

John 20:19-31

Well today is a joyous day indeed is it not? Today we celebrate the fact that Jesus rose from the dead, that death could not hold Him and we know that this was prophesied in the Old Testament and we looked at this just last week but just listen to what Psalm 16:10 says when it says this **For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.**

We might also take a minute or two as we begin today and just remember that Jesus Himself had said on several occasions that His physical death would not be permanent. Let me share a few of those verses with you if you listen to Matthew 16:21 it says <sup>21</sup> **From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.** And then listen to Matthew 17:22-23 just one chapter later which says <sup>22</sup> **Now while they were staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men, <sup>23</sup> and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up.”** And they were exceedingly sorrowful. And then finally listen to John 2:19-22 which says this <sup>19</sup> **Jesus answered and said to them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”**

<sup>20</sup> **Then the Jews said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?”**

<sup>21</sup> **But He was speaking of the temple of His body.** <sup>22</sup> **Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.**

It should have been no surprise to the disciples when the tomb the Lord had been laid in was found to be empty and yet we know that so often the disciples simply did not understand when the Lord spoke of His own resurrection.

Finally, before we get into John 20 I wanted to just share 2 verses with you from what Paul wrote to the Corinthians if you listen to 1 Corinthians 15:14 it says <sup>14</sup>**And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty.** And then verse 17 of the same chapter says **And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!**

The reality is that if Jesus did not raise from the dead then you and I are just plain out of luck when we enter eternity. Without the redemptive work of Jesus on the cross and His resurrection from the dead we are lost in our sins and we have no victory over death. You and I sadly would find ourselves in hell for all of eternity.

Thankfully for you and I Jesus did rise from the dead and the victory that He won on our behalf is placed upon our lives as we come to Him by faith believing in what He has done for us.

We are going to pick up in verse 19 of the Gospel of John chapter 20 but before we do that I did want to just briefly give you an overview of the first 18 verses of this chapter where we find that there were several individuals that were part of the discovery that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead.

We are first told in verse 1 about a woman by the name of Mary Magdalene and this was a woman that was just full on dedicated to Jesus. She loved the Lord so much that as soon as possible after the

Sabbath had ended she was up and out of her house along with some other women we are told in the other Gospels to take spices and go to the tomb to anoint the body of the Lord.

It is worth it to mention that these women in no way shape or form thought Jesus would rise from the dead. They were on the way to honor a dead body and had even used their resources in preparation for this.

We might wonder why Mary Magdalene (who was actually the first to see Jesus rise from the dead) loved the Lord so much and I believe it is because of what we learn about her over in Mark 16:9 which says this **<sup>9</sup> Now when He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons.** Can you imagine being possessed not by 1 demon but 7 all at once? This woman was probably dominated by the demons having no real control over herself.

In thinking about Mary Magdalene I am reminded of what Jesus said in Luke 7:47 which says this **<sup>47</sup> Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.** While Luke 7 does not specifically speak of this Mary I do believe it certainly applies to her life and I would say to mine also. She knew how much the Lord had done for her and as such wanted to honor Jesus even after His death.

So Mary first came to the tomb and found it empty and then she ran and came to Simon Peter and John who is known as the disciple that Jesus loved in verse 2 of chapter 20 these two men we were told ran to the tomb themselves and John makes it clear in verse 4 that he outran Peter.

We are told in verse 8 that John went into the tomb and when he got there it says he believed and this was probably the moment that John began to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead.

I do want to read with you verse 9 of chapter 20 if you look at that it says <sup>9</sup>**For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.** So as all of this is taking place and John is believing that Jesus had risen from the dead they still had not yet put together that the scriptures had said that the Messiah would rise from the dead.

Then in verses 11-18 we see that the Lord appears to Mary Magdalene and we are told that she after Peter and John left was first outside the tomb weeping and then she went and looked inside for herself...When she did we are told there were two angels in the tomb and they asked her why she was weeping? It's interesting that in the presence of 2 angels this woman wasn't afraid and she wasn't even amazed but instead she simply wanted to know where the body of the Lord had been taken and asked if they knew anything about it.

