

## **Pentecost: Hope-shaped Mission empowered by a Life-giving Spirit**

### **Read John 20:19-23**

1. Jesus' first words to his disciples are "Shalom Alekhem". It is the typical Hebrew greeting – peace be upon you. Or is it? He repeats it revealing to us that the results of his resurrection are a future of utter peace, utter flourishing, utter healing in every aspect of life. When you think of a future of utter flourishing what do you envision?

*This question is designed to expand our vision of what Jesus has won for us at Easter. As a leader I would encourage you to invite breadth rather than drilling down too specifically into one area. Think spiritually, physically, relationally, emotionally, psychologically – think of beauty, creation, animal life – think of divisions amongst people, races, classes – think of wrongs righted, evil undone, marring restored.*

2. In light of this new future Jesus invites his disciples to do the things he did. Easter does not give us a spiritual other-worldly future, which is an escape from the world it gives us mission to the world. What are the things that Jesus came to do that now we are invited to do?

*Certainly not exhaustive but here are some of the things Tim mentioned in the sermon that may help frame your conversation. Our tendency is to focus on the things we do, or the things we are comfortable with. As a leader affirm that but stretch your group to explore the areas they won't readily go.*

*Jesus taught – he preached – he revealed the character of God – he called people to repent and enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

*He healed – cast out demons – broke the power of evil over people's lives.*

*He loved, he comforted, he had compassion, mercy.*

*He broke down barriers of classism, racism, sexism – he moved against systems of injustice.*

*He was present with the lonely, offered hospitality to sinners and tax collectors.*

*He laid down his life in love for the sake of others.*

3. Where Easter commissions, Pentecost empowers. Where Easter sends Pentecost equips. **Read Genesis 1:1-5; 24-25 and Psalm 104: 1-4; 24-30.** Jesus breathes on them inviting them to receive the Holy Spirit. In light of the passages you just read what does Jesus breathing on them communicate about the nature and purpose of the Holy Spirit?

*Without the breath of God there is no life. Without the Spirit then there is no life.*

*His Spirit in us is meant to renew all things beginning with our humanity.*

*It expresses our utter dependence upon the Spirit to live into this new future.*

4. (vs. 23) This last line was a common Jewish phrase that meant to work out the details of a command. In the context of Jesus' encounter with his disciples he is inviting them in this phrase to work out the details of that future he has won for them at Easter in every aspect of life. Explore together your work lives, relational lives, consumer lives... and talk about how this promised future impacts those areas.

*Help draw the connection between what you discussed in question 1 with what the Spirit empowers and equips us for. A healthy discussion in response to this question will bring your group members to be specific about applying that future to their work, relationships, and consumer decisions.*

5. It is a grave distortion of Christian hope that keeps us focused on the spiritual leaving the world as it is and allowing evil to proceed unchecked. (Adapted from N.T. Wright) Discuss.

*This question is seeking to erode the belief that all that Easter invites us to is to make sure your spiritual lives are in order so that we are a part of that future. Instead this quote invites us to an Easter hope that engages us with the world in ways that live into the future Jesus won for us.*