

Thomas and the Risen Christ

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[0 : 00] Chapter 20, we shall read again verse 28. John 20, verse 28. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. My Lord and my God.

Jesus is risen. That was the great teaching that transformed the disciples, that changed them from being frightened deserters into valiant soldiers on the side of Christ. And this resurrection became the very center of their preaching. Yes, we preach Christ crucified.

But as you read through the book of Acts, you see a tremendous emphasis upon the fact that the one who was crucified is risen. He is risen and he is Lord. He reigns in heaven and he's coming to judge the world at the last day. Jesus is risen. This was the great message of the early disciples. It was the theme that filled their hearts with joy and peace and gladness. It gave them confidence to go out as missionaries because the risen Jesus was with them. Now in preaching on Thomas, sometimes ministers lay a great deal of emphasis upon doubting Thomas. And present this as very much the message of this passage, the doubt of Thomas.

Thomas. But surely we are told about Thomas for the very opposite reason. It's not so that we will concentrate on his doubt, but rather so that we will have assurance and confidence.

be not faithless, be confident in the Lord, in the risen Lord. He is risen. Even Thomas bears testimony to the fact that Jesus is risen. So let's not be doubters, but let's be full of confidence confidence and say with Thomas, my Lord and my God. It's interesting that Thomas was missing that first day, that resurrection day, that first Sunday. No doubt the word was going around that Jesus was risen. But Thomas was missing that evening when the disciples were gathered together.

[3 : 24] And because he was missing, he lost out on a blessing. He didn't receive the blessing that the others got. It's so important that you don't miss opportunities to be in church. Church is a means of grace.

It's an opportunity for you to receive a blessing. It's a time when God speaks to people's souls.

Church is where very often things happen that lead to the conversion of men and women.

Church is where very often things happen. And friends, there are many blessings that will come to us as we join with the people of God in the means of grace. But if we're absent, like Thomas of old, we can be left outside, full of doubts and full of fears, missing the good things of the kingdom.

So don't miss opportunities to join when at all possible in the worship of God, in hearing his word, and in receiving the blessings that church brings.

So first of all, we have here tonight the fact that Jesus is risen. And this must be central to our sermon tonight.

[4 : 48] Mary Magdalene came very early to the sepulchre. Before daylight, while it was still dark, there's only one thing on her mind, this woman, out of whom Jesus had cast seven devils.

Oh, what a deliverance she had obtained from Christ. How she rejoiced in being freed from the tyranny of Satan.

And how she grieved at the crucifixion of Christ, confused and not understanding what was happening. She comes very early to the sepulchre because she loves Jesus.

And there she notices that the stone is removed. There's no sign of the soldiers who were keeping guard.

They had fled. She comes up to the sepulchre, a cave, cut in the rock, and she looks in. And there's no Jesus.

[6 : 00] The body is gone. There's a pile of cloth there. The cloth that his body was wrapped in. And then a little bit away from that, there's a napkin.

The napkin that had been round his head. But there's no Jesus. And there's no explanation. She's perplexed. She's confused.

She doesn't know what to think. She runs back to Jerusalem. And to the house where Peter and John were staying. And she tells them, They have taken the Lord, and I don't know where they have laid him.

Peter and John set off for the sepulchre. And John runs faster than Peter and reaches and peers in and sees for himself.

And then Peter comes. And he runs right into the sepulchre. And there he sees too. And they take note of these events.

[7 : 02] For they see. They're wondering. And they set off home, puzzled. But Mary stays there, weeping, by the sepulchre.

And she looks in again into the sepulchre. And this time, there's two angels there. And they say to her, Woman, why weepest thou?

Well, then wasn't it a very obvious question to ask? The angels are filled with joy. They're so excited. Something wonderful has happened.

The Son of God has come into the world. He became man. And he died for men and women on the cross. And he was buried in the grave. But he is risen.

He is risen. And here's a woman. A sinner woman. A woman who is saved by grace. And she's weeping. Because Jesus is not lying, covered in grave cloths in front of her.

[8 : 10] Woman, why weepest thou? How can you possibly be weeping in this situation? But you ought to be overflowing with joy and with gladness.

He is not here. And he's not here because he has risen. And then Mary becomes aware of somebody behind her.

She turns round and looks and sees this man. And she thinks he is the gardener. And she says, If you have taken my Lord, tell me where you have laid him.

And I will take him away. If you have taken him, show me where. Woman, Why weepest thou? Tell me where you have put him. And then Jesus says to her, Mary. He calls his own sheep by name.

[9 : 09] And his sheep know him. They hear his voice. And they follow him. And they know the difference between his voice and the voice of an hireling.

Mary. And she shouts, Rabboni, my master. Amazing.

Jesus is risen. He died. I saw him die. I heard him cry.

