

Church Year Story 22

*Catechism and Memory Verse
from the Congregation at Prayer for the Week*

BIBLE STORY: JESUS' RESURRECTION APPEARANCE IN THE UPPER ROOM

John 20:19-31

Central Thoughts

- Fear is a result of sin and the unbelief that separates us from God.
- The forgiveness of sins is the cause of Jesus' resurrection and the content of the Gospel.
- The Holy Spirit is "breathed upon us" through the Word of God so that we might believe in Jesus.
- The Office of the Ministry is Christ's gift to the Church, so that the forgiveness of sins might be proclaimed to the entire world.
- The Apostles' were chosen to be eye-witnesses of Jesus' death and resurrection, so that they might testify to us that Jesus is risen from the dead.
- Every blessing of salvation is ours through faith in Jesus, even though we have not seen Him as the Apostles had.
- The Scriptures were written so that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ and that believing we may have life in His name.

Discussion Questions

Why were the disciples shut up behind closed doors in the evening of the first day of the week?

They feared the Jews who had arrested and crucified Jesus.

How could Jesus simply appear in the room?

He was resurrected and immortal. He could simply step out of the heavenly realm into the earthly realm without opening the doors or the windows to a room.

What were the first words Jesus spoke to the disciples?

"Peace be with you."

What do these words mean?

"Your sins are forgiven."

What did He also do?

He showed them His hands and His side.

Why did He do this?

Because they were chosen to be eyewitnesses of His death and resurrection. They needed to see that it was He who had been crucified, died, and was buried, who now was risen again from the dead.

What reaction did the disciples have?

They were glad when they saw the Lord.

What did Jesus say to them a second time?

"Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

What had the Father sent Jesus to do according to the very words Jesus had spoken?

He had sent Him to forgive sins.

What was Jesus now sending the disciples to do?

Forgive sins.

How did Jesus breathe on the disciples and give them the gift of the Holy Spirit?

He breathed on them and gave them the gift of the Holy Spirit by speaking the words to them, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent Me [to forgive sins], I also send you [to forgive sins]." When He had said this, He said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

How was the Holy Spirit given to the disciples?

By Jesus breathing upon them with His words.

How does the Holy Spirit come upon us?

When Jesus breathes on us with His words of forgiveness.

What promise did Jesus give the disciples when He forgave them and sent them to forgive sins?

The Holy Spirit would work through them whenever they forgave sins for His sake. "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

Where are these words of Jesus found in the Catechism?

In the Office of the Keys.

What is Jesus establishing by His words?

The Office of the Keys or the Office of the Holy Ministry.

What are men called to do in the Office of the Ministry?

Forgive sins in the stead and by the command of Jesus.

How are they to do this work?

By preaching the Gospel, baptizing, absolving sinners, and distributing the Lord's body and blood.

Who was not present when Jesus appeared the first time to the disciples?

Thomas.

What did Thomas insist upon seeing?

Jesus' body with the marks from the wounds in His hands, feet, and side.

Did Thomas have a right to ask to see Jesus' body?

Yes, but only because Jesus had told the Twelve that they would see Him and be witnesses of His death and resurrection. Jesus had promised that they would see Him. Jesus kept His word, even though Thomas and the other disciples had doubted.

What were the apostles called to be?

Eyewitnesses of Jesus' death and resurrection, chosen and sent out by Him to bear witness to Him and to preach His Gospel in all the earth.

What did Thomas confess when Jesus kept His Word and allowed Thomas to handle His resurrected body?

"My Lord and my God!"

What does Thomas' confession mean?

Jesus is the Lord—Redeemer from all sin, death, and the power of the devil—and He is God.

What does Jesus say to us who have not actually seen Him with our eyes?

"Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

What does Jesus' statement mean for us?

We have every blessing of salvation from Jesus that Thomas and the rest of the Eleven received as eyewitnesses.

Do the Gospels record everything that Jesus said and did?

No, but "These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name."

Meditation on the Bible Story

The disciples could not believe in the Lord's resurrection or understand what it meant apart from the Scriptures and the reception of Jesus' forgiveness. Jesus' forgiveness is the heart of the resurrection. His resurrection is the bodily, concrete manifestation of absolution. He rose from the dead precisely because His death atoned for all sin. Since death is the result of sin, and since all sin was atoned for in His death, it was impossible for death to hold Him. The apostles were called to be eyewitnesses of His resurrection, according to the Scriptures and Jesus' own promises to them. They were ordained to the Office of the Ministry as His apostles by His Word of forgiveness that they might forgive others as He had forgiven them and that they might faithfully bear witness to Him in the New Testament Scriptures. John himself confessed this understanding when he said, "Truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name."

Prayer on the Bible Story

Lord Jesus, we give thanks to You for Your glorious resurrection from the dead and that by Your Word of peace you forgive our sins and give us the gift of faith. Give us faithful ministers who will preach Your Word and testify to all that You have done for us according to the Scriptures, so that we may believe in You and have the gift of eternal life and be raised from the dead on the last day; in Your holy name we pray. Amen.



Jesus Appears in the Upper Room
John 20:19-31