The First Words of The Resurrected Jesus

The seven last words of Jesus have been lauded in songs and art. But when we consider the first words of Jesus after the resurrection, we discover what this new reality and commission looks like for believers.

Let's take a look at seven of the first sayings of Jesus. All of them are found in John 20.

1. **"Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?"** (John 20:15)
   These two questions are ones we should ask ourselves every day. What are the source of our tears? What exactly are we seeking?

   > *Whenever you find tears in your eyes, especially unexpected tears, it is well to pay the closest attention. They are not only telling you something about the secret of who you are, but more often than not God is speaking to you through them of the mystery of where you have come from and is summoning you to where, if your soul is to be saved, you should go next." Frederick Buechner*

   Obviously I'm commandeering these questions as metaphors. There's truth there, though. We have many definitions for insanity but I would propose another: Insanity is not knowing what you are feeling and not knowing where you are going. That would be a start.

   As believers, we call this mindfulness.

2. **"Mary" (John 20:16)**

May we be reminded that Jesus knows us, not only as the church, his bride, the mass of followers that began thousands of years ago. He knows our names. Each one of us. Jesus didn't lose his personal connection with Mary. He knows us by name as well. "Don't be afraid, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by your name. You are mine." Isaiah 43:1

As believers, we call this identity.

3. **"Go to my brothers and tell them." (John 20:17)**
   He challenges us to do the same. As believers we should be constantly reminding each other that this resurrection life isn't some kind of brief, cryptic illusion. We must remind each other that this life is real and transforming. Throughout the walking of our days may we remind each other of the news we celebrated on Easter Sunday: "He's not there. He is alive!"

   "The message of Easter is that God's new world has been unveiled in Jesus Christ and that you're now invited to belong to it." – N.T. Wright

   As believers, we call this mission.

4. **"Peace be with you." (John 20:19&21)**
   Isn't it awesome to know that Jesus greetings to us all after the resurrection is "Peace be with you"? When all was said and done, the denying betraying and doubting… Peace was still in the cards of the disciples and peace is pronounced over us, as well. When it comes to peace, He's the prince of it. Don't miss the blessing of Shalom.

   As believers, we call this blessing.

5. **“Receive the Holy Spirit.” (John 20:21)**
   If we want to be faithful to Jesus, we have to do what He says. We must receive the Holy Spirit. This means that we must move from confession to possession. We must be possessed by the Holy Spirit who will give us the power to do what we could not do before.

   As believers, we call this annointing.

6. **“If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you don’t forgive them, they are not forgiven.” John 20:23**
   The first sermon of the Resurrected Christ is forgiveness. It’s always first on the agenda. Forgiveness is the opus, motif, rising action, grand finale and denouement of grace. It should be our foremost quest in all our relationships. We *must* forgive.

   As believers, we call this grace.

7. **“Stop doubting and believe.” John 20:29**
   Just as He challenges Thomas, Jesus dares us to believed to trust him a little more, to love him a little more, to take one more step out of the boat and into the blue oceans.

   > *“Every mental act is composed of doubt and belief, but it is belief that is the positive, it is belief that sustains thought and holds the world together.” – Søren Kierkegaard*

   As believers we call this faith.

   These sayings should get us on our way in the post-resurrection maze of discipleship: identity,

mindfullness, mission, blessing, annointing, grace, faith…