



Believe

JOHN

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Community Group Material:

Ask one person to pray at the beginning of your meeting.

Check-in

Check in with each other about how everyone is doing.

Bible Reading: John 20:19-23

Sermon Summary:

Historically speaking, when Jesus commissioned people to go to the rest of the world with his good news, we immediately think of the Apostles (Matt. 28:16-20; Ac. 1:2-3, 8). But John gives us a more complete view in John 20. He uses the word 'disciples' meaning the larger group of his followers. This view is of profound importance as we consider the rest of the verses in this section. If it's only the Apostles, then a clear hierarchy is set forth in God's word that gives certain Christians certain responsibilities that other Christians do not have. Who should preach the gospel? Apostles! So what does that leave the rest of us to do? Are we let off when it comes to telling our colleagues & family members about Jesus' death, resurrection & offer of eternal life? From John's perspective, we all bear that responsibility. But Jesus doesn't just give us the responsibility, he also gives us the Spirit to give us all we need in order to carry out his mission. The question we are faced with is will we say 'yes' to God as he calls us to go?

Discussion:

1. Read Matt. 28:16-20, Acts 1:1-8 & 1 Cor. 15:7. Now read Jn. 20:19. John has stayed away from hierarchical or institutional language throughout his Gospel. He's drawn attention to the lesser known disciples: Philip, Nathanael, Thomas & many women. So it shouldn't surprise us that John says 'disciples' in verse 19. Read the section again & consider the pronouns 'their', 'them', 'you', 'they'. How important is it to see that John means all of Jesus' disciples?
2. Craig Koester says "*Jesus calls people out of the world & into the faith community, then sends them back into the world...in order to call others to faith.*" Talk about the responsibility Jesus has given us. Does this challenge or excite you?
3. Why is it so significant that immediately after Jesus commissions his disciples (v. 21), he breathes on them the Holy Spirit (v. 22)?
4. What is the proper understanding of disciples 'forgiving & retaining' sins?
5. According to John's Gospel what really happened on Good Friday & Easter Sunday?
6. Talk about the connection between Gen. 2:7 & John 20:22 & its importance to us.
7. William Carey said, "*Expect great things from God; Attempt great things for God.*" Does this saying challenge you? What is your experience of it?

End with Prayer.

- Pray for a refreshed view of what Jesus has asked each of us to do as his disciples.
- Pray for one another's concerns.