And then Jesus appeared and she again was not thinking the Lord had risen from the dead and she we are told thought that Jesus was the gardener and she asked again where the Lord had been taken and that she would personally take His body.

We are then told the Lord spoke her name saying "Mary" and I'm not sure what it was about how the Lord said her name but as soon as He did she knew right away it was Jesus and she began to cling to the Lord probably like a big bear hug and the Lord told her that she should not hold on to Him for He still needed to go to the Father.

And then we see this woman after being the first to see the Lord risen from the dead run and tell the others that she had seen Him.

Just one more comment here and I just encourage you for homework to go and look at the other gospels and you will learn very quickly that there were multiple people that saw Jesus risen from the dead. It wasn't just one or two people and I think my favorite verses about the resurrection and you have probably heard me quote them before are found in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 which say this **<sup>3</sup>For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup>and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, <sup>5</sup>and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. <sup>6</sup>After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. <sup>7</sup>After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. <sup>8</sup>Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.**

I don't know about you but if 500 people testified they had seen someone alive from the dead and there were multiple other witnesses that were even willing to die as they stated that this was so then **my conclusion is it must be true.**

Ok let's now look at John 20:19 and this is the same day Mary had seen the Lord risen from the dead it says this **<sup>19</sup>Then, the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you."** Notice that the disciples were gathered together and the doors were shut we are told. Other translations indicate the doors weren't

just closed but they were locked or barred and we are told they were afraid of the Jews.

Why would they be afraid? Well, if the religious leaders believed Jesus to be a false teacher and they had seen to it that He was now dead the idea in the disciples minds was probably that they would now come after anyone associated with Jesus and so they are hiding.

We then see Jesus show up in their midst...My first question is how did this happen? I mean we don't see any knocking on the door...Instead the idea is that He was suddenly right there with them. It is interesting to think about the glorified body of Jesus...Later in this chapter we will see that the scars were still visible...and then in chapter 21 of John the Lord eats fish in the presence of others...So the glorified body will be different, it will be spectacular I would say but at the same time we'll still have some of the same physical abilities we have now.

Notice the first thing Jesus says to them is "Peace to you!" I think that was a beautiful thing to say. If it was me and my Lord and Master had died I would be in despair and then to have Him suddenly in my presence I would be terrified and yet the Lord says Peace. It's remarkable that the Lord doesn't rebuke them or speak down to them for they surely deserved that for all their unbelief and lack of understanding but instead Jesus speaks peace.

I do believe this has a spiritual application to our lives as well for without the resurrection of Jesus our peace with the Father would not be secure and the scriptures could be said to be erroneous. We might keep in mind that the only way to be right with the Father is through Jesus and His sacrificial death. Jesus is the One that paid the price that we might have peace with the Father.

There are many in this world that look for peace in all kinds of avenues whether it be through financial success, or their health and their family or even in the partying lifestyle and yet there is no real peace in those things. Peace is found when an individual comes to Jesus and places their trust in Him.

And then we have verse 20 which says this <sup>20</sup> **When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.** So the Lord first speaks peace to the disciples and then He shows them proof of His resurrection. They could physically see the marks of the crucifixion of Jesus. It would seem that finally the disciples are realizing the news they are hearing is indeed true.

Look with me at verse 21 which says this <sup>21</sup> **So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."** Now the Lord gives the disciples a Purpose as He sends them out just as the Father had sent Him. This is probably the place in John's Gospel that we have the great commission...I think most of us are familiar with this but one of the primary reasons you and I are here in this world is that just like the disciples we might go out and testify to the world that the Lord Jesus died on the cross for our sins and rose from the dead for our justification.

The reality is you and I have a calling on our lives to share what the Lord has done in our hearts as He has changed who we are. We should be able to go out and tell the world that the Lord loves them so much that He went to the cross for their sins...and I think today the church in general needs to revisit the reason we are here on this planet.

I know that sometimes its hard to share our faith with those around us, sometimes we can have a little fear in our hearts and even the disciples had this in their own lives and you know we can learn from them in that they gathered together and asked the Lord for boldness that they could share with others and the Lord responded by filling them with the Holy Spirit and empowering them to be unashamed of the Gospel.