It is finished. I heard him say, Father, into thine hands, I commend my spirit. I saw him hang lifeless on the tree.

I saw his body being taken down and wrapped in the grave clothes and carried off and laid in the tomb. But now, he stands before me.

[10 : 17] Rabboni, master, my master, you are alive. You who died for me. You live. The tears are gone.

There's no more crying on the part of Mary. Jesus disappears and she races. With a heart full of love and joy and excitement, she races back to the house where the disciples were.

And she can hardly get out the message. He's not been stolen. He's not been hid away in some other sepulcher. I met him. He's alive. He is risen.

The Lord Jesus lives. Truly he is the Messiah. He is declared to be the Son of God with power by his resurrection from the dead. Jesus is alive.

He has finished the work of redemption. He lives. He lives. He lives. He lives. He lives. He lives. You can imagine just how the disciples felt.

[11 : 27] wondering, is this true? Can it possibly be true? And then, later on, that evening, there together, the doors are locked for fear of the Jews, afraid that somebody might come in and disturb their gathering.

They're talking together. No doubt going over and over and over and over what Mary had seen. And then suddenly the Lord himself appears in the midst.

He came through the locked doors. You see, it's not just a resuscitated natural body. He's now got a spiritual body.

A body that can pass through locked doors. He stands in the midst and he says, peace be unto you. Peace be unto you.

And he shows them his hands, the holes of the nails. Then he shows them his side. The hole that the spear had made in his side.

[12 : 43] I am here. I am your Lord. I have died for you. I suffered on your behalf. The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

Peace be unto you. You now have peace. You have peace with God. Through you, Lord Jesus Christ. I have atoned for your sin. I have offered the perfect sacrifice and I have satisfied divine justice.

I have made peace between an angry God and sinful men and women. I have atoned. I have propitiated, turned away the wrath of God unto myself and endured that wrath. And now there is peace. Peace is the great thing which I have achieved and accomplished. It is finished. It's for you.

Peace be unto you. Eternal peace. Not as the world giveth, give I unto you.

[13 : 51] When the world gives, it takes away. It will give you peace today and none tomorrow. But my peace will last forever. It will fill your heart and flood your life.

It will dominate your experience. It will give you eternal rest. Peace.

Assurance. Oh, what assurance they have that he is the Messiah. He himself had spoken of the sign that he was given them. The sign of the prophet Jonah.

Just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days in the belly of the earth. And now, just as Jonah came out of the belly of the fish, so the Son of Man has emerged from the belly of the earth.

The Old Testament promises have been fulfilled. He shall prolong his days. He shall see his seed. He shall not allow his Holy One to see corruption.

[15 : 04] The words we're singing in Psalm 16. He is risen. The Messiah. He died.

But death could not hold him. He is risen. And that brings peace to the church.

It brings assurance. And it comforts the church that he is alive. And he will not feel them. He builds up his church. He will build it and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

He has conquered Satan. He has overcome the powers of darkness. He has emerged victorious from the grave and he can say, Oh death, where is your sting?

Oh grave, where is your victory? Christ is triumphant. He is Lord. He is Savior. He has triumphed.

[16 : 08] Jesus has risen. This is our great message today. Our Savior isn't a failure. He's a success. The church isn't a failure.

It's a success. And even although in our experience we see the church at a very weak time in its history, the church is a success.

And always will succeed. Stone upon stone has been laid in this building. And the building one day will be complete. God's people are being gathered in.

And God's kingdom shall prevail. The gates of hell cannot prevail against it. But rather Satan shall be bruised under your feet shortly.

He's a mighty Savior. Powerful to save. And we have a message to proclaim to the whole world. Jesus is risen.

[17 : 14] He's a mighty Savior. And he's able to save to the uttermost. This was a great message of the early church. And it must be our message today too.

Jesus lives and Jesus saves. Secondly, Thomas had his doubts.

We tend to be very hard on Thomas, but in some ways he wasn't all that different from the rest from the rest of the disciples. They had all forsaken him and fled. The disciples, the rest of the disciples had to be convinced also.

Yet, Thomas seems to have been a kind of skeptic, a sort of scientist in a way. He says, unless I put my finger into the print of the nails, unless I put my hand in the hole of the spear, I will not believe.

I need to see, to hear, and even to touch. I want to be really sure. I just can't believe that Jesus has risen.

[18 : 34] It's so unlikely. It never happened before in this way that somebody rose from the dead like this. surely it's scientifically impossible. Once a person dies, then their body begins to decay.

It must have been the imagination of the disciples, some kind of mass hysteria that led them to think that Jesus was risen. Thomas shouldn't have doubted.

He had the words of Jesus spoken before his death. You remember that Jesus said, destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up again, referring to his body.

