

(Through the Bible) John 20-21

by Chuck Smith

Jesus' resurrection is a powerful reminder of his love, forgiveness, and the fulfillment of prophecy, and it requires faith and trust in his power and plan.

Duration: 1:29:32

Scripture: Matthew 28:1-2, John 20:1-9

Topics: "Resurrection Accounts", "Gospel Harmony"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the differences in the accounts of the resurrection morning and events surrounding it. He emphasizes that these differences can be easily harmonized and should not be seen as contradictions. The speaker highlights the fact that if all the accounts were exactly the same, it would raise suspicions of collusion among the writers. He then focuses on the Gospel of John, specifically chapter 20, where Mary Magdalene discovers the empty tomb and informs Peter and the other disciples. The speaker concludes that John's account does not contradict the other Gospels, but rather complements them by providing additional details.

Transcript

Shall we turn in our Bibles now to the Gospel according to John, chapter 20. The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, under the sepulchre. And she saw the stone was taken away from the sepulchre.

And then she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we don't know where they have laid him. Now, the other Gospels tell us that Mary came with several of the women. And there is no need to think a discrepancy, nor to think that Mary did not come with several women early to the sepulchre.

John makes mention of Mary because she is the one that ran to his house and brought Peter and him the news of the empty tomb. But notice what she said when she brought the news. They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we, not I know not, but we know not.

Inferring indeed that the other ladies were with her as the other Gospels relate, and they came to the sepulchre and found that stone rolled away. And so this account is not contradictory to the other Gospels as some people would suppose. There are differences in the accounts of the resurrection morning and of the events that happen, which can all be harmonized very easily.

But some people see insolvable differences. And of course, the Bible critics like to play up the differences in the various accounts that are given. Instead of proving that the Bible is not the word of God, it definitely proves that the writers did not get together in collusion and say, all right, now let's keep our story straight, fellows.

This is the way we've got to tell it. And if every story was exactly the same in all of the details, then there would be great cause to question whether or not there was not collusion in the writing of the story. But because we get it from different angles, it precludes collusion.

So Peter therefore went forth and that other disciple, who we know to be John, and they came to the sepulcher. Now, Mary, no doubt, was there at the home of John when Mary Magdalene came with the news because John took her to his house, the 19th chapter, and she stayed with him. So Peter and John went running to the sepulcher to find out just what had happened.

They ran both of them together, and the other disciple did outrun Peter. Now, I don't know that John needed to add that to the record, but perhaps a bit of boasting there. He was a younger man, and so he did outrun Peter, and he came first to the sepulcher.

And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying there, yet he did not go in. And when Peter, following him, went into the sepulcher, and he saw the linen clothes lying. Now, the Greek construction indicates that the linen clothes that were wrapped around Jesus were still lying in a circular form as though a body were in them.

And the napkin that had been about his head was folded in a corner by himself so that they could see that there was no body within the linen wrappings. This, of course, brings up the question of the shroud of Turin as to whether or not it was actually the shroud that was wrapped around Jesus Christ. And there are many who do believe that it was indeed the shroud wrapped around Christ.

I have difficulty with that inasmuch as John's Gospel tells us distinctly that the linen cloth that was about his head was folded and over in a corner by itself. And in the shroud of Turin, it has the entire form including the head. And so, that it was indeed the shroud that was around Jesus, I seriously question myself.

I think that the Lord has deliberately allowed all of those relics that involve the life and the ministry of Christ to be lost in obscurity through the years, because he knows that tendency of man to worship an object. And God doesn't want us worshiping objects, he wants us worshiping him. And so, the silver chalice of Antioch, which they say was the very cup that Jesus drank from or the disciples drank from at the Last Supper, Jesus did not drink from it, I question its authenticity.

For years, they sold splinters from the cross. And you could purchase little splinters from the cross. Of course, this was a practice that began around the year 400.

When they had finally sold enough splinters to put together, putting them together, you could have built a good-sized house. Someone was pointing out the fact that there were enough splinters now to make a house. And so, the church developed the dogma of the miraculous multiplication of the cross, so that they could continue to sell splinters.

And so, according to this dogma of the miraculous multiplication of the cross, every time they took a splinter out, a new one would form, so that they could keep selling them. It is tragic that man has such

difficulty worshiping the unseen God and needs an object, which so easily becomes an idol or idolatry. And that is the worship of any object is idolatry.

And that is something that is forbidden by the Scriptures. But it is something that man is so prone to do. And because of man's penchant towards idolatry, I do feel that the Lord deliberately just X'd out all of the stuff that related to Jesus Christ, things that he may have touched, the coin that Peter took out of the fish's mouth, and all of these kind of things.

And I believe that the Lord just deliberately has removed these artifacts to keep us from idolatry. Now, whenever a person begins to worship an artifact, there is always a twofold revelation. Number one, it reveals that that man has lost the consciousness of the power and the presence of God in his life.

The moment I am worshiping some artifact, it means I have lost that vital consciousness of God's presence. It means that I am somehow longing for that which I lost. And so I have a reminder of what God had done.

But idolatry, any idolatry always speaks of a degraded state of spiritual experience. So I, well, of course, just the very way that the Shroud of Turin is treated as a artifact of which great reverence and all is placed upon is just a classic indication of why the Lord, I think, allowed all of the things to deliberately be lost or discarded. Now, the other disciple after Peter went in also went in to the sepulcher and he saw and believed.

So, John bears record of his own belief when he saw the clothes lying there, he realized that Jesus must have risen. For as yet they did not know the Scripture that He must rise again from the dead, and the disciples went away again unto their own home, probably back to tell Mary what they had discovered. That is Mary, the mother of Jesus who was staying at John's house.

