



## THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: LESSON 21 *"COME AND SEE"*

God is amazing. Reading about the death and burial of Jesus Christ in John 19 was horrifying, yet thrilling, knowing that the resurrection was just around the corner. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is our hope; it's what our faith revolves around. It is the central part of the Gospel message (1 Corinthians 15:1-8). The resurrection gives me hope when my day is overshadowed by darkness, hope while dealing with reoccurring pain and suffering, and hope when the future looks dismal and grim. Understanding the significance of the resurrection is what gives us the strength to keep going when we're tired and weary.

This week, as you read, study, and meditate on His resurrection, may your spirit soar, your heart rejoice, and your mind be filled with excitement and wonder as you realize what it means to you. His resurrection means life ... simple as that. His resurrection means hope. His resurrection means peace. His resurrection means joy. The empty cross and the empty tomb are "God's receipts, telling us that the debt has been paid." (Warren Wiersbe, The Bible Exposition Commentary)

### First Day

1. Read John 20:1-31. What is your first impression of this chapter? What is the tone? What central theme runs through it?
2. Read the following sections and list the simple facts. What are the key or repeated words or phrases? Are there any facts or details that are new to you, or really minister to you?
  - A. Section 1: Verses 1-10

**B. Section 2: Verses 11-18**

**C. Section 3: Verses 19-25**

**D. Section 4: Verses 26-31**

**3. Read the following accounts of the Resurrection in the Synoptic Gospels and list any additional facts you find.**

**A. Matthew 28:1-8**

**B. Mark 16:1-8**

**C. Luke 24:1-12**

That's it for today. I pray that your heart is racing as you imagine what it was like to be there that first Easter morning. Try to think about how Mary must have felt. It's exciting because we know the end of the story, but Mary's heart was breaking as she discovered her Lord's body had disappeared. I wonder what we would have done ...

**Memory Verse of the Week:** " ... but these things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name." John 20:31

### Second Day

**Study your verse. Do you believe what has been written?**

Mary comes to the tomb on the first day of the week, a reference to Sunday, which from this point forward became the day set aside for believers to gather and remember the resurrection of the Lord. Mary came when it was "early," a technical term used to designate between 3 a.m. and 6 a.m.

1. Let's begin today by reading John 20:1-10 again. Using all the Gospel accounts, answer the following questions.
  - A. Who else was with Mary?
  - B. What were they carrying with them? Why?
  - C. What were they worrying about?
  - D. When they saw the stone rolled away, what was their first thought?

Remember that by dusk on Friday, Joseph and Nicodemus had finished burying the dead body of Jesus. LifeChange Series, Commentary on John, writes: "The disciples were in hiding, fearing their own arrest, torture and death. All their dreams of national liberation and spiritual revival had died

when their Master had aptly cried, 'It is finished.' While every other Jew in Jerusalem was celebrating the Passover, commemorating freedom from Egyptian slavery, the disciples of Jesus were cowering in fear. As the whole city was enjoying rest on the Sabbath, the disciples sat numb with grief. Saturday passed. Night fell again. Shortly before dawn on Sunday, the women disciples who had followed Jesus from Galilee gathered to finish the burial Joseph and Nicodemus had begun (Matthew 27:55, 28:1; Mark 16:1; Luke 23:55-24:1, 10)." Because coming to the tomb on the Sabbath would have been breaking the Law, the disciples are forced to wait until Sunday. Mary comes quickly; she can wait no longer.

The stone was disk-shaped, most likely weighing over half a ton. In front of the tomb ran a groove in the ground, and in the groove ran a stone that was wheeled into position to form a door. Matthew 27:66 tells us that the stone was sealed to make sure no one would move, or remove it.

2. John makes a point to tell us this is Mary Magdalene. What do we know about her? Read Mark 16:9, Luke 8:2, Matthew 27:56. Why do you think she had so much love for Jesus?
  
3. When Mary saw the stone was rolled away, what did she do? Describe the emotions she must have been feeling.
  
4. Peter and John jump up immediately and run to the tomb. What specific detail does John include? List some possible explanations on why he would add this.
  
5. John gives much attention to the way the grave clothes were found. (Remember, he was an eye witness.) Why is that significant? How would it disprove Mary's fears?

