

REFLECTION GUIDE

JOHN 20:19-31 | RESURRECTION MISSION

KEY TERMS

Signs – John uses the word *signs* rather than "miracles" throughout his Gospel to emphasize that Jesus' works point beyond themselves to reveal who he is. Here, John tells his readers that he wrote not to record everything Jesus did, but to show enough so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name (vv. 30-31).

Thomas – Thomas is often remembered as "doubting Thomas," but the other disciples also only believed after seeing the risen Jesus (v. 20). When Jesus appears later and invites Thomas to touch his wounds, Thomas responds with the highest confession of Jesus' identity in the entire Gospel: *My Lord and my God!* (v. 28). John opened his Gospel, declaring that *the Word was God* (1:1), and now a human being looks at the risen Jesus and says the same thing.

DID YOU KNOW?

When Jesus breathes on the disciples and says, *Receive the Holy Spirit* (v. 22), the language echoes Genesis 2:7, where God *breathed into [Adam] the breath of life*. Just as God's breath gave life to the first creation, Jesus' breath signals the beginning of something new.

SYNOPSIS

On the evening of Jesus' resurrection, as the disciples are together behind locked doors afraid of the Jewish authorities, Jesus comes and stands among them and says, *Peace be with you* (v. 19). He then shows them his hands and his side, and the disciples are *glad* when they see it is him (v. 20). Jesus repeats, *Peace be with you*, and then adds, *As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you* (v. 21). Jesus brings peace to his disciples and then sends them out on a mission, but not before he breathes on them and says, *Receive the Holy Spirit* (v. 22), empowering them for the mission he is giving them. Thomas, however, is not there (v. 24). When the others tell him they have seen the Lord, he refuses to believe unless he can see and touch Jesus' wounds for himself (v. 25). Eight days later, Jesus appears again and goes straight to Thomas, inviting him to see and touch. Thomas responds immediately with the words, *My Lord and my God!* (v. 28). Jesus' response points beyond just those in the room when he says, *Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed* (v. 29).

John then steps back and tells his readers why he wrote his Gospel: *Jesus did many other signs, but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name* (vv. 30-31). The Gospel of John is not an exhaustive biography. Everything John has selected, arranged, and emphasized has been so that his readers would see who Jesus is and trust him with their lives.

GOING DEEPER

Read Matthew 28:18-20 and 2 Corinthians 5:18-20. After his resurrection, Jesus tells his disciples, *As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you* (v. 21). What does it mean that Jesus' mission didn't end with his resurrection but was handed to his people? Where in your life might Jesus be sending you to represent him?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

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LEARNING THE WORD

1. Read John 20:19-31. Make 5 or so quick observations. What most catches your attention?
2. Jesus greets the fearful, locked-in disciples not with rebuke but with a typical Jewish greeting of friendship: "Peace be with you". What does this tell us about Christ's compassion for his disciples and for us?
3. In verse 21, Jesus ties the disciples' mission directly to the Father's sending of him: "As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." What does this parallel reveal about the focus and cost of gospel mission? What does it mean that our mission is modeled after Christ's incarnational, self-giving mission?
4. Jesus breathes on the disciples and says, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (v. 22), echoing God breathing life into Adam in Genesis 2:7. What is John signaling about the new creation inaugurated by Christ's resurrection, and what is the Spirit's role in empowering gospel proclamation?

LIVING THE WORD

5. Thomas refused to believe the testimony of the other disciples and demanded personal, physical proof. In what ways do we similarly resist believing the testimony of Scripture and the witness of the church? How does the internal work of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:16) and the sufficiency of Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16-17) help us with our doubts and guide our walking by faith?
6. Jesus met Thomas right where he was – doubts, demands, and all – and Thomas responded with a wonderful confession of faith: "My Lord and my God!" How does Thomas's story guide how we relate to people in seasons of doubt in light of Christ's patience here (see also 1 Thessalonians 5:12-15)?
7. The disciples moved from locked doors and fear to excitement and mission – all because of the risen Christ. Where in your own life do fear and self-protection keep you from boldness in sharing the gospel? What would it look like to let the resurrection reorient your posture toward the world?