To me, it is interesting for they did not yet know the Scripture. And yet Jesus had told them that He would rise again the third day. Yet they just did not still fully comprehend this.

But Mary stood without at the sepulcher weeping. Now, John and Peter had run to the sepulcher. They went in, saw the grave clothes lying there, and went on back to John's house.

Mary, after telling them that the sepulcher was empty, made her way back again to the sepulcher, this time alone. And as she was there weeping, she stooped down and looked into the sepulcher. And she saw two angels in white sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain.

And they said unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? And she said unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back and saw Jesus standing and knew not that it was Jesus. Now, it is interesting to me how that Mary wasn't interested in the angels.

These two men sitting there in white saying, Why are you weeping? Now, what would be your response if you saw angels? I'm sure we'd be very fascinated. We'd be intrigued. But you know, when your heart is longing for Jesus, even angels won't do.

And she was longing for Jesus. She was wanting Jesus. And angels are not even a decent substitute when your heart is yearning after Jesus.

And so, she turned away from the angels, not really interested in angels. I want my Lord. And Jesus was standing there and she did not recognize Him.

Now, it is interesting how that there did seem to be a certain difficulty in recognizing the risen Christ. And the difficulty, it would appear, was on the part of the beholder. We read that the two fellows were on the road to Emmaus and Jesus joined with them, but they did not recognize Him.

It said, For their eyes were holden that they could not see. In other words, there was an actual spiritual thing involved here where the recognition of Him was something that was held back by God. And it was not until He had broken the bread and they probably saw the nail prints in His hands that they recognized Him.

When we get into the next chapter of John's Gospel here, when Jesus had prepared the fish for them on the shore, again it said, And none of them dared ask Him, Who are You, knowing that it was Jesus. So, there was probably a difference in His physical appearance enough in His resurrected body that He was not easily identifiable by just the appearance alone. Now, Mary did not know that it was Jesus.

She thought maybe He was the gardener standing there. It is possible that it was early in the morning and because she had been weeping so much that her vision was distorted by the tears in her eyes. Though she did not recognize that physical form, she sure did recognize the voice.

But first of all, He said unto her the same thing that the angels had said, Woman, why weepest thou? Who are you looking for? Now, I heard a fellow the other night say that Jesus did not know everything while He was in this body on the earth. Therefore, He asked questions, for He really didn't know the answers. I heard that on Channel 40.

And just be careful what you hear on that channel. It isn't always sound biblical doctrine. The Bible says, Prove all things and hold fast that which is good.

I think that it is very presumptive for a person to make that declaration. And I think that it borders on blasphemy of Jesus Christ. Do you think that Jesus said to Mary, Why weepest thou? Because He didn't know why she was weeping.

Of course He knew why she was weeping. Questions are often used in teaching methods, not so that the teacher can find out the answer, but so that the person can find out what they know or can express what they know. And it is a very common teaching practice to ask questions.

Not because you don't know the answers, but you want people to start thinking. Our minds are lazy oftentimes. And someone asks a question and they think, Oh, well, what is that? You know, and it starts you thinking and it starts drawing out from you.

And it's a very common teaching practice. In fact, I heard of a little kid who went home from kindergarten and his mother said, Well, how was your first day of school? He said, It was terrible. I'm never going back to that place again.

That teacher is the most stupid person in the world. And the mother said, What do you mean? He said, All day long, all she did was ask questions. What's one in one? She doesn't know anything.

And to say, Well, Jesus asked questions because He didn't know is absolutely wrong. That is an assumption that is not correct. In fact, it's unbiblical because John told us that Jesus didn't need for any man to testify to him about other men because he knew men and he knew what was in men.

And when Jesus the third time said, Peter, do you love me? Peter said, Lord, you know all things. Yet Peter had just been asked a question. Peter recognized that Jesus wasn't asking the question for his own benefit.

He was asking it for Peter's benefit. Lord, you know all things. And so to suggest that Jesus was asking questions in order that he might gain information is unbiblical and manifestly wrong.

Woman, why weepst thou? Who are you seeking? He knew good and well why she was weeping and who she was looking for. But she, supposing him to be the gardener, said unto him, Sir, if you have borne him away from here, if you'll just tell me where you have laid him, I will take him away. In this, I see the strength of love.

We're all familiar with the picture of the little guy carrying the boy in his arms. And he's looking up to the man and saying, He ain't heavy, mister, he's my brother. The power of love, the strength of love.

I imagine that Jesus was a fairly robust person physically. And a limp, dead body is hard to lift. But yet Mary says, Hey, and I don't suppose he was that big.

She said, if you'll just tell me where you've taken him, I'll carry him away. And I'll bet she could have. The strength of love.

Jesus said unto her, Mary. Now, there were many Marys that followed Jesus. There was his mother, Mary.

There was that other Mary mentioned at the cross. There was Mary Magdalene. And with all of these Marys around, it could get confusing.

In our household, it was confusing because of Chuck Jr. So, someone called Chuck and oftentimes both of us would answer. So, I imagine that Jesus had a certain way of saying Mary in a personalized way for each of them so that when he would say Mary or Mary, that they would recognize from his intonation which Mary was talking to. And I imagine that he had a way of saying Mary that was just specially and specifically for Mary Magdalene.

This woman, out of whom seven devils had been cast, who became a fervent disciple. And he said, Mary, in such a tone that she knew exactly who it was. And she cried, Rabboni, Master.

