

4/24/22 - John 20:19-31 - "The Christ, the Son of God?"

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[0 : 00] I will be preaching from John as we continue our study of John. We will be continuing in chapter 20 today. And we'll be picking up where we left off last week, which was at the resurrection.

And last week we were introduced to Mary when she saw Christ risen. And we were also introduced to the two disciples who ran to the tomb to see that Jesus was raised.

But today we're going to continue in verse 19 of John chapter 20. And so it should be on the screen for you, but I would encourage you to read along in your Bibles. We are going to be jumping around the Bible a bit today.

So please keep your Bible open and I'll try to go slow. But let's read first our passage for today. Starting in verse 19 of John 20.

And John says, When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

[1 : 18] Jesus said to them again, Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit.

If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them. If you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld. Now, Thomas, one of the twelve, called the twin, was not with them when Jesus came.

So the other disciples told him, We have seen the Lord. But he had said to them, Unless I see his hands, the marks of the nails, and place my fingers into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.

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.

Then he said to Thomas, Put your finger here and see my hands. Put out your hand and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe. Thomas answered him, My Lord and my God.

[2 : 23] Jesus said to him, Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen me, and yet have believed. Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book.

But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in his name. So as we continue in the resurrection account of Jesus, I want to remind you just of some of the particulars that happened earlier in this same day when Mary went to the tomb and saw Jesus there.

Specifically, I want to jump back to John chapter 20, verse 8, and read a couple of verses. It says, Then the other disciple, and this is John referring to himself, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed.

For as yet, they did not understand the scriptures that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples went back to their homes. And so I think it's interesting that John makes this kind of side note here that even witnessing the empty tomb, they still didn't understand the scriptures.

There still was some unclarity in their minds about it. And so as we pick up in verse 19, we find the disciples, they're locked in this room, it seems together, with all of them except for Thomas.

[3 : 52] And they're really struggling to understand what took place these last three days. They're struggling to understand why Jesus died. He was their teacher and their Messiah, and they watched him die.

And now they're trying to understand why this took place. They were looking forward to what Jesus would do through his ministry, and yet now he's gone.

And in another place in scripture, in Luke 24, 25, you can flip there if you want, Jesus confronts two of his disciples, and he says this to them.

This, we don't know, is perhaps not one of the 12 disciples, but some other followers of his. In verse 25 of Luke 24, he says, O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.

Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them all, in all the scriptures, the things concerning himself.

[4 : 56] And so Jesus took time with these two disciples to go through the scriptures. I imagine this took many hours to explain them all in detail to them. But he took the time, nonetheless, to explain these to these two disciples.

And yet the disciples who are locked in this room, they weren't one of these two, it seems. And so they still are unaware of what has taken place. I think it's interesting to look back.

I know the Old Testament is filled with these examples of scriptures, of ones that I'm sure Jesus spoke on. But two that stand out to me that are cross-referenced in the ESV Bible were Psalm 16:10.

I think it'll be on the screen for you, but you can look in your Bible as well. I think Brent quoted this one a few weeks ago as well. It's the very end of Psalm 16. It says, For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol or let your Holy One see corruption.

And these were the very words that David spoke. Peter quotes them as well in Acts 2. But these were the words that God had promised through David 500 years earlier that Christ would not be corrupted.

[6 : 05] He would not decay in the grave. Instead, he would be raised. And so these words were fulfilled in the resurrection. They were prophesied 500 years earlier. And of Jesus' death, Isaiah the prophet had foretold it several hundred years earlier as well.

In Isaiah 53, verses 10 and 11, in a poem, God speaking to Israel through Isaiah, he says, Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him.

He has put him to grief. When his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring. He shall prolong his days. Another telling of the resurrection.

The will of the Lord shall prosper in his hands. Out of the anguish of his soul, he shall see and be satisfied. By his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

So although the disciples, they weren't educated as the Pharisees were in the law, they perhaps were still aware of this scripture, but they didn't see the connection that this spoke literally of Christ, of his death for the forgiveness of sins and of his resurrection.

