

## John 20:21-31 | Sunday January, 19th 2025

Jesus is resurrected and after appearing to Mary Magdalene at the **beginning** of the day now reveals Himself to His disciples at **the end** of the day. Last week we focused on the events Jesus accomplished once He left the cross. From giving a proclamation in Sheol (the place of the dead), to offering His blood as the perfect sacrifice. There are various ways to put the timeline together, (of what He did when) but the most important thing is all He accomplished. Humanity had nothing to offer or contribute to Jesus' conquering death and offering His blood. The 10 disciples felt tremendous joy when they saw the resurrected Jesus and yet there was much that they did not understand yet.

### John 20:17-31 ESV

(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. (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." (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." (30) Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; (31) 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.

Jesus not only showed the ten disciples (Judas had committed suicide, and Thomas was not present) His hands **but also His side**. The other criminals who died with Jesus would have had the same marks on their hands, but He was the only one pierced in the side. Jesus went out of His way to distinguish that it truly was Him. Everything was happening just as Jesus had promised them during their last meal together.

### John 16:22 ESV

(22) So also you have sorrow now, but **I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.**

The disciples experienced tremendous sorrow, grief and fear when Jesus was killed. Then just as He promised they were overjoyed when they saw Him again. **Each time Jesus fulfills a promise He**

**made, it should give us confidence that He will fulfill His promises to us.** Another promise that Jesus made repeatedly during the Last supper was the coming and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

#### **John 20:21-22 ESV**

(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.**"

Any doubt the disciples had that their ministry or role was ending with Jesus' death was erased. He was sending them out, just as the Father had sent Him. We cannot miss the order. He repeats for a second time "Peace be with you." **The apostles could be sent because of the peace they were given. They were not sent out to find peace.** It was not their mission or acts of service that would provide peace. Being sent out was a fruit of their peace that is found in Jesus. We have been given the same ministry.

#### **2 Corinthians 5:18-19 ESV**

(18) All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself and **gave us the ministry of reconciliation;**

(19) that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, **and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.**

Jesus was sent out with the ministry to reconcile the world. He came to bring peace, and pay for sin. **Then what is truly amazing is that this precious message of what Jesus accomplished has been entrusted to us.** We have been given the ministry of reconciliation. We get to share what Jesus accomplished. He could have used angels, writing in the sky, anything in all of creation but He chose the apostles and then us, to share this truth. We should not minimize this incredible gift. Jesus did not send them out without equipping them for this ministry.

#### **John 20:22 ESV**

(22) And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "**Receive the Holy Spirit.**"

Many times during the last supper Jesus promised the coming of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16, 26, 16:7-15). We have to be careful though, because the full coming of the Holy Spirit won't happen for another 50 days.

#### **Acts 2:1-4 ESV**

(1) **When the day of Pentecost arrived,** they were all together in one place.

(2) And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.

(3) And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them.

(4) And **they were all filled with the Holy Spirit** and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Pentecost was 50 days after the resurrection (50 days from the first fruit wave offering -Lev 23:15-16). The apostles were gathered with other believers, when the Holy Spirit came **and filled them.** This was the start of the church, the Holy Spirit coming and indwelling believers. To be clear what Jesus does in John 20:22 does not contradict the Acts 2 coming of the Holy Spirit or make it repetitive. We tend to lose sight of the transition that was taking place. The Old Testament was

wrapping up and the New Testament was just starting. **The ministry, role, and function of the Holy Spirit changed during the church age and this happened at His coming in Acts 2.** Luke describes the same moment as John 20 on the same night and helps give clarity on what Jesus did for the apostles.

#### **Luke 24:36; 40; 44-49 ESV**

(36) As they were talking about these things, **Jesus Himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you!"**

(40) And when He had said this, **He showed them His hands and His feet.**

(44) Then He said to them, "These are My words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

(45) **Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,**

(46) and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead,

(47) and **that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.**

(48) You are witnesses of these things.

(49) And behold, **I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."**

**When Jesus breathed on them He gave them the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament sense.**

The Spirit illuminated scripture to them and helped them understand how Jesus fulfilled it. Jesus sent them out to proclaim a message to the entire world. Humanity could repent, turn to God, and have their sins forgiven by trusting in what Jesus had accomplished. Jesus warned the apostles not to head out yet, **until they were clothed with power from on high, this was the coming of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2.** As Jesus gave the apostles the Spirit so they could understand scripture He clarified what they would be able to do as they go out.

