**Resurrection Unto Mission**

***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.” (John 20:19-23, ESV)*

Those of us who believe in Christ’s Resurrection are those who continue the Lord’s ministry. Greetings in Christ, as we talk on this 3rd Sunday of Resurrection about the connection between the Lord’s Resurrection and our life-mission. Christ’s ministry did not stop after three years; rather, it continued through His apostles, and they taught their disciples the mission, and they, in turn, passed on the mission to the following generations, all the way ‘til today. Again, for us believers, the Lord’s mission continues through us. Let’s see how that is…

We are called to continue Jesus’ earthly mission through the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus’ task had been to present the Kingdom of God and its victory to the world. Through Christ, the world, in other words all of humanity had a new hope to reenter into relationship with God. When Jesus had to leave this world, however, He gave instructions to His disciples on continuing His work. First, He greeted them, declaring peace over them; then He gave them instructions, declaring to them that they were “sent ones.” Then He gave them the Holy Spirit, which meant that He had authority to give Him, and that they needed the Spirit. Finally, He passed on to them an important authorization from God, namely, the power to forgive and to withhold sins. Without these, especially without His command to “go” and the gift of the Holy Spirit, the apostles would not have been able to do what Jesus had been doing throughout His ministry. They would not have been able to forgive sins and to see the results among the people. The Lord gave them the central, most important realities of the ministry in this episode. We know that He would later tell them to teach everything that He had taught them to the people, and to baptize those who believed. But in this case, he first gave His command that He was sending them, then He bestowed the Holy Spirit, and then gave the authority to forgive sins, something exclusively connected to God alone in Jewish minds, and not allowed for humans.) Jesus clearly put the foundations of the continuation of His ministry in place.

Every country has elections every few years so that it can continue to exist and thrive – whether a new president, governor, or leaders in general. This is done for continuity’s sake, among other reasons. If elections did not happen, the governmental functions of the state would suffer, and the country could find itself in the middle of serious problems.

Jesus, as our Leader, Savior, Lord, and King, has already given His instructions to His past and current disciples: first, we need to heed His Word. He has sent us just as the Father had sent Him. He had not come to live a “regular” life as it was in those days. He had not been sent to think and to work like everyone else. He had been sent to be the presence of God wherever He went. He had been sent for the work of salvation.

We also, have been sent like Jesus to bring God’s presence through our faith-life. Yes, salvation has already been accomplished, but the Good News still needs to be spread, and there are still many sins to be forgiven through Jesus. The Holy Spirit still has a lot of work to do both within us and through us in the unbelieving populations of the world. Jesus’ work did not stop when He ascended to heaven. Rather, we are to continue His works. The foundations of the latter are obedience to His Word; having the Holy Spirit; forgiving sins or withholding them, on a case-by-case basis.

Our life tasks as Christians are founded on these latter words of Christ. Therefore, let us remember that we are “sent ones,” and let us live that way. Let us live with a purpose, to bear witness to Jesus’ love and to preach His forgiveness of sin for the repentant. Let us remember that we have the Holy Spirit if we received Him from Jesus. He (the Spirit) is the One that makes our prayers effective and performs miracles in peoples’ lives. Let us remember that since we are those who obey Jesus and have His Spirit, that our words have great influence in peoples’ lives. This is why it is extremely important to know when to forgive sin, and when to withhold forgiveness. Let the repentant be forgiven – and let the rebel, the unrepentant ones continue in their rejection of God (without forgiveness).

We are called to continue Jesus’ ministry through the power of the Holy Spirit. We as Christians are those who continue the mission of the Lord.

The Lord bless you all. Amen.