[7 : 20] But until the Lord was there to explain these things to the disciples, they simply couldn't understand them, perhaps in their anxiety and their fear, perhaps their mind was clouded.

These things did not make sense to them yet. But they had witnessed Jesus' death. They saw him nailed to the cross. And now they're hearing testimony from Mary and others that Jesus has been raised from the dead.

As of yet, all they've seen is an empty tomb. And although that was reason to celebrate, they hadn't seen Christ yet. The evidence and facts were corroborated by multiple witnesses, which by Jewish law was enough for them to believe.

But would you really believe on the account of two witnesses that someone had been raised from the dead? They needed more. They needed to see to believe.

So before we dive into our text for today, I want to open with another prayer to set our hearts on the will of the Lord. So let's pray. Father, we thank you for your word.

[8 : 26] We thank you for how it convicts us, how it opens our eyes, how you enlighten the eyes of our heart to see wonder in your word. And I pray that you would do that today in our hearts, that as we study your words, you would remind us of the things that you said.

Teach us to understand your scriptures. And through our lives, let us bear witness that you are the Christ, the Son of God. We thank you and pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. So let's begin by looking at John 20, verse 19. And so my points, section one, I titled, Calling the Unqualified.

And I think you'll see why I titled that in a minute. But we're going to start by looking at verses 19 through 21. And so in verse 19, John says, 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.

So we see from the text that it's still Sunday. It's still Easter Sunday. It's later that same day. The first day of the week in their calendar would have been Sunday.

[9 : 42] And so the Jews, or the disciples rather, had locked themselves in this room. And based on the translation of the word locked, it seems that the door was barred from the inside.

And so they were hiding out from the leaders of the Jews who had killed Jesus. And they thought they were protected in this room. And then suddenly there's another person with them.

The scripture doesn't say, did he appear there? Did he unlock the door? We know later in Acts that Peter was able to get through a locked prison door. I don't think it was much for Jesus to find his way through a locked door.

But nonetheless, he is in their midst. And at first, just like Mary, they don't recognize him. He is in a glorified body and they see him and they don't perceive who he is.

And so he says to them, Peace be with you. And I think this phrase is something that we should keep our eyes on as we move through the text because he repeats it a few times.

[10 : 43] But after he said this, as recorded in verse 20, we see that he shows them his hands and his sides. And then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

And so Jesus, he confirms who he is to them with a sign, with evidence that he is the risen Christ. He shows them the scars in his hands, the same scars from when they witnessed him nailed to the cross.

And he shows them the scar in his side from when he was pierced with the spear. And they know that they saw him dead and buried. And it can only make sense with the scars that this must be him.

But now they see him alive. And more than that, they see him alive in the flesh. He's not simply a spirit. He's not some fictitious image.

He is physically there in their presence. They can see that he is real. Just a few days after they witnessed him die, now they get to witness him alive in their presence.

[11 : 52] And so they're relieved to see him. And they're glad, as it says in the ESV. Their Lord and their Messiah is back. And I think, before moving on, I want to highlight how important this is to the apostles throughout the Bible.

This fact that he was risen is immensely important. It's not a detail that John took lightly. And so I warned you that we're going to be jumping around the Bible a bit, but let's jump to 1 Corinthians 15.

We'll start in verse 13 and we'll stay there for a minute. And I know I'm using my text as a diving board to go elsewhere, but I think it connects and I think we need to see the importance here.

And this is Paul speaking to the Corinthians and reminding them because apparently they disagreed on whether or not the resurrection was real. But in verse 13 of 1 Corinthians 15, Paul says to them, if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. And skipping down to verse 17, he says, if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.

[13 : 16] If Christ, if in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. So to Paul, as with John, this resurrection was immensely important.

