

Life Group – You Are Not Alone – Week 3

Connect: What are you celebrating this week or season in your life?
What challenge are you facing in this season in your life?

In our passage today Jesus is extending peace to people who had let him down. Jesus is restoring relationship with people who had abandoned him. He knows who he's dealing with. He knows their doubts and their failings. Here, and in other conversations with his followers after his resurrection, he reestablishes a relationship with these very normal people. He doesn't write them off or dismiss them.

One of the big macro-themes in the Bible is the image of God. God made us in his image (*imago dei*). This image has been broken by sin. God's been working to restore that image, to undo the damage caused by sin. The Bible tells us that we're being changed into the image of Christ, who is in the image of God. He's restoring that image.

Another macro-theme is the mission of God (*missio dei*). God is on mission to restore that image. The whole Bible is about the mission of God. God chose a people to carry out his mission to bless the world. God sent his Son to carry out this mission. Now, Jesus gives the mission to those who follow him, to the glory of God (*gloria dei*).

In other words, we were made in the image of God to participate in the mission of God, all for the glory of God.

Read John 20:19-23

1. What does John want us to see in the condition and state of mind of the disciples? What are they inordinately distracted by and focused on, according to John 20:19?
2. What did Jesus promise in John 14:18-20, 25-29; 15:18-19, 26-27, and 16:19-22? What did the disciples forget and fail to focus on?
3. John 20:19-23 is the fulfillment of all Jesus' promises in the Scripture references listed above. What does that mean for the truthfulness and trustworthiness of Jesus' word?
4. If horizontal cares can easily distract and deceive us from the truth of our vertical relationship in Christ, what must we keep our eyes squarely focused on? What two things does Paul say in Col 3:15-16? How is one related to the other?
5. When does the disciple's fear turn to joy and their sadness turn to gladness? What is John communicating about the power of Jesus' resurrection for our personal lives and for the world?
6. What ought to be the natural result of personally experiencing such power, peace, and joy?
7. The Father sent Jesus, and now Jesus sends the disciples. How was Jesus sent, and what message was he sent with? What implications does that have for how we are sent?

Jesus, I pause to hear your words and receive them as spoken directly to me today: "Peace be with you! As the Father sent me, I am sending you." Send me Jesus to be an agent of good in my world today, prompt me to pray for my friends, co-workers and family. Prompt me to pray for the church around the world. Help me to make disciples – helping people find and follow you. What a gift that you are always with me. I love you. Amen.