Resurrection Ministry

John 20:19-23 ESV
19 On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." 20 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending 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, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."

Background

- In the Bible there is no specific plan laid out for ministry
    - Jesus didn't say "step 1 do so and so, step 2 . . . . . ."
    - Much Easier if he did, pastors couldn't mess it up, or maybe they could
    - However, Jesus did lay out some basic tools that ministers (everyone) need no matter where we are sent
- Here in John 20 Jesus gives us 4 Key elements for disciples to start ministry after the Resurrection= Peace, Sending, Giving the Holy Spirit, and Commission to Forgive

Key Elements

1. Peace
    - Greeting
        - Transformed by Jesus
        - "Hello" in English
    - Passing the Peace in Church
        - Only during Holy Communion
        - Standard introduction in a lot of churches
        - Don't do it here because makes some visitors uncomfortable
    - Kiss
        - Europe= standard greeting, French=touch cheek kiss air
        - New Testament
            - Paul= "greet one another with a holy kiss"- Romans 16, 1 Corinthians 16, 2 Corinthians 13, 1 Thessalonians 5
            - Peter in 1 Peter 5:14 "Greet one another with a kiss of love
        - Know what you're all thinking= Last week-Naked baptism, This week-kissing one another! What is wrong with you Brent!
        - Culture of the time
            - Kissing Pagan idols/gods (Greeks/Romans)
            - Disciples of Jesus Christ this kiss was a sign of peace and reconciliation to each other not the idols/gods

        - Not just blood kin, sign of peace and reconciliation for the family of the community of faith
    - Over time
        - Kiss of Peace has evolved
        - Handshake, Hugs, etc.
- Jesus
    - John 14:27 ESV
      Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.
    - Here in John 20 Jesus says “Peace be with you” 3 times, side note number 3
        - Twice to the disciples w/o Thomas in vv. 19-23
        - Then once with Thomas
        - John 20:24-29 ESV
          24 Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe." 26 Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." 28 Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."
        - Interesting in John 14, we read v.27 a few minutes ago, earlier in the chapter Thomas and Jesus has this interaction
            - John 14:5-7
              Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."
    - Jesus is not just saying “hello” when he says “Peace be with you”
        - Risen One is now giving his disciples peace
        - 1st Gift of the Resurrection= Grounding of ministry in Christ’s peace

2. Sending
    - John 20:21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."

- Disciples are sent by Jesus in the peace of Christ
- Common dismissal from Christian worship for thousands of years “Go in peace”
- Here Jesus says “As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you”
    - Not desperation
        - Gotta get out of here b/c of trouble
    - With Confidence
        - Hope
    - Being sent doesn’t mean you have to “go” anywhere
        - Bloom where you are planted
        - Many times I have thought I needed to “go”, but the Lord has put me in Jackson Co./Jefferson for a reason
        - Neighboring series a few weeks back
- So No matter if you Go or Stay disciples/you are Sent in the Peace of Christ

3. With the Holy Spirit
    - John 20:22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit
    - Jesus breathes the Holy Spirit on his disciples
        - IMPORTANT
        - Again in John 14, this time v. 26 Jesus says, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”
        - Jesus promises not to leave the disciples orphaned, but to send the Holy Spirit to help them
        - Greek/Hebrew
            - Greek word for spirit= “pneuma”, like pneumonia
            - Hebrew= “ruach” (roo'-akh)
            - Also means wind or breath
            - The Hebrew word is the same word as translated as the “breath of life in Genesis”,
        - I don’t think it is ironic that here the Holy Spirit is the “breath of life” and that Jesus breathes the breath of life on his disciples . . . . . .and he breathes that breath of life after he was crucified, dead and buried and rose again in the resurrection
            - Don’t miss the power of that, Jesus breaths the breath of life after he rose from the dead!
        - Similar to the French “air kiss”, Jesus kisses the Holy Spirit/breath of life on his disciples
    - Sent into ministry with the Holy Spirit
        - Baptism (Last week) “In the name of the Father, Son, Holy Spirit”
        - Peace of Christ, As the Father Sent Jesus, with the Holy Spirit
    - MInistry is grounded in the Love, Power, and presence of the Triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)
4. To Forgive or Retain Sin

- John 20:23 NRSV If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."
- To Forgive or Retain Sin
    - Lots of things could have followed the preposition “to”
        - “To change the world”
        - “To bring justice”
        - “To convert everyone”
    - No, 1st words Jesus spoke after breathing on the disciples the ‘breath of life’ in the form of receiving the Holy Spirit for power in ministry
        - Was about forgiving Sins (or retaining them)
        - Interesting, must be important
        - Mercy and wisdom to conduct ministry
        - Mercy 1st
            - Mercy is not getting what we deserve= punishment
            - Grace is getting something you don’t deserve
            - David Bost, Pastor St. Paul UMC in Lumpkin County, “Whole lotta grace, very little mercy”
    - Forgive 1st, Retain 2nd
        - Whole different sermon
        - Focus on forgive
    - Remember what Jesus said while on the cross “Father forgive them for they know not what they do”
        - Could have retained their sin, but choose to forgive!
        - Don’t be fooled forgiveness is a choice!

Closing

- Jesus says
    - “Peace be with you”
    - I am sending you as God sent me
    - Go and minister to the fearful, the hiders, the closeted, the condemned, the ostracized, the haters and the hated
    - I am sending you, as God has sent me, to breathe peace into dark places
- We have a great responsibility in the ministry of the Resurrection!
- “Peace be with you”
    - Not just a greeting
    - Not “Good Morning”
    - Call to be in Reconciliation ministry with Christ as we offer God’s peace in places of woundedness and brokenness
- We offer ourselves as part of Christ’s risen body
    - We go in the name of Jesus Christ
    - Speak the power of forgiveness through our words and actions
    - We go to God’s people and offer God’s invitation of peace and reconciliation

- As we embark on this Resurrection Ministry let us hear Jesus speaking to us, Let us hear him calling us, everywhere and always to breath God’s reconciling love into this world!