And Jesus said unto her, touch me not. Now, here again, the Bible critics have a field day. Because in the other Gospels, it tells us that the women came and held him by the feet and worshiped him.

And later on in this chapter, he is going to say to John, take your finger and put it into my hand. See if it isn't me. Put it there in the prints.

You say you won't believe until you see the prints and the scar on my side. Go ahead. Do it, Thomas.

So, the fact that the one Gospel says the women held him by the feet and worshiped him. And in John's Gospel, Jesus said to Mary, touch me not. Naturally, the Bible can't be the word of God.

It's just the confused writings of men. If you look more carefully at what Jesus said in the Greek language, he said to Mary, Mary, don't cling to me. I can imagine that when Jesus said, Mary, and she cried out, Master, that she fell upon him and grabbed him around the neck in a chokehold.

As if to say, you got away from me once, but you'll never get away from me again. I'm not letting go. And thus, he said, Mary, don't cling to me.

I've not yet ascended to my father. But go and tell my brother and say unto them, I ascend unto my father, unto your father, unto my God and your God. And Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord and that he had spoken these things unto her.

Now, though Mary had come and told the disciples that I've seen the Lord. He talked to me. He told me that, you know, to come and tell you that he hasn't yet ascended to the father.

I would imagine that they must have just passed it off as the hysterics of an excited woman. At this point, Thomas was not the only doubter. They were all of them pretty much still doubting at this point.

In fact, the two disciples you remember who took off for Emmaus. According to Luke's gospel and who were walking on the road to Emmaus. When Jesus joined with them and he said unto them, hey, fellows, why do you look so sad? Oh, here he is asking questions again.

Doesn't he know anything? What's wrong with you fellows? They said, you must be a stranger around here. If you don't know the things that have been happening lately in Jerusalem. And again, Jesus asked questions.

What things? You really think Jesus didn't know what had happened in Jerusalem? And they said unto him concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, both his deeds and words, a mighty prophet. And how the chief priests and our own rulers delivered him to be condemned to death and have crucified him. But we had trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel.

And beside all this, it's the third day since these things were done. Yes. And certain women also of our company made us astonished who went early to the sepulcher.

And when they found not his body, they came saying that they also had seen a vision of angels which said he was alive. These ladies have visions of angels said he was alive and certain of them which were with us. That is Peter and John.

They went to the sepulcher and found that even so as the women had said, but they didn't see him. And he said unto them, oh, fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken, not the Messiah to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory. See, they still hadn't believed, though the women came and said, hey, we saw the angels.

They said he's alive. Peter and John went, they found the tomb empty, but you know, no one's seen him. Of course, at this point they didn't have Mary Magdalene story.

They'd taken off for a minute. Now, that same evening now earlier in the afternoon, he appeared the two disciples on the road domains. And it is interesting to me, the very first person Jesus appeared to after his resurrection was a woman and he appeared to her who loved him so much.

Jesus said he who is forgiven much loves much and his response to Mary's weeping, his response to her love was that she was the first one that he appeared to then to the other women who held his feet and worshiped him. And then to the two disciples on the road to a mass. And now it's the evening.

Jesus made a quicker trip back from Emmaus and the other two disciples, though I imagine that they were pretty fast getting back. 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 came Jesus and stood in the midst and said unto them, peace be unto you. The typical Jewish salutation of peace, Shalom.

And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side. Now, Jesus at this point still is bearing the marks of the cross. He showed them his hands, his side.

It's me. When he is in heaven, he will still be bearing the marks of the cross. For in Revelation chapter five, when the scroll is in the right hand of him who is sitting upon the throne and the angel proclaims with a loud voice who is worthy to take the scroll and loose the seals.

And John is weeping because no one is found worthy in heaven and earth under the sea to take the scroll or even to look thereon. The elder said unto John, behold, weep not. The lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed to take the scroll and loose the seals.

And John said, I turned and I saw him as a lamb that had been slaughtered. Still the marks of the cross. Isaiah in chapter 52 tells us that all that look upon him will be astonished, shocked because his face has been so marred.

You can't recognize him as a human being. In the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, he tells us that we, as it were, hid our face from him. That idea being that his appearance was so shocking that you can't really stand to look.

But then he goes on to say, but he was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities. Now, when Jesus returns, he will still be bearing the marks for they shall look on him whom they have pierced. How long will he bear these marks? I don't know.

Surely not all of eternity for John sees him in the book of Revelation in chapter one, in that glory of the kingdom. And he describes that glorious vision of Christ in John in Revelation chapter one. But for a time, and I'm sure as a shocking reminder to us of just what he was willing to endure in order to bring us salvation, your first view of Jesus is apt to be a very shocking experience.

Just be prepared for it. So often we think, oh, to look upon the face of Jesus and we behold a perfect face, the rose of Sharon, the lily of the valley, the bright and morning star, fairer than 10,000. But your first view is apt to be very shocking.

As shockingly, you're reminded how much God loves you as you see what he was willing to endure to bring you salvation. So Jesus showed them his hands in his feet or his hands in his side, and then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. Then Jesus said unto them again, Shalom, peace be unto you.

As my father hath sent me, even so send I you. The father sent me to what? To serve, to give my life for others. So send I you.

How? For what? To serve and to give yourself for others. I cannot abide that teaching that declares that it is God's will that all of us be prosperous and healthy and and, you know, just if you're not driving a

Mercedes, it's because you lack faith, that it is never God's will for his children to suffer. God is never glorified by his children's suffering.

That is a denial of Jesus Christ and the cross. Surely it was God's will that he suffer for our sins. And Peter, writing his epistle, said, And those who suffer according to the will of God, just commit your souls unto him as a faithful creator.