The proof, the verification that it took place was important. Staying in 1 Corinthians 15, if you jump up to verse 3, he says, I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scripture, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures.

And so you could say, according to Paul's understanding, that the atonement for sin was not completed with Christ's death on the cross.

It was completed with his resurrection from the dead. If there was no resurrection, there was no forgiveness forgiveness of sin. It took both. The resurrection confirmed that Christ's sacrifice was acceptable before God, and it confirmed more importantly that he was God.

And that's what we'll see through this text today. If Christ died and had been buried and he was never raised, then there would be no forgiveness of sins.

[14 : 37] And the disciples would have no reason to rejoice. But because he was raised and he is with them, they have every reason now to be glad, as the ESV says.

Paul makes this point again in Romans 4, verse 24. I won't have too many more cross-references. But in Romans 4, 24, I think it's important that Paul clarifies this, how interconnected he sees the resurrection.

In verse 24 of Romans 4, he says, Righteousness will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. So maybe you can see the connection there.

When Jesus comes to them and says, Peace be with you, it is because for the first time, they have peace with God. They have righteousness.

[15 : 47] They have been justified. And they truly are at peace with God. Imagine that. And so, this word, they were glad, I think is a poor choice of words.

Nothing against the ESV. But it should be translated, they rejoiced exceedingly. Because I think that should be the outcome.

As we continue on, looking at John 20, 21, Jesus repeats this phrase, Peace be with you. And then he says, As the Father has sent me, even so, I am sending you.

And so we see in John that Jesus is commissioning the disciples. Just as they were commissioned elsewhere in Scripture, he is sending them.

And he doesn't give them much detail here on where he is sending them, what he is sending them to, except to say that it will be in the example of how the Father sent him. So as the Father sent Jesus into the world, so Jesus is now sending them into the world.

[16 : 54] And I can imagine that the disciples were a bit terrified by this reality. In this moment, Jesus is with them, but they recognize that they're going on this mission on their own, or so it would seem.

And they're terrified by this idea of going out and continuing Jesus' mission on their own. I mean, look at what happened to Jesus. What if the same should happen to them?

How are they to accomplish this task? We actually see their hesitation on the night before Jesus was died.

If you flip back just a couple pages to John 14, verse 5 in your Bible, this is Thomas, and so I think it's fitting. And he asks the Lord, Lord, we do not know where you are going.

How can we know the way? Right? And this is just the beginning of a dialogue that takes place between Jesus and his disciples that's actually four chapters long. And so, as much as I want to, I can't read all four chapters.

[17 : 59] But throughout this dialogue, he explains, he calms their nerves, he explains what it is he's sending them to do. But it seems witnessing Jesus die was enough to erase it from their minds.

And so, they have forgotten. Just as we may not remember the details as we studied these four chapters over the last several months, maybe a year, we've been studying the latter part of John, the disciples, they don't remember all of the details.

But nonetheless, Jesus has a plan to help them remember. And that's really what this text is going to focus on. What is that plan that will help them remember, will equip them to accomplish all that God is calling them to?

We see a bit of this in John 17, verse 17 through 18. In part of what's titled in the ESV, the High Priestly Prayer.

And he prays this for his disciples, Jesus does, on the night before he dies. He prays in John 17, 17, sanctify them in the truth. Your word is the truth.

[19 : 09] As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. So he prayed over his disciples and he knew that God would accomplish his will through his disciples.

But now, now he needs to reassure his disciples and to prepare them for the mission that's before them. And why, why is he sending them? I think for us today, if you've been a Christian for a while, you know the why.

But, in John 17, 21, he states it clearly for them, right? He says, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. That's why he's sending them.

He's sending them to proclaim the gospel of Christ, to testify what they have witnessed, so that the world may also believe. We find a little bit more clarification on what he is sending them to do in Matthew 28.