Paul even said this over in Romans 1:16 when he said <sup>16</sup>**For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.** Of all the news in the world the very best news is that Jesus Christ died and rose again on the third day that humanity might be forgiven as they come to Him by faith.

So the Lord commissions the disciples to go and share just as Jesus had shared as He went through life...and really the message of Jesus was very similar in that He told those He ministered to that He had come that we might have life and have it more abundantly.

So Jesus announced peace to the disciples and he showed proof of His resurrection and He gave them a purpose and then look at verse 22 of John 20 which say this <sup>22</sup>**And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.**

Now what I believe happened here in these verses is that the disciples at this point are really being born again, the Holy Spirit has testified to them the truths of Jesus Christ and they are believing He has risen from the dead and now I believe the Holy Spirit as it is breathed upon the disciples is regenerating the disciples or giving new life to them.

This I believe is what Jesus talked about over in John 3:3-6 when He said this to a man named Nicodemus <sup>3</sup>Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

<sup>4</sup>Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?”

<sup>5</sup>Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. <sup>6</sup>That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

I also believe this is what Jesus spoke of over in John 14:15-18 which says <sup>15</sup>“If you love Me, keep My commandments. <sup>16</sup>And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— <sup>17</sup>the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. <sup>18</sup>I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. Notice the Lord here promises that another Helper would come and this Helper the Holy Spirit would be with the disciples and then we are told in verse 17 that the Spirit would be IN YOU...I believe this is the indwelling work of the Holy Spirit that is happening in the lives of the disciples.

Now just for a little added information the word for Breathe here in the Greek is the Word emphysao and this is the only place it is used in the New Testament. If you were to look at the Greek Septuagint of the Old Testament which is a version of the Bible that was translated from Hebrew to Greek by 70 individuals you will find this same word used over in the book of Genesis 2:7 which says the following <sup>7</sup>And

**the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.**

So the same word used for breathed in the Greek version of the Old Testament is the same word used here to speak of Jesus breathing the Holy Spirit on the disciples. It's fascinating really as the idea to me here is that the disciples are being born again not of the flesh but of the Holy Spirit.

**Verse 23 of John 20 says this <sup>23</sup>If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.**

Again there is debate about this verse...Some erroneously claim that Jesus is giving the disciples a priesthood here...that they have the power to forgive sins or retain them in themselves.

I don't agree with that at all. We learn in the gospels that God alone can forgive a man or woman of their sins...you and I personally don't have this power but instead we as we preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ can testify to what real forgiveness of sins looks like.

We can look at the truth of scripture and we can know that as a person heard the good news about Jesus **and they believe in the Lord Jesus** that they will find forgiveness and they will be filled with the Holy Spirit. It is then that we can honestly say that a person's sins are forgiven.

If a person rejects Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior the reality is their sin remains and they will face an eternity in hell if they die on this planet.

So the Lord has appeared to the disciples and He has spoken to them and encouraged them and then we find out the following in verses 24-

25 which say this <sup>24</sup> Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> The other disciples therefore said to him, “We have seen the Lord.”

So he said to them, “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.”

Well we learn here that one of the twelve was not around when the Lord appeared...We aren't sure why Thomas missed this incredible meeting but I do think we can learn just a small spiritual lesson from this in that you can't fully experience Jesus if you aren't with other believers.

There is so much comfort when you choose to attend a local fellowship of believers, there is much strength to be gleaned when I regularly come together with those that are like minded.

I don't want to overly emphasize this but I will share from Hebrews 10:25 which says <sup>25</sup> not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

When a believer is not regularly with other believers the road of faith will become a lonely and difficult one.

So Thomas wasn't around when the Lord appeared and you know for this man he must have been a very practical kind of guy for he would not just take the words of the other disciples as the truth and he in response to hearing Jesus was alive simply said he would not believe unless he put his hands in the side of the Lord (and this would have been the place that the spear had pierced the side of Jesus to prove

He was dead on the cross) and unless he was able to put his finger into the print of the nails.

