



# The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V25 N34 August 20, 2023

## MAKING GOD KNOWN

“Missional People”

John 20:19-23

### THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

#### Life Purpose

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in his kingdom purposes for his glory.

*“However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me – the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace.”*

Acts 20:24



What does being a *sent one* mean?

As a believer in Christ, you no doubt see yourself as a child of God. After all, John says in his Gospel, “Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believe in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God” (Jn 1:12-13). And repeatedly in his letters, John addresses his readers as “children,” using the Greek word *teknon* (1Jn 3:1, 2, 10; 5:2), which connotes those who are “begotten” or “born ones” (cf., Scottish “bairn”). Moreover, you undoubtedly also see yourself as forgiven, justified, sanctified, gifted, and so on.

What you may not see is that you are not only a “born one,” but also a “sent one.” In his high priestly prayer for the Eleven *and you*, Jesus prayed, “As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world” (Jn 17:18). His prayer and words later weren't for the Eleven only. Jesus was praying specifically for the Eleven. However, one commentator writes: “Comparison with verse 20 shows that in verses 6-19 Jesus was praying specifically for the Eleven. However, we should not regard what He requested for the Eleven as restricted to them exclusively. The change that takes place in verse 20 is not from one group of believers to another, as though they were in separate containers. It is rather a broadening of the field from the Eleven to those that would follow them. Thus it is understandable that when Jesus prayed for the Eleven He would pray for some things that not only they but their successors would need. Clearly all subsequent believers would need sanctifying by God's Word so that they could achieve their mission, just as the Eleven needed sanctification” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on John,” 2023 ed., 446-47, [planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/john.pdf](http://planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/john.pdf)). Later Jesus told the Eleven, you included, “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (20:21).

The point of the *comparison*, “As you [the Father] sent me,” revolves around *mission*. One commentator explains: “Jesus was sent by his Father

into the world (3:17) by means of the incarnation (1:14) with the end of saving the world (1:29); now that Jesus' disciples no longer belong to the world (15:19), they must also be sent back into the world (20:21)” (D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, PNTC, 648). And another writes: “He had come into the world to fulfill the Father's purpose and had completed his task. Now he expected them to continue his work in his absence. As the Father had sent him to speak his words, to do his works, and to lay down his life for the salvation of men, so he expected them to deliver his message (15:27), to do greater works than he had done (14:12), and to give their lives in his service” (Merrill C. Tenney, “The Gospel of John,” in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 9:193). As believers we must see ourselves as people on mission, and the subjects of that mission include all those within our sphere of influence.

In John 20:21 Jesus told his disciples, “As the Father sent me, so I send you” (TEV). Just as the Father sent him into the world so also he sends his disciples into the world. But does Jesus' use of *comparison* extend beyond simply being sent? If it extends to the notion of mission, then just as Jesus was sent on a mission to the world so also he sends his disciples on a mission to the world. By implication, then, Jesus' disciples ought to live their lives on mission like he did. Put differently, they ought to live missionally, which implies they ought to “share Jesus with others.”

Here's the point to remember: living missionally means living as Jesus' agent in the world. Living missionally doesn't mean becoming a vocational pastor or foreign missionary. Dallas dentists remain Dallas dentists; Springfield moms remain Springfield moms; Miami mechanics remain Miami mechanics; Seattle carpenters remain Seattle carpenters; Omaha office managers remain Omaha office managers; Toledo granddads remain Toledo granddads; you get the picture. It means being Christ's disciple in whatever sphere of work, in whatever community, in whatever church you attend.



## EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

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### Read John 20:19-23

19 *On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"* 20 *After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.*

21 *Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."* 22 *And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."*

### Read in another translation

19 *So when it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you."* 20 *And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord.* 21 *So Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you."* 22 *And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained."* (NASB)

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Box "that" specifying which "first day" in v. 19.
- Circle "disciples" in v. 19.
- Box "for" indicating *reason* in v. 19.
- Circle "Jewish leaders" in v. 19.
- Bracket the greeting in vv. 19, 21.
- Underline "he showed them his hands and side" in v. 20.
- Circle "overjoyed" in v. 20.
- Box "as" indicating *comparison* in v. 21.
- Bracket v. 22.
- Highlight v. 23.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about \_\_\_\_\_."