6. When John "saw," what happened?

John uses three different words for the word "see." In verse 5, it means to "glance or look," simply seeing an object. In John 20:6, the word in the Greek means "to study the situation," or "to scrutinize." In verse 8, it means "to see with understanding" or "to comprehend." They were progressively getting it! After the resurrection, the Scripture illuminated the facts about Jesus. As John stared at the undisturbed grave clothes, he realized what had happened. It wasn't the Scriptures that convinced John that Jesus had risen, it's what he saw with his own eyes (John 2:22). Then he remembered.

I just want to point out that there are many theories about the grave clothes, but one thing is important to remember. The scene John describes is very orderly, not one of confusion. If the grave robbers had taken the body, they wouldn't have left the cloths so neat and tidy. Either they would have taken the clothes with them, or torn them off. John Chrysostom writes: "The myrrh glues linen to the body not less firmly than lead."

7. The stone has been rolled away so you and I can look inside as well. How does the fact of the empty tomb stir your heart? What does it mean to you? Have you "studied the situation" and fully comprehended it?

8. Is there any fact, truth, or thought that really spoke to your heart from this section?

9. I believe Mary loved Jesus so much because He had done so much for her. He had literally saved her from torment. Write a prayer, thanking the Lord for what He's done for you, recognizing what He's saved you from.

### Third Day

**Work on your memory verse. It reminds us of the whole point of John's Gospel.**

Before we begin, think about this. No one but God Himself saw Jesus rise from the dead. It is a secret only known to God. What a beautiful mystery!

1. Read John 20:11-18. Peter and John return home, but Mary stays by the tomb. Why was she in such a state of despair?
  
2. Twice in this section, Mary is asked why she's weeping. She seems to be almost uncontrollable. As the angels speak to her, how does she respond? What does she call Jesus, even while believing He was dead?

I wonder if the angels are confused as to why she's crying. After all, the world had just been redeemed!

We don't know why Mary turned around right then. Did the angels look up and acknowledge Jesus? Did she sense His presence? She doesn't recognize Him, but supposes He's the gardener. She just can't fathom the idea of what they might have done to the body. I'm sure she thought they may have desecrated it to further humiliate Him. She begs the gardener for help. Her Lord is lost, somehow, somewhere. I wonder where she thought she was going to take Him. How would she move Him? In her love for Him, she didn't seem to care. She just had to find Him.

In her despair, Mary loses all hope. I'm sure she felt helpless and anxious. How often we do this ourselves. We face an impossible or difficult situation, and we lose hope, feel sorry for ourselves, or become anxious. How easy it is to forget the promises of God! How easy it is to forget all the things we know about Him and all the promises in His Word.

3. Are you in a state of despair? Are you in a situation in which you've lost hope? Jesus has not left you; He's right there. Focus on His Word. Find some promises that will encourage you to gain hope and strength. If you can, be ready to share them with your group. Someone else might need them too!

Robert J. Morgan wrote, in The Red Sea Rules, "Our faith grows when we choose to apply God's promises to today's problems and use the experiences to mature us for tomorrow's challenges. In a sense, we are storing up faith for times ahead."

4. When Jesus said her name, Mary recognized His voice (John 10:4). Why? (Imagine how she must have felt when He said her name! What love must have flooded her heart!) How was her despair turned into joy? (Psalm 30:5)

As Mary realizes it is Jesus, she calls Him "Rabboni," meaning "Teacher" or "Lord." She didn't want to lose Jesus again, so she must have thrown her arms around Him in joy and worship. A. M. Hunter said, "Perhaps she wished to do Him homage. Perhaps it was simply her woman's impulse, as if to say, 'I will never let you go again.'" Barclay calls this moment, "The greatest recognition scene in all literature." Jesus doesn't rebuke her for not recognizing Him. He knew her heart was broken.

5. Notice that Jesus revealed Himself to the one who lingered. She was seeking Him with all her heart. (Proverbs 8:17; Matthew 22:37). God wants to reveal Himself to you as well. Are you seeking Him with all your heart? Are you lingering in His presence, searching for Him? As you spend time in His Word, don't rush, linger ... He wants to meet you there.

6. It's easy to linger at the feet of the world instead of the cross. What happens when we do? Where is your heart resting? Read Matthew 6:19-34 as a reminder. Ask yourself ... "Where is my heart these days?"
7. In John 20:17, what does Jesus tell her? Why do you think He tells her not to cling to Him? What are some possible explanations?

