I want to be able to tell people how God is growing me. Maybe it is helpful to remember that we grow in our ability to walk in the peace of God. It's not like we wake up one morning and suddenly we have 100% peace and 0% worry or fear. If you think I've been too harsh or critical or even have come across as judgmental in my comments, I would appreciate it if you told me. I am wrestling with this...

○ **What kind of peace is it that would be linked to mission?**

Peace with God and the peace of God. What else does the world really need?

Having peace with God brings joy, delight, satisfaction, fulfillment, a light heartedness, love for God, love for others, perspective. What else would you say it brings?

The peace of God touches every area of life:

- Our concerns about the future
- Our concerns about the present
- What we carry around with us from the past
- Financial concerns
- Health concerns
- How is the election on Tuesday going to turn out?
- Our relational futures
- What other areas would you add?

○ **How does this influence your own commitment to Jesus' mission?**

It keeps me focused on walking in the peace I have received in the Holy Spirit (for my sake and for the sake of others). Though this message was about being sent, for me the emphasis has been on practicing the peace that is required to be well-sent.

What would you say? What else?

- 4. In what ways does the Holy Spirit's relationship with you help you as you go on mission?**
- He is the source of the peace I and those I am being sent to desire so much.
  - He is the One who will help me walk in and practice the peace I have already been given (by Him).
  - I need to rely on Him.
  - I can trust Him to direct me to people who need the peace He has to offer.
  - What else would you say?

**Sent in Love**

- 5. What is one concrete thing you can do this week to apply this text? What is your response to Pastor Ryan's "I will...." at the end of the message?**

I don't have mine yet, but I will let you know next week what it was and what I did to apply it.