## DIG DEEPER

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Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. Summarize what had happened earlier on *that* first day of the week. (Jn 20:1-18).
  2. In verse 19, John indicates a meeting was held behind *locked* doors *that* evening. Who was there?
  3. In the same sentence, he adds the doors were locked because those in the room were afraid. Does that make sense to you? Explain.
  4. Then he says, “Jesus came and stood among them.” What do you infer from John’s statement?
  5. And he says Jesus said, “Peace be with you.” Why do you think Jesus repeated this greeting twice?
  6. Why would Jesus show them his hands and his side?
  7. Explain the point of the *comparison* in verse 21.
  8. Jesus said, “I am sending you.” Does that mean *you*? Explain.
  9. If Christ’s disciples do not have the authority to grant or withhold forgiveness, what does verse 23 mean?
  10. **Discussion:** Talk about the significance of the connection between *receiving* the Spirit and *being sent* (Jn 20:21-22; cf. Acts 1:8; 2:1-18).
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### Commentary On The Text

On the evening of the same day Mary Magdalene discovered Jesus' tomb was empty (Jn 20:1; cf., Mt 28:1-10; Mk 16:1-8; Lk 24:1-12), Jesus appeared to his disciples behind locked doors (Jn 20:19-21). Judging by all that had happened that day, not to mention all that had happened that weekend, they had to be wondering what would happen next. Earlier that day Jesus appeared to Mary at the tomb (vv. 11-18), to two travelers on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-32), and to Peter in Jerusalem (24:34). That evening the disciples met to rehearse the events of the day and deal with their doubts. They met behind locked doors for good reason. The Jewish authorities who arrested Jesus and saw to it that he was crucified could easily do the same to them. Ten, perhaps more, were in the dimly lit room when Jesus "came and stood among them" (v. 19). John doesn't explain how Jesus miraculously entered the room; the doors were locked! He leaves it to his readers to infer that locked doors could not keep the *resurrected* Jesus out. He greeted them with common words, which carried an uncommon meaning on this occasion. One author writes, "His words 'peace be with you' (repeated in 20:19 and 21) were a standard Hebrew greeting (Judg. 6:23; 19:20; 1 Sam. 25:6; 3 John 1:15), still used in the Middle East today. But here these words are far more than a greeting. At a profoundly personal level, Jesus is summing up the essence of his work and presence in the world. Peace is the gift of his kingdom. In 14:27 and 16:33 Jesus promised that this peace would be his gift to them, now he has delivered it" (Gary M. Burge, *The NIV Application Commentary: John*, 558). Immediately, he showed them his hands to prove that he was, in fact, the crucified one. "The disciples' response (20:20) to his appearance—after they see the evidence of his wounds—is likewise a fulfillment of what was promised, 'I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, *but your grief will turn to joy*. . . . Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and *you will rejoice*, and no one will take away your joy' (16:20-22, italics added). Once they see Jesus in this room, the disciples are filled with joy" (Burge, 558).

Then Jesus tells them, "'As the Father sent me, so I send you'" (v. 21 GNT). Jesus lived his life as a *sent one*; his disciples are to likewise live as *sent ones*. The Father sent Jesus on a mission to the world; Jesus sends his disciples on a mission to the world. Living life on mission isn't about becoming a vocational pas-

tor or foreign missionary; neither is it about living a bifurcated life. Living life on mission isn't about living a secular life during the week and a sacred life on the weekend; it's about living one life that integrates the two. Living life as a *sent one* "*applies to the whole life of every believer. Every disciple is to be an agent of the kingdom of God, and every disciple is to carry the mission of God into every sphere of life. We are all missionaries sent into a non-Christian culture*" (Alan Hirsch, "Defining Missional," *Leadership*, fall [2008]).

What Jesus did and said next is difficult to understand. He breathed and said "'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.'" The first difficulty pertains to the relationship of a giving of the Spirit on Easter to a giving on the Spirit on Pentecost. Some see the first as a *symbolic* giving in anticipation of the *actual* giving. The fact that the disciples did not leave Jerusalem until after Pentecost even though Jesus said "so I send you" (GNT) on Easter suggests as much. Some see the first as a *partial* giving of the Spirit that somehow prepared the disciples for a *fuller* giving seven weeks later. But giving the Spirit in part is hard to imagine. Finally, some see the giving of the Spirit on Easter as the *only* giving of the Spirit *for John*. "John does not anticipate another gift of the Spirit. He gives no hint of something to come, and if we did not possess the narrative of Acts, we would easily conclude that John 20 fulfills all of Jesus' promises" (Burge, 560). But we do possess the narrative of Acts, and in the mind of Luke and the preaching of Peter the giving of the Spirit on Pentecost is the only giving of the Spirit "promised by the Father" (Ac 1:4, 5) that pertains to the promise of Joel (2:16-21). All things considered, the first interpretation is likely the best.