But he speaks of suffering according to the will of God. Such a thing is indeed possible. And that doctrine that is being taught is scriptural garbage.

As the father has sent me, so send I you to give yourself. To serve not the Lord over people. But to give yourself.

And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit. He breathed on them. It is interesting to me that the word for spirit in Hebrew is Ruach, which is the same Hebrew word for breath.

The Greek word for spirit is Pneuma, which is the Greek word for air. Pneumatic tires means tires that you fill with air. Pneuma air.

But it is also the Greek word for spirit. So in the Old Testament, when God formed man out of the dust of the earth, he breathed into man. Now, when the Hebrew scholars translated the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek, which is known as the Septuagint, it's a translation of the Old Testament into Greek done by 70 scholars some 200 years before Christ.

When they made this Septuagint translation, the words that the Greek word breathed into man and he became a living soul is the same word that John uses here. And it's the only place it's used in the New Testament. Jesus breathed on them, even as God breathed into that shell that he had formed out of the dust of the earth.

And man became a living spirit. But that spirit, you remember, died when man sinned. And man lost fellowship with God.

Now Jesus is restoring that which was lost by Adam as he breathed in them and said, receive ye the Holy Spirit. That life of God, that spirit of God, that spiritual life. And so that which was lost by Adam is now restored by Jesus Christ.

The life of God within man that God had breathed into man in the beginning, now restored. Jesus had said to his disciples. Just four nights earlier, but the comforter, which is the Holy Spirit.

No, and I will pray the father and he will give you another comforter. Even the spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it seeth him not neither knows him, but you know him for he dwells with you and shall be in you. And I believe that when Jesus breathed on them and they became.

At that point, once more living spirits restored, as was Adam in fellowship with God in the Garden of Eden. And I believe that that was the point when the Holy Spirit came into their lives. Now.

Jesus is going to be telling them now you wait in Jerusalem for in a few days, the Holy Spirit is going to come upon you. You're going to be empowered now by the spirit empowered for service unto your service for God. Now you wait until you get this endowment of power for service.

But I believe at this point when he breathed on them and said, receive the Holy Spirit that there was the born again experience. There was where God's life was again. Placed into man, the spirit of God and men came by that spirit into the union and fellowship with God.

And then Jesus said, whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them and whosoever sins you retain, they are retained. Does this mean that Jesus gave his disciples the power to forgive sins when they had brought to Jesus a man who was bedfast as the result of palsy? You remember they tore up the roof and let him down in the in the midst of the room in front of Jesus and Jesus said unto him, son, thy sins be forgiven thee. And the Pharisees among themselves said, oh, that's blasphemy.

Who can forgive sins but God? They were correct in that statement. Only God can forgive sins. Jesus was only proving to them that he was God.

They didn't recognize that. But their assumption was correct. Only God can forgive sins.

You remember in the 51st Psalm, that penitent Psalm of David, after he had been faced by Nathan, the prophet, because of his spin of his sin with Bathsheba. Have mercy unto me, O Lord, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out thy transgression and hide this sin from my sight. For against thee and thee only have I sinned and done this great iniquity in thy sight.

Against thee, O God, I've sinned. Sin is against God, and thus God is the only one who can forgive sins. Then what did Jesus mean when he said to his disciples, whosoever sins you remit, they are remitted.

Whosoever sins you retain, they are retained. I think one of the most joyful experiences that a child of God has is to lead a person through the sinner's prayer. To me, it's always a joy to have a person who has come and says, I want to receive Jesus Christ.

And I'll say, all right, follow me in this prayer. And as we pray that God would forgive our sins, and as we pray that the Holy Spirit would come and begin to indwell our lives, and that we might now have this new relationship with God as we just invited to come in and take over in Jesus name. When they say their amen, it's always a joy to me to be able to look them square in the eye and say unto them, God has nothing against your account.

You're completely forgiven every sin you've ever committed. Oh, how I love to say that. What a thrill that gives to me to be able to say that to a person.

Now, on what basis do I say that? Because here I am, I have the power to say, hey, it's all right. Canceled, man. No way.

I make that statement on the basis of their confession by faith that Jesus Christ is the Lord, and they've invited him to come in and be the Lord of their life. And upon the basis of what they have confessed with their mouths and knowing that if we ask God anything in the name of Jesus, it will be done. And because they've asked the Lord in Jesus name to forgive them and cleanse them of all of their sins, I can say, according to the word of God, your sins are forgiven.

Now, someone comes and says, well, I don't want Jesus Christ. I don't want to have anything to do with him. He might cramp my style.

I can't say to them, that's all right. Your sins are forgiven. Anyhow, I'm going to forgive them.

No way. But to that person, I can say, friend, one day, if you do not receive Jesus Christ as your savior, you're going to have to stand before God and answer for your sin and your sins are going to condemn you. You're still in your sin.

And even if a person comes and says, well, I've done so many good deeds. Now I know that I did some pretty bad stuff. But I've made up for it for all the good deeds that I've done.

I say unto them, look, all of your good deeds cannot put away your guilt of sin. You're still guilty before God. Well, I meditate and I, you know, go through my little thing.

You're still guilty before God until you receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and savior. You're still guilty. And so whosoever sins you remit, they are remitted.

Whosoever sins you retain, they are retained. But I only do that on the basis of what they have done or declared. Now, there's a lot of times that people who have even gone through the sinner's prayer are still reluctant to believe the word of God.

Oh, but I'm such a horrible wretch. I can't believe that God can just forgive me just that easy, just that simply. Surely there's something I've got to do, you know, because I was so horrible.

