

BACK TO NORMAL... BACK TO PNEUMA

Received or Resisted?

May 16, 2021

Overarching Theme: In 2021, FUMC will be SENT with the peace of Christ!

Instructions:

When using this material as teacher, feel free to pick and choose the point you want to emphasis in the lesson. *The format of the curriculum is designed to have an abundance of information in which to refer as desired.*

Core Point:

On Easter evening, the Risen Christ appears to his gathered disciple for the first time since Good Friday and speaks these words: "Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so I send you." Just as Jesus sent his disciples into a divided, conflicted 1st Century with his peace, so he sends us into a divided, conflicted 2021 with his peace.

John:

The Gospel according to John is written by John, one of the apostles, who was the brother of another apostle named James and all the Gospels mention their father's name as Zebedee (Mark's Gospel in addition mentions that Jesus gave these brothers the name 'Sons of Thunder'). John's Gospel is quite different from the other three (does not contain a genealogy, or any record of Jesus' birth, childhood, temptation, transfiguration, appointment of the disciples, nor any account of Jesus parables) because more than his Gospel giving an account of the life of Christ, it is a powerful argument for the incarnation of Christ. The purpose of the writing of this Gospel was to demonstrate conclusively that Jesus was, and is, the very heaven-sent Son of God and that all who believe in him will have eternal life because he is it's only source. It was written to new Christians and also to seekers of salvation and truth sometime between AD 85 and 90. A key verse of this Gospel is: "Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (20:30-31). Some of the special features of this Gospel are: In every chapter Jesus' deity is revealed and his true identity of the divine-human nature and life-giving mission is underscored through the many titles he is given as well as through the eight miracles of Christ which John mentions, calling them signs.

The greatest sign, of course, is the resurrection and John provides a stirring eyewitness account of finding the empty tomb and various post-resurrection appearances of Jesus. Of these miracles, six are unique to John as well as the 'Farewell / Upper Room Discourse' (chapters 14-17); over 90% of John is unique to his Gospel. John records seven 'I am' sayings of Jesus through which he affirms his preexistence and eternal deity.

– Adapted from The Life Application Bible, p. 1866.

Reflect on this Scripture:

John 20:19-22 NRSV

¹⁹ When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." ²² When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

John 21:1-3 NRSV

¹ After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. ² Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. ³ Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

Introduction:

Last week we looked at how the Holy Spirit is our constant companion. This week we will look at the truth that we need to allow the Holy Spirit to work in our lives by continually opening ourselves to receive rather than resist.

This Week:

The Holy Spirit works in the lives of people so that they see their need for a Savior and come to faith in Jesus Christ. Those who are receptive in their hearts and minds are led to salvation through repentance and faith in Christ and the Holy Spirit comes to live in them. The Spirit works within them to give meaning and purpose to their lives in who they are and what they do so that they would live as children of God in this world, sharing the love of Christ with others in both word and deed. However, this doesn't happen by itself without allowing God's Spirit to

convict and spiritually renew in the case of the unbeliever or without allowing God's Spirit to continue working to spiritually sanctify in the case of the Christian who has believed and received Christ as Savior and Lord.

The beginning of the last chapter, chapter 21, of the Gospel of John gives us a picture of what happened to Jesus' disciples, especially Peter, after all that they experienced in living with Jesus and witnessing his amazing life but terrible death, and even his unbelievable resurrection from the dead as after that for 40 days Jesus from time to time appeared to them and taught them more about himself and the Kingdom of God. In chapter 20, the risen Christ met his disciples on the evening of the first Easter day and imparted his peace, commissioned them to go into the world with the good news of salvation for all through believing in him, and encouraged them to receive the Holy Spirit so as to be empowered for this work. In the previous chapters and in this one, we see that the disciples had been transformed by meeting Jesus, the long-awaited Messiah of God, and they also received meaning and purpose for their lives. However, it was not all that easy as it seemed because with all the highs and lows that they experienced, including their one-time enthusiasm and the moment of having abandoned Jesus on the fateful night of his betrayal by one of them, there was likely a lot of anxiety and uncertainty about the future. They probably were confused about the reason they followed Jesus and what that meant for the future as they expected Jesus to restore the glory of Israel, having forgotten all that Jesus revealed to them. Therefore, Peter decided to return to the occupation that he had abandoned to follow Jesus – to being a fisherman in catching and selling fish for a living and six of the other disciples decided to do the same with him.

Out of the seven, we know that Peter, James, and John were professional fishermen but even as they returned to this occupation, they caught nothing the whole night. John's Gospel mentions that early the next morning at daybreak, the resurrected Jesus stood on the shore and called out to them to cast their nets on the right side of the boat so as to catch fish. As they did they caught so many large fish, 153 to be precise as they would have counted them once on shore, and their nets did not break by the load. By mentioning this post-resurrection incident of Jesus with these disciples, the Gospel-writer points out that this was a time when the disciples had closed their lives to the working of the Holy Spirit because of the disillusionment that they faced and as a result they lost meaning and purpose to their lives, returning to what they were before. But encountering Jesus again, whom they initially did not recognize and after the miraculous catch of fish they did by probably remembering how it happened in the same way in the past when they first met Jesus (Lk. 5:1-11), they were able to open their hearts and

minds again and the Spirit through their encounter with Jesus help them to have meaning and purpose to their lives restored, being reminded that they were called to be fishers of people and each person they were sent to with the love and peace of Christ mattered just as each fish was counted.

Whoever we are and whatever we do in our lives, meaning and purpose comes to us as we live the Christian life allowing the Holy Spirit to work in and through us and this happens by continually receiving the Spirit's presence and power rather than resisting. The New Testament teaches that we need to live by and keep in step with the Holy Spirit of God (Gal. 5:16-25) as it is possible to hinder the Spirit in one's life (1 Thess. 5:19).

Questions to Ponder for Accountability in the Group:

1. What would be the reason(s) for a Christian, once made spiritually alive by the Holy Spirit, to resist the Spirit's work in one's life?
2. What needs to be remembered and done about living the Christian life in this sinful world so as to continue to find meaning and purpose in life and bearing spiritual fruit?
3. What do you understand about your salvation in Christ by the truth that the Holy Spirit can be hindered and resisted?

Activity for the Life of a Disciple:

1. Remember to find encouragement for the day by reading the daily devotional from FUMCC.
2. Ponder and pray on this scripture this week: John 20:22 NRSV
²² When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."
3. Prayerfully approach God in asking to be always open in your life to receive more of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit and help to never resist. Give thanks to God that God cares for you and will help you to return, if you're willing, whenever you stray.