The second difficulty pertains to whether Jesus gave the apostles, and by extension church leaders later, his authority to forgive sins. This difficulty is easier to resolve than the first. The short answer is no; Jesus did not give the apostles his authority to forgive sins. One author explains, "God does not forgive men's sins because we decide to do so or withhold forgiveness because we will not grant it. We announce it; we do not create it. All those who proclaim the gospel are in effect forgiving or not forgiving sins, depending on whether the hearer accepts or rejects the Lord Jesus as the Sin-Bearer" (Merrill C. Tenney, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 9:193).

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## Word Studies/Notes

v. 19 *the disciples* “How large a group is referred to by the disciples is not certain, but in the light of the circle at the last supper (made up of Jesus plus the Twelve, and then, after Judas Iscariot left, the Eleven), and in the light of the fact that Thomas is singled out as not having been present (v.24)—though doubtless there were countless other ‘disciples’ less tightly connected with the Lord who were also not present—we should probably think of the Ten (*i.e.* the Twelve, less Judas and Thomas)” (D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, PNTC, 646). “If the occasion is that referred to in Luke 24:33 there were others present, for Luke expressly mentions them” (Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, NICNT, 845). *The NIV Study Bible* places Luke 24:33 during the day on Sunday and 36-45 on Sunday evening (cf., Jn 20:19-25) (1588).

v. 19 *locked* The disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid the Jewish leaders would send a detachment to arrest them as they had Jesus. Jewish authorities had seen to it that Jesus was executed; they could more easily pick off his followers had they decided to do so. “The fact that the disciples *locked the doors* is a perfectly understandable reaction to the events of the past few days. But what is the significance of the inclusion of this statement by the author? It is often taken to mean that Jesus, when he entered the room, passed through the closed doors. This may well be the case, but it may be assuming too much about our knowledge of the mode in which the resurrected body of Jesus exists. The text does not explicitly state how Jesus got through the closed doors. It is possible to assume that the doors opened of their own accord before him, or that he simply appeared in the middle of the room without passing through the doors at all. The point the author makes here is simply that the closed doors were no obstacle at all to the resurrected Jesus” (the *NET Bible*, 32sn on Jn 20:21).

v. 19 *Jesus came* “The *function* of the locked doors in John’s narrative, both here and in v. 26, is to stress the miraculous nature of Jesus’ appearance amongst his followers. As his resurrection body passed through the grave-clothes (v. 6-8), so it passed through the locked doors and simply ‘materialized’” (Carson, 646).

v. 19, 20 *peace* “At one level, the greeting *Peace be with you!* is conventional, representing the Hebrew *šālôm ‘ālêkēm*, still in use today. Indeed, perhaps when the disciples first heard the risen Lord utter it, they thought little of it, being so astonished and overjoyed that linguistic subtleties would elude them. But the repetition of the greeting (vv. 21, 26) would eventually

prompt the reflective amongst them to recall that Jesus before the cross had promised to bequeath to them his peace (14:27; 16:33)” (646-47). Jesus could have rebuked them for their unfaithfulness and cowardice the previous weekend, but instead he spoke peace to them to reassure them and renew their hopes.

v. 20 *side* Jesus proves he is the disciples’ crucified, risen Master. Others who were crucified could show the wounds in their hands and feet, but only he could show the wound in his side.

v. 21 *sending* “As the Father sent me, so I send you” (GNT; NET); cf., “I sent them into the world, just as you sent me into the world” (17:18 GNT, NET).

v. 22 *on them* Lit., “He breathed, and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’” (652; Morris, 846). The words “on them” are added in many English translations. The significance of what Jesus did and the sense of what he said and the relationship of both to Acts 2 are much debated (see the summary of the debate in Carson, 649-55). Perhaps it’s best to regard verse 22 as a *symbolic* promise of the gift of the Spirit later to be given at Pentecost, given that Jesus told them to wait in Jerusalem for the “gift my Father promised” (Ac 1:4, 8). “John 20:22 is not mere symbolism anticipating an endowment of the Spirit that is nowhere mentioned, it is symbolism anticipating the endowment of the Spirit that the church at the time of writing has already experienced, and of which outsiders are inevitably aware” (655).

v. 23 *if . . . forgiven* Cf. Mt 16:19; 18:18. “Jesus was giving the apostles (and by extension, the church) the privilege of announcing heaven’s terms on how a person can receive forgiveness. If one believes in Jesus, then a Christian has the right to announce his forgiveness. If a person rejects Jesus’ sacrifice, then a Christian can announce that that person is not forgiven” (Edwin A. Blum, “John,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 343). “The two passives—‘they are remitted’ and ‘they are retained’—imply divine agency: the preachers’ role is declaratory, but it is God who effectively remits or retains” (F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, 392).