But it's glorious to be able to just say, no, there's nothing you can do except what you've already done. And that is just to believe in Jesus Christ and confess him as your Lord. Your sins are forgiven.

And many times that word of faith to them is the thing that triggers their faith and causes them to realize. I went down one night to a lady who had come forward to receive Jesus Christ, and I said to her, how do you feel now? And she started crying. She said, I still feel miserable.

I still feel all of my guilt and all. I still am miserable. And so I went through.

Now, have you asked Jesus Christ to come in your heart? Oh, yes. Did you ask him to forgive you of your sins? Oh, yes. I said, then your sins are forgiven.

God has nothing against you. Now, if I should just suddenly come and give you a glorious, fabulous gift. What would be your response? So I would thank you.

I said, all right. God has just given you a glorious, fabulous gift of eternal life. Don't you think you ought to thank him? And as she started thanking the Lord, hey, the old burden of sin rolled off and the joy of the Lord and the power of the spirit just came upon her life in such a glorious way.

Your sins are forgiven. I can declare that to a person on the basis of the word of God and the confession of their faith. Now, Thomas, one of the 12, called the twin Didymus's twin.

So Thomas evidently had a twin brother was not with them when Jesus came. Now, Thomas was a very practical sort. He was never one to pretend to believe something that he did not really believe or to.

Uh, well, for instance, when Jesus was talking to his disciples that final night, he said unto them. And if I go away, I'm going to come again and receive you unto myself that where I am there, you may be also. And where I go, you know, and the way, you know.

And Thomas said, wait a minute, Lord, we don't know where you're going and how can we know the way he's not never one to pretend to know something he doesn't really know or believe something he doesn't really believe. When Jesus was with his disciples down at the Jordan River. And they received word of Lazarus's illness, and finally Jesus said, let's go, you know, that I might awake Lazarus out of his sleep.

And the disciples said, Lord, if he's sleeping, he's probably getting better. Jesus said, no, he's really dead. But I'm glad for my sake, I wasn't there that you might really see the glory of God.

And Thomas said, well, let's go and die with him, you know. Now the disciples said, hey, we've seen him, man. He showed us his hands, his side.

We've seen him. He's alive. He's risen.

Thomas said, unless I see his hands and the print of the nails and I put my finger into the print of the nails and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. I've got to see it for myself. Now, you'd think that he would trust these guys.

You've been around him for a long time, but Thomas was just the kind that from Missouri, you got to show me. And after eight days, again, his disciples were within and Thomas was with them. Now notice after eight days, they had gathered together on the first day of the week.

Eight days later, they were gathered together, which would have been the first day of the week again. And it is believed that here is where the practice of gathering together on the first day of the week for worship actually began right after the resurrection, that that's how early Sunday became the day that the disciples gathered to worship the risen Lord. And thus the church meets today on Sunday rather than the Sabbath day, which is Saturday.

The first two gatherings of the disciples were on the first day of the week, eight days later, be the Sunday again, the first day of the week. They were gathered together again. This time the doors were shut and Jesus stood in the midst of them and said, peace be unto you.

Then he said to Thomas, reach hither thy finger and behold my hands and reach thither thy hand and thrust it into my side and be not faithless, but believing this indicated that when Thomas was expressing his doubts, Jesus was right there listening to his expressions for the first thing Jesus said, hey, Thomas, OK, you want to do it? Go ahead. Now, what Jesus was actually seeking to train the disciples at this point was that he was present with them, even as he said, Lord, I am with you always, even to the end of the age that he was present with them, even though they did not see him. And that is the consciousness he wants us to develop the presence of Jesus with us, though we do not see him.

He is with us always. And he wants us to be aware, to be conscious of his presence at all times. And so he's training the disciples now in this very way that they will realize that he is present with them, though they don't see him.

Thomas answered and said unto him, my Lord and my God. Thomas acknowledged Jesus as his God. John acknowledged him as God.

In the beginning was the word. The word was with God and the word was God. Paul acknowledged him as God, for we look for the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, and even God himself acknowledged him as God.

For in Hebrews, we read that God declared him actually to be God. Speaking of him, he said, but unto the son, he said, thy throne, O God. Is forever and ever a scepter of righteousness, the scepter of thy kingdom.

Now, the Jehovah Witnesses do not want to acknowledge him as God. But if Thomas. Says, my Lord and my God and John said.

He is God and Paul, the apostle speaks to him about. And if God himself calls him God, then who am I to believe the Jehovah Witnesses? I would rather believe God. Jesus said unto him, Thomas.

Because you have seen me, you have believed. But blessed are they that have not seen and yet believed. That's good.

You see, you believe that's all right. But hey, blessed are they who believe without seeing. Now, many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book, but these are written.

That you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God, and that believing you might have life through his name. So John was writing his gospel with a definite purpose in mind, and that is to make believers out of people. That's why this gospel was written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ or the Messiah, the son of the living God, and by believing might have life in his name.

That is why the gospel of John is the best thing you can put into the hands of a sinner to read. Encourage them to read the gospel of John. Because God's word will not return void.

This gospel was written to convince people that Jesus was the Messiah, the son of God, in order that by their believing they might have life through him. Now, after these things, Jesus showed himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and this is how it happened. There were together Simon Peter and Thomas, called Didymus or the twin, and Nathanael of Cana of Galilee and the sons of Zebedee, James and John, and two other unnamed disciples.

And Simon Peter said unto them, I'm going fishing. And they said unto them, we'll go with you. Now, here's a classic example of human leadership.

