



+

### Meeting the risen Jesus... with the disciples

John 20:19-23

#### Summary

This week we continued our series in chapters 20 and 21 of John's gospel, in which we look at the various post-resurrection appearances of Jesus recorded by John.

The passage seems to divide into two parts. The first centres around the change in the disciples' emotions as they meet the risen Jesus. Before Jesus appears, they are huddled in a house with the door locked for fear that the Jewish religious authorities might come after them next (v19). But after Jesus appears and announces His peace, they are overjoyed (v20). Jesus proves that it really is Him by showing them the nail-marks in His hands and side. His death has won peace for His followers.

The second part of the passage focusses on what the disciples are to do next as a result of the fact that Jesus is risen from the dead. Jesus tells them that He is sending them into the world, in the same way that the Father sent Jesus into the world.

We spent some time thinking about what it meant that Jesus breathes and says 'Receive the Holy Spirit' in verse 22. Although there have been many interpretations of this over the years, we took the line that this is a symbolic, acted-out parable which confirms and anticipates the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Armed with the power and authority that the Spirit brings, the disciples are to go out and preach the gospel. As people respond in either repentance and faith or rejection of the gospel, the disciples will declare that people's sins are forgiven, or not forgiven (v23).

Here are a few questions to start discussion off - as always, feel free to adapt for your group

#### Questions

Imagine you are one of the disciples on this first Easter Sunday night. What emotions would you be feeling and why?

How are we told the disciples felt in verse 19 and why?

What does the disciples' emotional state at the start of the passage teach us about their faith in Jesus' promises?

What do we know about the idea of peace (*shalom*) in Jewish culture? Why is this important?

How does John imply that peace has been achieved for Jesus' followers?

What causes us to lose peace in our lives and how is knowing the risen Jesus the answer? (Try to be as practical as possible).

How are the Father, Son and Holy Spirit all involved in the mission that is given to the disciples (and us) in verses 21 and 22?

What authority is given to followers of Jesus in verse 23? What does this mean in practice? What does it *not* mean?

In what ways can we abuse the authority that is delegated to us by Jesus?

Imagine you are having coffee with a non-Christian friend. The conversation turns to spiritual matters and your friend asks: 'So do you think I am going to heaven or not?' How would you respond to this question?