#### **John 20:22-23 NAS95**

(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, **their sins have been forgiven them**; if you retain the *sins* of any, they **have been retained.**"

This verse is taken out of context by the Catholic church and is used to teach that a priest, or the church can forgive someone's sins. This is not what Jesus is saying. **He used the passive voice, meaning the disciples are not doing the action**, they are not the ones who can forgive sin, only God can. The Jews of Jesus day understood this.

#### **Mark 2:5-7 ESV**

(5) And when Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, **"Son, your sins are forgiven."**

(6) Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts,

(7) "Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! **Who can forgive sins but God alone?"**

The Jews were correct that only God could forgive sin. What they missed was that Jesus was God. **So the disciples are not forgiving sin but Jesus gave them the authority to recognize**

**whose sins had been forgiven.** With Jesus resurrected they now understood how sins could be forgiven. Listen to what Peter declares to the gentile Cornelius.

#### **Acts 10:42-43 ESV**

(42) And He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that **He is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead.**

(43) To Him all the prophets bear witness **that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name.**”

Peter declares that Jesus will judge the living and the dead. **Peter did not claim to have the power to forgive sin, but he knew how they could be forgiven.** Everyone who believes in Jesus has their sins forgiven. We do not have to doubt what secures salvation. We do not have to feel that we cannot recognize when someone’s sins are forgiven. **If you believe in Jesus, your sins are forgiven on the authority of God’s Word!**

#### **John 20:24-25 ESV**

(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.”**

We are not told why Thomas was missing when Jesus revealed Himself to the other apostles. It is unfortunate that Thomas is remembered in an unfavorable light when He asked for the very thing the other apostles received. Thomas was courageous, a pragmatist and a little pessimistic. In John 11:16 as the Jesus wants to head back to Judea, where the Jews were trying to kill Him Thomas said **“Let us also go, that we may die with Him.”** The disciples told and retold Thomas what they had seen but He was not convinced. He was honest about what he needed to believe, to see Jesus risen.

#### **John 20:26 ESV**

(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.”

Thomas had not given up on the apostles or abandoned them. He was still there a week later (the Jews counted each day, so the next Sunday was called 8 days later). Even after seeing Jesus risen the disciples still had the door locked. Jesus offers peace once again.

#### **John 20:27-28 ESV**

(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!”**

**I am amazed by the fact that Jesus knew exactly what Thomas needed.** We have no record of a disciple telling Jesus what Thomas had said. Yet Jesus is offering out His hands and side to Thomas. **Jesus knows us and what each of us need in our walk with Him.** Jesus shows such love and gentleness by not chastising Thomas’ doubt, but encouraging him to believe. We are to show this same heart.

#### **Jude 1:22 ESV**

(22) And have mercy on those who **doubt**;

Doubt means **to be uncertain, waver, to be at odds with yourself, to judge and rejudge**. As believers we have been called to have mercy on those with doubts. To offer the same care Jesus shows Thomas. At some point we will all need to experience this kind of mercy. We all need to be reminded of who Jesus is and what He has done for us. **Thomas declares Jesus as God when He saw Him**. Jesus takes a moment to encourage you and I in the church of a special blessing reserved for us because we cannot see Him.

#### **John 20:29 ESV**

(29) Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen Me? **Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.**"

We are called blessed, because we have trusted in Jesus based on the truth revealed through His word. We have not had the chance to see the risen savior in His resurrected body like Thomas and the other disciples.

#### **1 Peter 1:8-9 ESV**

(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.

We can have a tremendous relationship with Jesus and have a deep love for Him even though we have not seen Him. This also makes us long for the day when we will see Him, **because seeing Jesus is what will change us**.

#### **1 John 3:1-3 ESV**

(1) See what kind of love the Father has given to us, **that we should be called children of God; and so we are**. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know Him.

(2) Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that **when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is**.

(3) And everyone who thus hopes in Him purifies Himself as He is pure.

As a believer we are God's children, and yet who we truly are, is not fully seen as long as we are in these physical bodies. When we see Jesus we will be changed. We will fully see who He is. The more we focus on Jesus now the more we will be changed in anticipation for that moment. **Do we live longing to see our risen savior face to face?**

#### **John 20:30-31 ESV**

(30) Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; (31) **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**.

Jesus did so many things while He was alive. The four gospel combined record over **30** unique miracles of Jesus with countless more happening. John wrote these specific signs down so that we can believe. **What specifically did He want us to believe? Jesus is the Christ**, the Messiah, the savior who would come and deal with sin. He could do this because He is the **Son of God**, fully God and fully man who lived a perfectly righteous life. It is in trusting in Jesus as the Christ, and Son of God **that we can have life**.

**Romans 10:11 ESV**

(11) For the Scripture says, “**Everyone who believes in Him will not be put to shame**.”

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