

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JULY 22ND-23RD, 2023 // GOSPEL OF JOHN

EMPTY (JOHN 20:1-10)

WHY ARE THE GOSPEL ACCOUNTS DIFFERENT?

The four gospel authors had differing approaches, focused on different audiences from various cultures, so they highlighted different elements.

- Context and audience help us understand why there are minor differences. **With a little research, so-called discrepancies in the Bible can be explained.**

THREE DAYS LATER...

Though we're not sure what day of the week Jesus was crucified, we do know He was put in a tomb that belonged to Joseph of Arimathea for three days.

- On Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene and a couple of women came to anoint Jesus, but found the stone moved and His body gone.

AN IRONIC CHOICE

Mary ran to **Peter**, who, ironically, **publicly denied Jesus before the crucifixion**. At the news, Peter and John ran toward the tomb, which would've been culturally inappropriate, but this news was too shocking.

- It is also wonderful that John mentions he ran faster than Peter.

JOHN DIDN'T GO INTO THE TOMB

Though impulsive Peter entered, John stayed outside the tomb. This might've been because he was the **only one of the 12 to witness the crucifixion**. Peter, probably motivated by guilt, didn't hesitate to go into the tomb.

- Peter saw nicely folded burial clothes that would indicate **this was premeditated**.

THEY SHOULD HAVE EXPECTED THIS

Peter and John returned "amazed" (Luke 24:12) though all of this had been foretold by Scripture and by Jesus. They were unable to connect the resurrection to Scripture because the Spirit hadn't been given yet (Acts 2).

- To understand Scripture and know God, we must seek spiritually, not just intellectually.**

TEACHER! (JOHN 20:11-18)

AN INTERESTING FIRST WITNESS

After Peter and John went back to where they were staying, Mary, a woman with a checkered past, stayed back and became the first witness of the resurrected Jesus.

- The fact that Jesus was first seen by a woman with a demonic past shows **the equal opportunity and grace of God**.

THE ROLE OF ANGELS

When Mary enters the tomb, two angels are present. If one reads the Bible, they will see the role of angels as proclaimers and executors of God's plan (Luke 1; Revelation 22).

- Possibly in a moment of embarrassment or raw emotion, Mary leaves and runs into a third person she presumes is the gardener.

HOW COULD SHE NOT RECOGNIZE JESUS?

John writes that Mary sees Jesus but doesn't recognize Him, probably because she was crying and looking down. Maybe she had also forgotten about the foretold resurrection.

- We're reminded of two things: **in times of stress/turmoil, look at Jesus, and we must not forget the promises He made us.**

"TEACHER!"

Even after Jesus says, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it that you're seeking?" Mary still didn't know it was Christ until He spoke her name. At that, she knew who He was!

- Not only is Jesus the Savior of humanity, He's a personal Savior. He knows, loves, and invites us into a relationship with Him!**

BY FAITH, NOT BY SIGHT (2 CORINTHIANS 5:7)

V17 is interesting because Jesus tells Mary not to "cling to [Him]." This was because Jesus' followers were going to have to learn to live without His physical presence until His return.

- We have the Spirit until Jesus' physical return. During this time, **we must learn to live in supernatural faith, not just physical sight.**

LIVING BY FAITH CAN BE DIFFICULT

In the spirit of transparency, any honest Christian will tell you that walking constantly in faith is often difficult! So, what do we do?

- We pray regularly, surround ourselves with strong Believers, read the Bible, and judge the fruit of a society living by "physical sight."** This will build faith in God.

THE SPIRIT (JOHN 20:19-23)

SUNDAY EVENING

Despite Mary's report, the disciples feared the authorities, so they were locked in a home. As they were gathered, "Jesus...stood among them, and said...'Peace be with you [shalom].'"

- To the disciples, the locked doors were protection; to the reader, it's a reminder that **nothing stops the resurrected Jesus.**

"I ALSO SEND YOU"

After showing His scars, Jesus prepares the 10 (Judas dead, Thomas absent) to be sent out to teach. John records that Jesus "breathed on them" and they "Receive[d] the Holy Spirit."

- The Spirit would be officially poured out in 50 days (Acts 2), but they received it early so they could understand and teach others.

CAN PEOPLE FORGIVE SIN?

V23 has been misinterpreted to mean that certain people can absolve sin. This is not the case; only repentance to Christ can do that. So, what does this verse mean?

- True Christians have the Spirit of God, and with His counsel, we're to proclaim the truth about sin and forgiveness.**

THE INVITATION (JOHN 20:24-31)

SOME CHRISTIANS ARE GULLIBLE, NOT THIS ONE

Thomas comes in after missing the risen Christ. After hearing what had happened, he says, "If I don't see the mark of the nails...and put my hand into His side, I will never believe."

- Thomas got weary, felt defeated, and took on the opposite view of John's thesis: believing is seeing.**

"A WEEK LATER..." AT A WORSHIP SERVICE

Again, the disciples were in a locked room when Jesus "came and stood among them." Then, He looked straight at Thomas, offered proof of who He was, and told him, "Don't be faithless, but believe."

- Jesus didn't scold Thomas for doubt, but actually honored his sincere research!**

"BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HAVE NOT SEEN..."

Though we are not offered the unique evidence Thomas received, there is much evidence of God around us (Romans 1:20), and we are blessed when we believe.

- Again, this goes back to a **desire to see. If we desire truth and genuinely seek it out, we will encounter Jesus (Matthew 7:7).**

BELIEVING = LIFE

V30-31 tell us Jesus did much more than what is mentioned, but what's recorded was chosen so we'd believe and **"have life in His name."**

- John's documentation of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus was to show us how we're to find **life. This means purpose now and paradise with God later!**

AM I PETER?

- Do we struggle with impulsivity that causes problems? Have we denied God in times of stress?

AM I MARY?

- Do we feel marginalized? Do we have an awful past? Have we been filled and controlled by evil things?

AM I THOMAS?

- Have we struggled with doubt? Have we become skeptics because we are weary of life's perceived letdowns?

AM I JOHN?

- Maybe we've been "good" and present people, but we've forgotten about the promises of God.

LIFE IN HIS NAME

- It doesn't matter what our background is; what matters is our willingness to hear the truth and change. **We can be saved, empowered, and fulfilled if we want to be.**
- We're also offered a relationship with God. That means we have His Spirit to guide, help, and comfort us until He returns.
- Truly living isn't just for us but for those around us as well. When we believe and follow Jesus, **we are commissioned to impact a broken world with truth and love.**
- Jesus' resurrection had a purpose, and so does ours! Christians are called and empowered to touch the heart of man.

HIS RESURRECTION BECOMES OURS

- The pursuit of self has created chaos, destruction, and spiritual death.
- On the other hand, **the pursuit of the resurrected Jesus yields spiritual resurrection, a fulfilling life now, and the promise of an eternity with God in paradise at our eventual physical resurrection!**

WHAT ARE WE PURSUING?

- If we're honest, where do our trust and hope lie? Where is our heart? Are the principles of the world and material/physical gain giving us the value and fulfillment we desire?
- Is it possible we've been looking for the wrong things? Have we leaned into a resurrected Savior?**