Look with me at verses 26-27 which say this <sup>26</sup> **And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!"** <sup>27</sup> **Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."**

8 days later the disciples were together again and Thomas was with them this time and it was probably a hard 8 days for this man as the other disciples were rejoicing and hopeful and Thomas is kind of like an Eeyore here in that he is gloomy and refusing to believe and then the Lord showed up again in their midst and again he says "peace to you"

He then takes Thomas and lets him do that which he had stated he needed in order to believe as he put his hands in his side and his finger in the nail prints of the Lord.

I am so thankful that God is able to meet us where we are in life. He knows just what you need in order that you might place your faith in Him...I would say the Lord knows what we need instead of us saying what we need because we can be unreasonable in coming to faith in Jesus.

I know in my life I can look back and see that the Lord was working to get my attention in so many ways. He loved me when I rejected Him on repeated occasions, He put Christians in my path to speak to me about His love, He allowed the cops to catch me in illegal activities

that I might not just run wild, He allowed the courts to order me to a rehab facility and then He orchestrated things in such a way that I ended up in a faith based program where I heard the good news of Jesus and could see that Jesus was changing the lives of those around me and finally He opened my eyes and helped me to come to Him.

Perhaps you are here today because someone invited you here, or you are here because it is Resurrection Sunday or a grandchild is in the choir and maybe you have been far from God for a long time or you have been rejecting Jesus and refusing to accept Him in your heart.

I would simply say to you that today the Lord would say to your heart that He loves you and went to the cross for your sins and that He desires that all of the world would come to know Him as Lord and Savior.

Look at what happened next for Thomas after this took place in verses 28-29 which say <sup>28</sup> **And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!”**

<sup>29</sup> **Jesus said to him, “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”**

Notice that this was enough for Thomas, he came to a place of faith and a place of rejoicing like the other disciples had. He says to Jesus that he is not only his Lord which means master or leader and conveys the idea that Thomas is submitting his life to the Lord **but he also says that Jesus is his God...and yes this is Thomas stating that Jesus is God which is a fact that is given over and over in the scriptures.**

And then the Lord said to Thomas that he was blessed because he had seen and believed but blessed are those who have not seen and yet believed and certainly that reaches out to you and I who have not personally seen the resurrected Lord but we sure can testify to the resurrection power of God as we have received Him in our own lives and seen first hand that He has forgiven us and given us new life.

I would ask you today have you believed in Jesus? Have you believed in the resurrection of the Lord? And do you not only believe it in your brain but have you like Thomas decided to make Jesus the Lord of your life? Have you taken the Lord into your heart that He might be the ruler of your life?

Today we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus but what good is the resurrection if you don't personally accept it in your heart.

Look with me at verses 30-31 and we'll finish up it says this

**<sup>30</sup> And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; <sup>31</sup> 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.**

As we close today we can see why John wrote the Gospel the way that he did as he was led by the Holy Spirit. If you look at all the gospels it becomes apparent that John chose to share all kinds of narratives that the other Gospel writers did not...Later on at the end of John in chapter 21 verse 25 John said this in closing **<sup>25</sup> And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.**

It's amazing to think that Jesus did so many things that aren't even recorded for us...The Lord is amazing, He is full of love, He chose to die on the cross for the sins of humanity and He certainly did rise again from the dead.

John simply says at the close of this chapter that he wrote all that he did for a very specific purpose and that purpose was that people might believe that Jesus is the Christ and that means He is the Messiah or the anointed one prophesied of in scripture, that He is the only Son of God and that by believing in Him you may have life.

Have you come to that place in your own life personally? Where you have chosen to accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior...If not, the Bible says today is the day of salvation and as we worship the Lord this morning in closing I just encourage you if you need to receive Jesus in your heart that you would just come on forward as I would love to pray with you that you might place your faith in Jesus Christ.

Let's pray and we'll worship.

## John 20:19-31 “Coming To Believe”

### **Introduction**

Psalm 16:10

Matthew 16:21

Matthew 17:22-23

John 2:19-22

1 Corinthians 15:14

1 Corinthians 15:17

### **Verse 1**

Mark 16:9

Luke 7:47

### **Verses 11-18**

1 Corinthians 15:3-8

### **Verse 21**

Romans 1:16

### **Verse 22**

John 3:3-6

John 14:15-18

Genesis 2:7

### **Verses 24-25**

Hebrews 10:25

### **Verses 30-31**

John 21:25