

12.3 That You May Have Life In His Name John 20:19-29

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Context: We are in John's gospel, after the crucifixion of Jesus — on the day of His resurrection, where death and sin have been defeated, and what happens with Jesus and his disciples.

The Resurrection

20 Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. ² So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” ³ So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. ⁴ Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, ⁷ and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. ⁸ Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; ⁹ for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰ Then the disciples went back to their homes.

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

“ But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. ¹² And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. ¹³ They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” ¹⁴ Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned and said to him in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher). ¹⁷ Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’ ” ¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord”—and that he had said these things to her. (Jn 20:1-18)

As we learned last week –

1. The Resurrection of Jesus is Historical

- Real space and time that we might read these things and believe. And by believing that we would have life in his name.

2. The Resurrection of Jesus is Personal

- As Mary was commanded to go and tell her brothers and sisters about Jesus' resurrection and his plan to return to "our Father" ... So too must all followers of Jesus be transformed by Jesus' triumph over death.

3. The Resurrection is for All who Believe

- In all places and ages → Jesus victory is central to the hope of the gospel.
- "I have seen the Lord" must be transformed into "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20)

The resurrection of Jesus is at the core of our faith as followers of Christ – and we have every reason to be confident in this.

- ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. ²⁰ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. (1 Co 15:16–22)

Let's continue in John 20 as the day of resurrection continues to unfold

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

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)

Here they are, even having heard from Mary - "I have seen the Lord." earlier in the day, these disciples were behind locked doors and in fear. Through his locked door, John writes – that Jesus came and stood among them. "Peace be with you" — could be just a standard Jewish greeting — but it's likely more than that. Jesus had already told them about a different kind of peace.

- Peace be with you – I am sending you.
- Receive the Holy Spirit
- Speaks clearly about forgiveness

“The apostles were commissioned to carry on Christ's work, and not to begin a new one” (Westcott 1908:2:350). Through the disciples' witness to Jesus by word and by the life and love of the community, the world will be forced to choose for or against Jesus, just as they were during Jesus' own ministry. Those who repent and believe in Jesus can be assured of forgiveness, and those who refuse to repent can be assured that their sins are not forgiven. Such is the consequence of rejecting the Lamb of God who has taken away the sin of the world!”

Let's look back to John 14 – where Jesus was preparing these disciples for this very moment.

¹⁸“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. **Because I live, you also will live.** ²⁰**In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.** ²¹Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.”
(Jn 14:18–21).

²⁵“These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. ²⁶But **the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.** ²⁷**Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.** ²⁸You heard me say to you, ‘I am going away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. ²⁹And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe. ³⁰I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me, ³¹but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here.
(Jn 14:25–31)

- Because I live, you also will live – and you will KNOW I am in my Father, you in me and I in you.
- Possessing and keeping Jesus' commandments – He it is who loves me – and will be loved by the Father, loved by Jesus and will see Christ.
- When Jesus appears as this resurrected King – he breathes on them - Receive the Holy Spirit – and Jesus has already taught them – the Holy Spirit - The Helper - will teach and bring to remembrance all that Jesus has taught them (including on forgiveness).

¹ Whittacre, Rodney - IVP NT Commentary JOHN - 483

Jesus and Thomas

²⁴ Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.”

²⁶ Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.” ²⁸ Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” ²⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

(Jn 20:19–29)

Maybe some of you can relate to Thomas – you have heard others talk about “We have seen the Lord” – but with Thomas, he had to see in his hands, the mark of the nails and see where Jesus’ side was pierced.

Again, we see Jesus – appearing to the disciples, the doors are locked – they have seen the resurrected Jesus already – but not Thomas who still was experiencing doubt. Jesus says “Peace be with you.” – See my hands? See my side? Do not disbelieve, but believe.” MY LORD and MY GOD — Thomas sees and does believe.

But Jesus then says — BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HAVE NOT SEEN AND YET HAVE BELIEVED.

Those words landed in Peter’s heart – blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. The same one who cut Malchus’ ear off, the same one that denied he knew Jesus three times during his arrest, trial, and crucifixion – now is seeing his resurrected King Jesus and speaking about genuine trust and faith.

Later he would write the Church:

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ⁸ **Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe**

in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹ obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

(1 Pe 1:3–9)

Though you have not seen Jesus, you love him.

Though you do not now see him, you believe in Jesus and rejoice.

One of the earliest Christian creeds, quoted by Paul at 1 Cor. 15:3–5 (perhaps 15:3–7) speaks of Christ being raised (i.e. by God) ‘on the third day, according to the Scriptures’ and appearing (ᾠφθη) to Cephas (i.e. St *Peter) and to the twelve. The list continues with appearances to more than 500 brethren, to St *James, to all the *apostles, and, Paul adds, finally to himself. His instance (v. 11) that this belief was shared on all sides in the early Church is confirmed by the NT as a whole.²

Every follower of Christ beyond this apostolic age, before the Ascension of Christ – where after 40 days Jesus was taken up to heaven, every follower of Christ has come to faith by hearing the Gospel message “because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”¹⁰ For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.” For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.”¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him.¹³ For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

¹⁴ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?¹⁵ And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”¹⁶ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?”¹⁷ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ”(Ro 10:9–17)

What does it mean to have life in the name of Jesus?

- Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet still believe.
- Though we have not seen Jesus, we love him. Though we do not now see him, we believe in Jesus and rejoice.
- Our faith has come by hearing the gospel of Jesus – and we have a message and mission – to love God and love people, proclaiming who Christ is and what He has done. We are sent people in the name of Jesus.

² Cross, F. L., & Livingstone, E. A., eds. (2005). In [The Oxford dictionary of the Christian Church](#) (3rd ed. rev., p. 1397). Oxford University Press.

Questions for community groups:

- Describe the difference between those committed to following Jesus and those who simply want to affiliate themselves with Jesus?
- Because we have not seen Jesus, yet still believe and still love Jesus – what does rejoicing with inexpressible joy look like in your life? How is your faith being lived out? (1 Peter 1:8)
- As we approach Christmas – how does the death and resurrection of Jesus make Christmas even more meaningful this season?