## APPLY THE TEXT

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### CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Just as the Father sent Jesus on a gospel mission, so also has Jesus sent you on a gospel mission.

### CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



## 3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



## FAMILY TALK

For years I was scattered with five different kids in at least three different schools. There was tennis on one side of town, football on another and a crowd of kids that needed to be driven to the community pool or a birthday party. I joked with school moms that we spent more time on the streets of 76013 than we did our own home. Home is basecamp for our family. It's the first place we want to go to celebrate or settle into a good cry. It's where we recharge with our people so we can do it all again the next day. Like our home, church is another basecamp and extension of our family. It's where we gather on Sunday to celebrate God's work throughout the week. We learn amazing Bible teaching and gather with our community to laugh and cry. We recharge so we can go out on mission the next week. At Central Bible Church we are on a journey to "make God known by making disciples who are changed by God to change their world." This mission is the same for our adults, students and kids. Though our heart might beat for different parts of the world or different areas in which we can serve others, we're a mobilized unit ready to spread the message of salvation through Jesus Christ. How are you involving your kids in the mission of God? Do you consider them partners on mission? Just like you and the disciples before you, they are being sent into the world with a message of salvation. How are you equipping them? We're praying for you!

### What Does The Bible Say?

Read John 20:19-23.

1. Why did Jesus show the disciples His hands and side?
2. What job did Jesus have that He gave to the disciples?
3. What did Jesus breathe on the disciples?

### What Do You Think?

How does the Holy Spirit help us share God's message of salvation through Jesus?

### What Do You Do?

How would you share the Gospel with a friend? Talk about this with your family and practice sharing the Gospel so you know what you'll say when the time comes.

## CORE COMPETENCY: Life Purpose

I believe God wants me to glorify Him in all I say and do.

## MEMORY VERSE: Zephaniah 3:17

*"The Lord our God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing."*

## KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: [kids@wearecentral.org](mailto:kids@wearecentral.org)

- ☐ I completed my Bible Study
- ☐ I memorized this week's verse
- ☐ I brought my Bible to church
- ☐ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

# OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

## CENTRAL BELIEFS

**Authority of the Bible** (2 Timothy 3:16-17)  
*I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.*

**Church** (Ephesians 4:15-16)  
*I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.*

**Eternity** (John 14:1-4)  
*I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.*

**The Holy Spirit** (Romans 8:9)  
*I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.*

**Humanity** (John 3:16)  
*I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.*

**Identity in Christ** (John 1:12)  
*I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.*

**Jesus Christ** (Hebrews 1:1-4)  
*I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.*

**Life Purpose** (Acts 20:24)  
*I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.*

**Personal God** (Psalm 121:1-2)  
*I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.*

**Salvation by Grace** (Ephesians 2:8-9)  
*I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.*



## CENTRAL VIRTUES

**Love** (1 John 4:10-12)  
*I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.*

**Joy** (John 15:11)  
*I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.*

**Peace** (Philippians 4:6-7)  
*I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.*

**Patience** (Proverbs 14:29)  
*I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.*

**Kindness/Goodness** (1 Thessalonians 5:15)  
*I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others*

**Faithfulness** (Proverbs 3:3-4)  
*I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.*

**Gentleness** (Philippians 4:5)  
*I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.*

**Self-Control** (Titus 2:11-13)  
*I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.*

**Grace** (Colossians 3:13)  
*I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.*

**Hope** (1 Peter 1:3-5)  
*I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.*

**Humility** (Philippians 2:3-4)  
*I choose to esteem others above myself.*



## CENTRAL PRACTICES

**Bible Study** (Hebrews 4:12)  
*I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.*

**Biblical Community** (Acts 2:44-47)  
*I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.*

**Compassion** (Psalm 82:3-4)  
*I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.*

**Disciple-Making** (2 Timothy 2:2)  
*I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.*

**Evangelism** (Acts 1:8)  
*I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.*

**Generosity** (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)  
*I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.*

**Prayer** (Psalm 66:16-20)  
*I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.*

**Single-Mindedness** (Matthew 6:33)  
*I focus on God and His priorities for my life.*

**Spiritual Gifts** (Romans 12:4-6)  
*I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.*

**Worship** (Psalm 95:1-7)  
*I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.*

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**Stephanie Thomas** (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have four children: Elijah, Levi, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

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