Remember that he said to them, I'm going to die, but I go before you into Galilee and I will meet you there. He told them about his resurrection.

Thomas should have believed. And Thomas had the testimony of the other disciples. Son of Mary to the fact that Jesus was risen. And then Thomas should have reflected on who Jesus is, that he is the Messiah, that he is the Son of God, and that death could not possibly hold him in its power.

[19 : 57] But Thomas wanted scientific proof. He wanted to touch the risen Christ. He wanted to be sure to be sure that it was not some phantom.

He was not easily convinced. And that's why Thomas is an excellent witness for us of the physical resurrection of Christ.

Thomas was determined that he would not have the world pulled over his eyes. Thomas felt that even although everybody else said that Jesus was risen, he would not say it until he had actual scientific proof for himself.

So, Thomas had his doubts. But, thirdly, Jesus' loving assurance given to Thomas, the genuine seeker will always find.

This is one of the great certainties of the gospel. Seek and you shall find. You might have some time to wait, you might have to search, through considerable difficulty and discouragement, but if you are a genuine seeker, you will find.

[21 : 29] Thomas had to wait eight days, but Jesus was concerned that Thomas would find.

And so, eight days after Thomas was present with the rest of the disciples, the doors locked, locked doors were no problem to the risen Christ, suddenly Jesus appears in the midst, again with this characteristic message.

Peace be unto you. Peace. Do you have peace? Do you have peace in your heart? Have you had peace with God?

Have you made peace with a judge? Peace in your conscience? What is your peace based on? your own good living? Or in Jesus Christ, the peace offering, the sin offering, the burnt offering, the one sacrifice which satisfies divine justice?

[22 : 47] Thomas, says Jesus, you see me, you hear me, but now put out your finger and put it into the hole of the nails.

Reach here your hand and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing. Christ's resurrection body can be felt.

it's a body that can eat, he ate with his disciples after his resurrection. It's a body that can be felt, a physical body, in that sense, although spiritual, called a spiritual body.

Reach out your finger and put it into the print of the nails. Reach here your hand and thrust it into my side. The effect on Thomas is overwhelming.

The skeptic is convinced. The scientist has the proof that he requires, and he exclaims, my Lord and my God.

[24 : 10] Not just the Lord, not even the Lord, but my Lord, my Lord and my God.

Can you say that? Jesus, you're my Lord and my God. Seeing was enough for Thomas.

Jesus says, blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed. Is that you?

You haven't seen Jesus with your physical eyes, but yet you've believed. You believe that Jesus rose from the dead. What is the way of salvation?

Remember the way it's put in Romans chapter 10. with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

[25 : 16] But what? If you believe in your heart that God hath raised him from the dead and if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus you shall be saved.

You have to believe. To believe what? that Jesus is risen. Truly believing in the risen living Christ and confessing him with your mouth putting your hope and confidence in him alone.

Whosoever believeth in him shall not be ashamed. Lots of people will be ashamed but none who believe in him. Faith is not a leap in the dark.

We have many evidences many things that indicate to us that Jesus is risen. Many witnesses different gospels different individuals referred to in the gospels bearing witness to the fact that Jesus is risen.

We have God's word that more sure word of prophecy inspired by the holy ghost and we have the testimony of God's spirit in our hearts.

[26 : 38] Jesus is risen. Jesus is Lord. Jesus is Lord. Do you believe that Jesus is risen?

Are you rejoicing in the resurrection of Christ? Is this something that thrills you to think about the one who died for you and rose again and who lives?

He truly lives. you can read these stories of long ago and think to yourself that Jesus is something of long long ago but Jesus is alive today and by his spirit he is present here tonight.

Jesus lives. Do you know him? Have you met him? Have you received him into your heart? Behold I stand at the door and knock.

If any man hear my voice and open the door I will come in with him and sup with him and he with me. Does he dwell in you by his spirit?

[28 : 03] Note that the wounds are still on Jesus body he has risen from the grave but he still has the holes of the nails in his hands still as the spear hole there.

You remember when John saw him in the book of Revelation he saw him as a lamb that had been slain still bearing the marks of death upon them and throughout the endless ages of eternity those who dwell with him in heaven will be reminded of the cost of their salvation it wasn't cheap although it's free and to him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood this will be our great song praising the Lord who bore our sins on his own body on the tree be not faithless but believing are you a doubter are you questioning questioning the resurrection questioning that Jesus is able to save questioning the living saviour full of doubts

Jesus lives and Jesus saves and one day Jesus will judge and you and I will stand before the Jesus who walked this earth and he seated upon his great white throne will pronounce the final judgment upon us oh make sure that you hear in your ears these blessed words come come ye blessed of my father and not the awful words depart he cursed Jesus lives does he live in your heart does he rule your life do you believe in him trust in him follow him let us pray let's pray bye