Perhaps you know Matthew 28, the Great Commission, the famous verses 19 and 20. you can flip there if you'd like, but I think many of us know that he sends them to make disciples of all who believe, to baptize them in the name of the Father, the Spirit, and the Son, to teach them the scriptures so that they too will be sanctified in the truth of the Word of God.

[20 : 31] And I think some would say that this Great Commission is the reason God has left us here after Christ has gone. If we believe in him, the only purpose for us not to be glorified and be with him is that we bear witness to the truth and bring it into the world that others too may know him.

And so that is the why of Jesus' commission. But as we move into the next few verses and the next point, Jesus knew his disciples that they, just as we, are unqualified to accomplish this mission, on our own.

And so he promised on the night before his death and he promises now that he will supply, he will equip them, he will equip the unqualified to accomplish their mission. So let's look at John 20, verse 22 in the second point, equipping the unqualified.

I'll read verse 22. It says, and when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, receive the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was his plan, right, from the beginning.

Jesus promised many times that he would send them a helper and now he breathes on them and calls them to receive the Holy Spirit. I could move on and leave it at that, but I think Jesus took so much care in the Gospel of John to explain what the Holy Spirit was to do in them that we should take a moment to look back at some of the examples of the things that he said.

[22 : 15] These are all going to be in the Gospel of John, but I've got a few of them. So let's start in John 7, 38 through 39. give you a second to flip there.

Jesus says to them, Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. Now this he said about the Spirit who those who believe in him were to receive.

For as of yet, the Spirit had not been given because Jesus was not yet glorified. Flip to John 14, verse 25 as well.

I promise I have a point with all of these. In 1425, he says, These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you, but the Helper, the Holy Spirit, who the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to remembrance all that I have said to you.

So we see he's going to send the Spirit to teach them, to remind them, because they have already forgotten what took place three days earlier. And then in 1526, towards the end of chapter 15, he says, When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.

[23 : 51] And so we see, in addition, that the Spirit will bear witness, and they too, in 27, and you also will bear witness because you have been with me from the beginning.

Another one in 16, just a couple verses later, verses 7 through 8, he says, Nevertheless, I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away. For if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you, but if I go, I will send him to you.

And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment. So in these four verses, we see, well, it's really eight verses, but four locations, we see a couple of things that I want to point out.

First, Jesus must be glorified before the Holy Spirit is sent. He must be glorified. Second, it is the Father who will send the Holy Spirit.

Third, Jesus will be with the Father when they send the Holy Spirit. And fourth, he must go to the Father before the Helper can come.

[25 : 06] Right? Now, it's not that the Holy Spirit is not in the creation. He's been in the creation since Genesis 1-1, as John said at the beginning of his book, that the Spirit is with them.

He dwells with them. And in fact, it is the Spirit who accomplishes every word of God who brings it to pass. So apart from the Spirit, there is no creation, there is no life.

Right? It is the Spirit. He is with them. And Jesus reminds them of that in John 14-17. He says, So really, what's changing when Jesus sends the Spirit is not that the Spirit is with them, it is that the Spirit is in them.

He will fill them. But right now, when Jesus breathes on the disciples, John doesn't record anything unusual taking place.

In fact, Jesus simply continues talking. And so it doesn't appear at first that the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit at this moment. Jesus breathed on them and told them to receive the Holy Spirit, but there was no indication that they were filled at this moment with the Holy Spirit.

[26 : 44] For now, it seems the Spirit will continue to dwell with them because they know Him, but He is not yet in them. And this makes sense in my mind.

Jesus is still with them. He has not gone to be with the Father and with the Father to send the Spirit, and so the Spirit has not been sent in the sense that He fills them.

And we know from Acts 2 that when the Spirit comes from the Father on the day of Pentecost, right, miraculous things take place.

And through Peter, he's the one who specifically preaches the sermon that's recorded in Acts, he does four things, and you won't find these literally, but if you read what he does, he does four things that stood out to me.