Simon was evidently a natural leader, and he said, I'm going fishing. They all said, we'll go with you. In a sense, Simon is going back to the old life.

He had been a fisherman before he ever met Jesus. That's the way he made his livelihood. That's the life he knew and no doubt enjoyed.

He was fishing when Jesus called him to leave his nets and to follow him. And I will make you to become fishers of men. Jesus had told the disciples, told the women to tell the disciples to go up to Galilee.

He would meet him up there, meet them up there. And they had no doubt come up to the Galilee, but Jesus hadn't shown up yet. Peter, being the impetuous, impatient person that he was, when the Lord didn't show, he said, well, I'm going fishing.

This is probably all over. It was a great time. It was a marvelous experience.

It was an exciting life. But hey, we can't live forever in memories. We've got to get on with living.

I'm going back fishing. I'm going fishing. They said, well, we'll go with you.

And so they got into the ship and they fished all night and caught nothing. But when the morning was now come, Jesus was standing on the shore, but the disciples didn't know it was Jesus. And Jesus said unto them, did you catch anything? Typical question to ask fishermen.

And they answered him, no. He said unto them, cast your net on the right side of the ship and you will find. Notice how sure Jesus is.

They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it in for the multitude of fish. And therefore, that disciple whom Jesus loved, John said unto Peter, it is the Lord. And when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fishers coat unto him for he was naked and dove into the sea and swam the shore.

They were only about a hundred yards out. And the other disciples came in a little ship for they were only about a hundred yards away and they were dragging the net with fishes. They had fish all night and got nothing.

They weren't going to let this catch go. Dragging the net with fish. And as soon as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there.

And there were fish laid there on and bread. And Jesus said unto them, bring the fish which you have now caught. And Simon Peter went up and drew the net to land full of great fish.

A hundred and fifty three. And for all there were so many, yet was the net broken. Now, you remember the last time that Jesus told them to cast the nets on the other side, there were so many fish as they tried to draw them in, the nets began to break.

But now they draw it in and though there were all of these great fish in it, yet the net was not broken. Now, why the number 153? I'll leave Chuck Missler to deal with those issues. It is interesting how that the mystics always look for some significance in the numbers.

And Constantine worked out, not Constantine, um, oh, Augustine worked out a formula for the hundred and fifty three. And his formula is interesting in that he puts together 10 as a number of something and seven is a number of something. So you get 17 and you take all of the numbers from one to 17 and add them up and you get 153.

And, you know, you can play with numbers all kinds of ways and get all kinds of ideas out of them. But just why 153, I personally don't know. And I don't really put much stock into this, you know, juggling of numbers and say, now the real mystery here is, you know.

I leave that for other fellows. I'm just too practical. I just say 153, that's interesting.

I wonder why they counted them. Someone has suggested that that is the symbolic number of the church. Now we do know that there are symbolic numbers.

That seven is the number of completion, seven days in a week, seven notes on the scale. And seven is called the perfect number, the number of completion, whereas eight is the number of new beginning. Because if you come to a complete seven, then the next note would be the eighth note, but you're beginning a new scale.

Or you come to seven days, a complete week. And the eighth day is the beginning of the new week. So you come to a new week.

And so the number of new beginning is the number eight. Now, significantly, because Jesus is a new beginning for men. Every name of Jesus in the Greek language, when the numeric value of the letters of the name are totaled, they are always divisible by eight.

The Christos, the Kurios, the Jesus and all, when you total the numeric value of the letters, they are always divisible by eight. We know that 13 is the symbolic number for Satan. And all of the names for Satan in the New Testament, when you add the numeric value of the names, they are always divisible by 13.

There are those who have written some very interesting books on this particular subject. One of them is Biblical Numerics by Pannon. And more recently, Jerry Lucas has written one called Theomatics.

But again, I leave it to others to get involved in these number kind of things. But there aren't... 40, for instance, is the number of judgment. 12 is the number of human government.

12 apostles, the 12 tribes, though there were actually 13, but always referred to as 12 tribes, the number of human government. Six is the number of man, imperfection. And the numbers do have a symbolic meaning.

In 153, they say, is the symbolic number of the church, which I find to be interesting, that the net was full and yet it didn't break. Jesus said, all that the Father hath given me are mine. No man can pluck them out of my hand.

Now, in the earlier net breaking thing, you have maybe the evangelism, where you're gathering in all kinds and you don't hold on to them all. But once they are truly in, no man plucks them out. The net, no matter, yet for its number of great fish, yet it didn't break.

I find it interesting that what they could not all do in their own efforts out in the boat when they tried to pull the net into the boat, Peter was able to do by himself because Jesus told him to do it. Jesus said, now go draw the net. And Peter, because Jesus had commanded it, was able to do it by himself, though all of them weren't able to do it earlier.

The strength of the commands of Jesus, the very fact that he has told me to do it. If I will just endeavor, I can do it because he gives me the ability to obey any command that he gives to me. And so service offered to the Lord.

You see, we can sometimes go out and try and do things on our own and are totally unsuccessful. I'm going fishing. We'll go with you.

Human energy, human effort. They knew how they knew how to throw the nets. They knew where the fish usually were.

But going out on their own, they were totally unsuccessful. Jesus comes along and says, hey, cast it over on the right side and you'll find. Now there's services directed by the Lord and notice the difference.

When you're doing something that the Lord is directing you to do rather than just doing something out of your own impulses. Service directed by the Lord is so totally rewarding. You can't even pull in the nets.

And I often when I go out and talk to people who want to hear about what God has done here at Calvary Chapel, I say to them. Look, when the nets get so full, you can't pull them in anymore. You know, there's only one reason for it.