He bore witness about Jesus. He taught them the meanings of the Scriptures. He reminded them of Jesus' words, and he convicted them about sin and righteousness and judgment, accomplishing exactly what Jesus promised in John 13 through 17.

[27 : 55] He did so with signs and wonders, but nonetheless, he accomplished exactly what Jesus foretold. And so it is this Holy Spirit, this helper, who enlightens the eyes of the heart, as Ephesians 1 says, who equips us and the disciples to accomplish our calling, and the same Holy Spirit who equips every saint to accomplish the will of God, to bear witness, to remind us, to teach us, and to convict us of sin and righteousness and justice.

As we move on, another verse that slowed me down a bit here in John 20, 23, I think we will have to spend a minute looking at this one as well, because it says something that maybe at first reading is a little bit strange.

It says, if you forgive the sins of any, they're forgiven them. If you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld. And so, this verse has caused no little confusion in the church.

In fact, it has given rise, along with Matthew 16, 19, to entire religions founded around the idea of man acting as a mediator of forgiveness between God and man.

So, how do we understand this verse in light of the reality of forgiveness? Right? And I don't want to get too distracted here, but I think it's important that we understand what Jesus is commissioning the disciples to do when he says that they have authority to forgive sins and to withhold forgiveness.

[29 : 42] What is he saying? Jesus does command us to forgive others in proportion to how we have been forgiven by him. He says this at the end of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6.

Or, yeah, Matthew 6. But in that sense, he's speaking about forgiving those who have offended and sinned against us. He's not telling us to forgive those who have offended and sinned against God.

Right? We get the clearest sense of how sin is seen in the eyes of God from David in Psalm 51. Right? Verses 3 and 4 of Psalm 51, David says, For I know my transgression and my sin is ever before me.

Against you, you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment. And so, just as David understood, and I'm sure the Pharisees in their own theology understood, if a sin is an offense against God and all sin is an offense against God, then only the sinner can repent of that and only God can be just to forgive that.

Now, I'm not talking about us forgiving those who wrong us. We are called to forgive those who wrong us, but I'm talking about the sin between us and God is forgiven by God.

[31 : 09] God. And we know the Pharisees understood this because in Luke 5, when Jesus heals the paralytic man, maybe you remember the story, they let him down through the roof of the house.

Instead of saying, arise, take up your bed and walk, what does he say? He says, your sins are forgiven you. And immediately the Pharisees, they begin thinking to themselves, wait a minute, this man just forgave someone's sins.

This is blasphemy. We should kill him for this. That's how they believed and that's how they understood and they weren't wrong. If Jesus were a man, this was blasphemy and according to their religious laws, he should be stoned for it.

But we know Jesus was not a man. That claiming authority to forgive sins was rightly his. He was God.

He was the one offended and he was the only one who had the right to forgive sin. I think it's important to see exactly why this is the case.

[32 : 25] If Jesus is both man and God, he alone is just and the justifier. He is the one offended and he satisfied God's perfect justice when he died as a propitiation, right?

A substitutionary sacrifice for our sins. He drank the wrath of God that was poured out against him and in addition, he rose from the dead showing that he was indeed God.

only God can be both just in forgiving sin and justified in forgiving sin as Paul says in Romans 3.

And I think Jesus here knows that forgiveness of sin is at the heart of the gospel. Right?

It is the miraculous working of a gracious God. When we understand the gospel, we understand that we stand guilty, morally bankrupt before God and if we are to be saved just as David did in the beginning of Psalm 51, we must cry out and repent of our sins and believe and just as he did for David, he will blot out our transgressions and he only forgives sins because Jesus died for sin.

[33 : 53] He paid the penalty for sin. And Christ was raised from the dead, the first fruit of those who have fallen asleep. And so all who believe in him have been, as this verse is translated, perfect tense, permanently forgiven and will be raised to life with him.

Getting back to John 20, 23, I know we went down the rabbit hole there, but getting back to the verse at hand, Jesus is clarifying the power of the gospel and the disciples' commission.

The gospel of Christ concerns the forgiveness of sins, and the disciples are sent to share the gospel, to implore people to repent and believe.

And so he's charging them with two realities that they are to proclaim. To those who believe in Jesus Christ, they are authorized to tell them your sins have been perfect tense, forgiven, washed away.

And so you have peace with God. And to those who deny Christ and refuse the gospel, they have the authority to tell them you are at enmity with God.

[35 : 15] Repent and believe. And that's how I understand this verse. To forgive sins means to declare the forgiveness of sins.

To withhold forgiveness means to declare that they stand condemned. Not that they in themselves are the one forgiving sins because that would be blasphemy, but that they know sins are forgiven for all who believe in Christ.

And I think Peter really took this to heart because when he was filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, we see in his proclamation, in his gospel presentation, that he did indeed bear witness and proclaim that Jesus was Lord.

He taught the audience of Jesus sayings, he explained the scriptures and how David foretold Christ. If you read Acts 2, you see, he quotes David directly. He reminds them of Jesus' words, and then when they are convicted, pierced to the heart, it says, concerning sin and righteousness and judgment, he says, repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins, and you too will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

the Holy Spirit filled the disciples, not on this night, but on Pentecost, and helped them to accomplish everything that God had promised, that Christ had promised.

[36 : 54] And I believe we have those same promises. We are promised the same Holy Spirit. We are promised the same message of forgiveness of sins. And through us, by the power of the Spirit, we have the authority to tell people of the forgiveness of sins, and that they stand condemned before a righteous God and therefore must repent.

But as we move into the next few verses, we see Thomas missed out on this event. He wasn't there. So let's look at John 20, 24.

My third point, we're going to look at verses 24 through 29. I titled My Lord and My God. Picking up in verse 24 in John 20, it says, Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the twin, was not with them when Jesus came.

Now I imagine Jesus planned things pretty well, being God, and he came twice, eight days apart, for a reason, and that reason was to teach us and Thomas something through these words.

But it's eight days later, and Jesus comes back. Right? In verse 25, it says, The other disciples had told him, Thomas, we have seen the Lord.

[38 : 27] But he said to them, Unless I see in his hands the marks of the nails, and place my fingers into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe. Right?

It's pretty adamant doubt. When the disciples told Thomas everything that Jesus had done, he simply couldn't believe their testimony. He couldn't take it on their word alone.

Imagine Thomas had been there a few days earlier when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. He knew Jesus could resurrect people from the dead. There was no doubt about that. Maybe it was, well, Jesus can raise people from the dead, but he's the one who's dead.

Who's going to raise Jesus from the dead? We don't know why he doubted, but we know he said he wouldn't believe unless he saw and witnessed the scars himself.

And by grace, Jesus doesn't leave him in his unbelief, right? He comes back eight days later. His disciples were inside again locked in a room barred from the inside, and Jesus again miraculously appears amongst them, and he says again, peace be with you.

[39 : 38] The peace of God is with you. And then he says to Thomas, put your finger here and see my hand, and put your hand, put out your hand and place it in my side.

Do not disbelieve, but believe. Jesus, just as God, was merciful and compassionate, compassionate. And in spite of Thomas' doubt, he invited him to feel the scars, to witness them personally.

And he commanded him to forsake his disbelief and to believe. He commanded his belief of him. Imagine that. And then how does Thomas respond?

He responds, my Lord and my God. Right? He confesses that Jesus is not only Lord, but also God.

And this stands as the clearest scripture in all of the New Testament, declaring the deity of Christ.

[40 : 42] Thomas' confession. But not only does he confess that Jesus is God, through this interaction, he proves three things. There were eleven witnesses in this room, and while Jesus was there, he proved that Jesus was risen.

He was raised to life by the Father, fulfilling the scriptures. His soul was not abandoned in Sheol, and he never saw corruption. He also proved that Jesus was real.