Like John said, it's the Lord. It's just service directed by God and it is always fruitful. It's always productive.

It's the Lord. It isn't man's genius. It isn't some fancy program that we have.

It isn't our great and glorious organ that we paid \$500,000 for that has the largest pipes in the world. It isn't our marvelous choirs. It's the Lord.

People have a difficult time understanding this. But it's God directed service. Jesus is the head of the body, the church and directing the activities.

They are fruitful. And then Jesus said to them, come and eat. And none of the disciples dared to ask him, who are you? Knowing that it was the Lord.

And then Jesus came and he took the bread and he gave it to them and the fish. Likewise, he had done this before divided bread and fish among them. Now, this is the third time that Jesus showed himself to the disciples after that he was risen from the dead.

So, John records the first three times. Jesus did appear on other occasions after this, but this was the third time in order. So, when they were through eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? The word love here is agapas.

It is a Greek word of deep love used of God's divine love. It is a supreme love. It is a giving love.

Lovest thou me agapas, divinely, fervently more than these? What were the these? Maybe the 153 fish still flopping in the nets over there. You love me more than your livelihood. Do you love me more than the greatest success in your chosen profession? Having the height of success in your chosen field.

Do you love me more than that, Peter? How much do you love me? Do you love me more than these? Or the these could be referring to the other disciples whom Peter had avowed that he loved the Lord really more than them in an offhanded way. For Jesus had said to his disciples, all of you are going to be offended tonight because of me. And Peter said, Lord, though they may all be offended, I will never be offended.

In essence, saying, Lord, I am more faithful and I love you more than the others. And Jesus said, Peter, before the cock crows, you'll deny me three times. Impossible, Lord.

If they would slay me, I would never deny you. But he did. And Jesus could be recalling that failure when he said, Peter, lovest thou me more than these? And he could be referring to the other disciples there.

We don't know the these because we weren't there to see what Jesus was looking at or beckoning or motioning towards. Peter said, yes, Lord, you know that I fillet you. Now, he did not use Jesus' word for love, but he used another Greek word, which is a word of fondness or affection.

Lord, you know, I am fond of you. Jesus didn't say, Peter, are you fond of me? He said, Peter, do you love me divinely, fervently? Peter said, Lord, you know that I am fond of you. And Jesus said unto him, feed my lambs.

You're not to be out here fishing, Peter. I told you to leave your nets and to follow me. I'll make you to be fishers of men.

Now feed my lambs. The Lord is interested that his lambs be fed. Jeremiah said that the Lord will give them in that day pastors after his own heart who will feed them with knowledge and understanding.

That would be the knowledge and the understanding of God. When I read that passage in Jeremiah, after having been a pastor for many years, I realized my failing and I repented before God. And I determined from that day on, I wanted to be a pastor after God's heart who would feed the flock with the knowledge and the understanding of God.

Feed my lambs, Jesus said. You love me? Feed my lambs. The second time Jesus said unto him, Simon, son of Jonas, love us, using the same Greek word he did before, agapos, lovest thou me divinely, deeply, fervently.

And he said unto him, yes, Lord, thou knowest that I flail you. I am fond of you, Lord. And he saith unto him, feed my sheep.

The word feed here is a different Greek word, and it literally means to tend my sheep or to watch over my sheep, to be a shepherd over my sheep, take care of my sheep. And he said unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? And this time Jesus used Peter's word, phileo, Peter, are you fond of me? And Peter was grieved because this third time Jesus used his word and said, are you fond of me? It hurt Peter deeply that Jesus had to reduce himself to Peter's level. God will always meet us on whatever level we will meet him.

But it is tragic when we bring God down to our level rather than our rising to his level. But God will meet us on whatever level we will meet him, and he will do his best for us on that level. I am convinced that we often limit that work of God in our lives because we won't rise to the level that God wants us to dwell upon.

God made concessions for the children of Israel. God wanted to be their king. He wanted them to be unlike all of the other nations in that they would not have any visible king, but the world would know that God ruled over these people.

But they didn't want that. They came to Samuel and they said, appoint a king over us like the other nations. And Samuel was grieved.

And the Lord said unto Samuel, don't grieve because they haven't rejected you. They have rejected me from being king over them. And now you anoint the one that I will show you to be the king.

You see, God is now making a concession. He's coming down to their level. Sad though when we bring God down to our level rather than rise to his level because we're not living then on the highest plane and God would have us to live life in the highest plane.

He draws to his level if we would only but do so. But Jesus came down to Peter's level. Peter, are you fond of me? And Peter was grieved because the Lord had to come down to his level.

And he said, Lord, you know all things despite what TV preachers say on Channel 40. And you know that I am fond of you. He wouldn't come up because he couldn't come up.

He would love to, I'm sure. But Peter was always guilty of speaking impulsively and getting rebuked for it. When Jesus said, who do men say that I am? Peter said, well, thou art the Messiah, the son of the living God.

And Jesus said, blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, flesh and blood. Did not reveal that unto you, but my father, which is in heaven. And I'm sure Peter puffed up and said, hey, fellas, you hear that? Revelation.

I'm tuned in. You heard that, didn't you, fellas? And Jesus at that point began to tell his disciples how that he was going to go to Jerusalem and be turned over to the hands of sinners. And they would crucify him and slay him.

And on the third day, he would rise again. And Peter said, oh, Lord, never, never be that far from you. And Jesus said, get thee behind me, Satan.

You're an offense unto me. You can't tell the difference between what comes from God and what comes from man. Hope you guys didn't hear that.

Foot in his mouth. Speaking impulsively. All of you are going to be offended this night because of me.

Oh, Lord, though they're all offended, I'll never be offended. Peter, before the cock crows, you'll deny me three times. Though they kill me, I'll never deny you.

Speaking impulsively. Having to eat his words. Now, Jesus had said.

He that hath my commandments and keeps them. He it is who loves agapas me. With the divine fervent love.

How is it shown? By keeping his commandments. Peter wasn't keeping his command. I'm going fishing.

Jesus didn't say, Peter, go fishing. He said, wait in Galilee. I'll meet you there.

He said, leave your nets and follow me. And he was in the very act of disobeying the command of Christ going back to the nets. And therefore, when Jesus said agapas, do you love me divinely fervently? He could not say yes, because Jesus would then have said, then what are you doing out there in that boat leading these other fellows on this fishing venture? When I didn't tell you to.

And Peter knew that he was trapped and he knew that he couldn't say, I love you divinely fervently. And so he had to use that lesser Greek word. I'm fond of you and tragically had to bring Jesus down to that level.

And it hurt. Jesus said, feed my sheep. This is the word feed again.

So you have feed my lambs, take care of my sheep and feed my sheep. You love me. This is what the Lord would have you to do.

This is his command. Feed the sheep. And then he said unto him, I tell you the truth.

When you were young, you girded yourself, you dressed yourself and you went wherever you wanted. But when you are old, you will stretch forth your hands and another will gird you and they'll carry you where you won't want to go. And this Jesus was speaking, signifying by what death he should glorify God.

He was telling Peter that he's going to be crucified. When you were young, you dressed yourself, you went where you wanted. But one of these days, others are going to dress you and they're going to take you where you don't want to go.

They're going to take you to a cross. And sure enough, in years to come, when Peter was in Rome, he was sentenced to die on a cross. And Peter said, I have one request.

Please crucify me upside down. I'm not worthy to die as did my Lord. And he was crucified upside down.

But it is interesting to me that Jesus here tells him by what death he's going to die. And immediately after telling him what death he is going to die, he said, follow me. You can go back fishing, but follow me.

You're going to it's going to be tough. It's going to be a cross. You're not going to drive a Rolls Royce.

You're not going to live in a fancy mansion. It's not going to be easy, Peter, but follow me. Then Peter turning about, seeing the disciple whom Jesus loved following.

He said to him, what about him, Lord? Peter back in the same old position, speaking out of turn again. What about him, Lord? What shall this man do? And Jesus, in essence, said, Peter, that's none of your business. I'm talking to you about you.

You worry about yourself. Don't worry about him. If I should will that he lived until I come again, what difference does that make? He just told me you're going to be crucified.

Oh, but what about him, Lord? Jesus said, hey, look, Peter. You take care of yourself, your relationship with me. If I will that he should live until I come again, what's that to you? What difference does that make to you? You follow me.

Now, the Lord always wants to deal with each of us personally and that personal relationship with us. The Lord will talk to me and tell me about me. And the Lord will talk to you and tell you about you.

I put very little stock in people coming up to me who say the Lord told me to tell you. I wonder when he forgot my number. What about him, Lord? You know, Peter, I'm talking about you.

It doesn't matter what I've intended for John. You follow me. Now, because Jesus said, if I will that he remain till I come, many picked up that statement and misinterpreted it.

And they said Jesus said that he was going to come before John died. But John is careful to correct that misunderstanding. And John points out that is not what Jesus said.

Jesus only said, if I will, that he should tarry till I come. And so John seeks to correct that common mistake that had gone up within the early church. Oh, the Lord is going to come before John dies.

John said, no, no, that's not what he said. He said, if I will that he tarry, but he didn't say he will tarry. But if I will that he tarry, what is that to you? Now, John tells us that he knows the things that he is writing are true because he witnessed them himself.

And then he goes on to tell us that there are so many other things that actually happened that could have been related. As he said earlier, many other things did Jesus, which are not written in this book. And now he says there are a lot of other things that happened and I suppose that if you would write down

everything that could be written about Jesus, that the whole world could not contain the books that should be written on the subject.

It's a subject that is so vast that we will never fully comprehend it on this side of eternity. But it is a subject that is so vast, it'll take all eternity to comprehend it. I look forward to eternity as a growing experience, a learning experience.

As Paul tells us in Ephesians, and God through the ages to come shall be revealing unto us what is the exceeding richness of his love and grace and mercy towards us in Jesus Christ. God's love for you and his mercy towards you is so vast, it's going to take all eternity to reveal its fullness. Throughout the ages to come, we'll be learning of how much God does love us.

So impossible to write it all in a book or in books. The world isn't big enough to contain the libraries that should be written on the subject of Jesus Christ. It's an ever enlarging revelation to our own hearts, that work of God's spirit, that work of God's love in our lives.

So we pray. Father, we thank you for all that you are and all that you've done. We thank you for sending your son who died and rose again and who lives tonight making intercession for us.

Lord, bless us we pray as we learn of thee and as we learn of your love and as we grow in this grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in whose name we pray. Amen. May the Lord be with you and give you a beautiful week.

May you just sense his presence to such an extent that you won't need any kind of an artifact or relic to remind you that the Lord is with you. May you come to that consciousness and awareness of his presence by the things that he is doing in your life. May things happen in such a way that you realize, ooh, the Lord is here with me.

That's always a neat flush when you get that, ooh, you know, the Lord is here. May you experience that this week as you walk with him in an ever deepening and an enriching fellowship. Through his Holy Spirit.

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