He wasn't a ghost or a spirit in their midst. He was really there. How could Thomas have felt the scars in his hands and his side if Jesus wasn't literally physically there?

And this was important to John because it wasn't much later in John's writings in 2 John 7 where he had to confront these cults that were proclaiming that Jesus never came in the flesh.

Deceivers had gone out into the world who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. But John says, no, I was there. I saw him. He was in the flesh.

[41 : 54] And third, it proves with witness testimony that Jesus is God, fully God and fully man. Thomas confessed it to all who doubt.

Let them see that he was raised and he appeared to Cephas and then to the twelve and then he appeared to more than 500 witnesses at one time.

Right? The evidence is there. There is no doubt. As we continue, let's look at verse 29 in John 20.

He says, Jesus said to them, Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.

Jesus foretold that there would be great blessing to those to us who believe on him without seeing. Even if we doubt, even if we call out as Thomas did to see so that we may believe, that's not how it works for us.

[43 : 01] Right? Jesus has ascended to be with the Father. He is glorified at the right hand of the Father. But he sent the helper, the Holy Spirit, the one who opens, enlightens the eyes of our hearts that we too may believe.

Right? We surrender our lives to him in obedience. We eagerly await eternity with him. Before we close, look at 1 Peter 1.8.

In 1 Peter he says, 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, filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your soul.

That's the reality we have this side of redemptive history, having the Holy Spirit lightening the eyes of our hearts, to see him, to love him, to believe in him and to rejoice, to be glad in all that he's done.

I'm going to close by looking at the last two verses of John 20, where John tells us the purpose of this book. Kind of unusual in writing to tell someone why you're writing to them at the conclusion of the book, but he takes time in verse 30, he says, Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book, but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

[44 : 55] That's exactly why John wrote this. His heart for us, for the reader, for all in history, is that we too would come to love Jesus as he does.

And so he implores us to believe his testimony, to believe that Jesus is the Christ, that he is the Son of God, and if we believe he promises life in his name.

Now John is talking specifically about eternal life as Jesus promised in John 3, 16, and many other places, but he's not just talking about eternal life to come, he's talking about life today, right, and what some call the already not yet.

The promises have been made and fulfilled in Christ, but they are not yet consummated. Jesus himself promised rivers of living water that are to come through him, right?

This made me think of Romans 8, 11. My mind is strange sometimes, and I don't know how I make these connections, but they pop into my head, and this is what came to my mind. If the spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his spirit who dwells in you.

[46 : 22] And so we see this promise of rivers of living water, of life in his name is not just talking about eternity, it's talking about now, today. And Jesus through his words, John through his gospel, Peter through his sermon, and Paul through his many letters, promised this gift of the Holy Spirit to all who believe in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins.

And we talked at length today about the Holy Spirit, but what is promised to us in this gift of the Holy Spirit when he dwells in us? And that could be ten sermons, volumes have been written on the reality of it, but the short answer for today is the same things that were promised by Jesus to the disciples.

The Holy Spirit in us will bear witness about Jesus through our lives as we share the gospel in our words and in our deeds. That's one. Two, the Holy Spirit will teach us all things, teach us to obey all that Jesus has commanded us.

Three, the Holy Spirit will remind us of Jesus' words through the scriptures, both old and new. Four, the Holy Spirit will convict us concerning sin and righteousness and judgment and also will convict others through us that they too might repent and believe.

And fifth, the Holy Spirit will equip us with gifts of wisdom and knowledge and faith, healing and miracles, prophecy, discerning tongues and interpretations, gifts that are given to each in accordance with the Holy Spirit to accomplish the will of God, to accomplish that which we have been called, to confess, to witness who Christ is, what he has done, to grow in the obedience of faith, to proclaim the gospel, to baptize people in his name, and to teach them to obey all that he has commanded us.

[48 : 28] Let's pray. Okay.