Maybe Mary was afraid He was going to leave her again if she let go. Perhaps Jesus was reminding her that His presence was temporary, He could not stay. Maybe Jesus wanted her to simply go and tell the good news to the other disciples. One scholar remarks that Jesus was assuring her that He would be around awhile and there was no need to cling to Him as though He might vanish. He would remain on earth for 40 days, appearing to believers. Although Mary probably thought things would be the same, the resurrection had changed many things.

Jesus clearly draws a distinction between His relationship with the Father and theirs. He reminds Mary that God was their Father and that He would be with the Father in Heaven after the ascension. He needed to return to the Father so the Holy Spirit might come to them.

Mary obviously lets go of Jesus and is obedient to what He tells her to do. She goes and tells the disciples not only what she saw, but what she heard. She had a personal experience with the Savior. Notice that her love resulted in obedience to His Word.

8. Does your love for Christ result in obedience? Name an area of your life in which obedience is difficult. What changes is the Lord calling you to make? Are you willing?

I recently read a life-long prayer of a man named A.T. Pierson. He prays, "To go as I am led, to go when I am led, to go where I am led." Will you make this prayer your own? See you tomorrow!





Verses 21-23 are both interesting and a little confusing. It appears as if Jesus gives the disciples the gift of the Holy Spirit, but wasn't that what happened at Pentecost? It seems like John is recalling the words of Genesis 2:7, where the "Lord God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." Perhaps Jesus was suggesting that His own Spirit was being imparted to them. One scholar believes that it is not improbable that there should have been a time of waiting after the initial bestowal of the Spirit, a time when the Spirit worked among the apostles, like dough, until it burst forth on the Day of Pentecost in a mighty release of divine power. It also has been seen by some as more of a temporary empowering, since the permanent outpouring of the Spirit came at Pentecost. Perhaps this is symbolic, showing them the need for the empowering of the Holy Spirit to do His work.

Verse 23 is especially difficult. Contrary to what some teach, this verse does not mean that Jesus gave a certain elite group of people the power and authority to forgive sins. The Church has the privilege of conveying the message of forgiveness to men. It's not the power to forgive sins that the church has been entrusted with, it's the power to proclaim that message to the world. We are allowed to remind them of the forgiveness of God, as well as the judgment of God if they refuse it.

5. Who was not in the room when Jesus appeared to them? Why didn't he believe it?

6. Thomas doubted the words of the disciples. When Jesus appeared to them again, 8 days later, Thomas was now present. What did Jesus say to him?

7. How does Thomas respond? Did he touch the wounds?

In John 20:25, the verb "said" means that the disciples "kept saying" to him. He did not believe them. In fact, in the Greek text, there is a double negative "I positively will not believe." Thomas wanted personal

experience and had certain conditions for the Lord to meet. (Why was he absent from the Upper Room, anyway? Why wasn't he fellowshiping with the rest?) Although Thomas is always pegged as the "doubter," I do admire his absolute honesty. He didn't pretend that he believed because others did, he wanted to make sure. And when he was, he was certain. He surrendered totally (vs 28). It's as if Thomas fought his way through his doubts to find conviction. This is something to be admired. The Lord met Thomas where he was at. He wanted him to experience the blessings that were lying ahead. Unbelief and doubt rob us of blessings and opportunities. We are called to walk by faith.

8. Read the following verses on faith. What do they say?

- a. Romans 1:17
- b. Romans 10:17
- c. 2 Corinthians 5:7
- d. Ephesians 2:8
- e. Hebrews 11:1, 6

9. Ponder the actions of Thomas. What are some positive things we can learn from him? What are some negatives?

10. Who is Jesus referring to in verse 29? Read 1 Peter 1:5-9.

Tomorrow we'll finish up the last few verses. I pray that you will live by faith and walk by faith, not by sight. Blessed are we who didn't have the privilege of being there to witness the resurrection, but still believe!

### Fifth Day

Write out your verse by memory.

**Read John 20:29-31 again.** A. M. Hunter calls this Jesus' "last beatitude." He goes on to say that by this statement (vs 29), "The walls of that room begin to grow, to expand, to take in everyone who in every age has faith and includes himself in this final beatitude of Jesus." Verse 31 sums up the purpose and aim of the writer of this book very clearly, as John sums up the evidence he has presented.

1. Do the Gospels contain all that Jesus said or did?
2. Why were certain situations and words written?

The Gospels never intended to give an exhaustive account of the life of Christ, day by day, hour by hour. William Barclay said "They were not meant to be biographies of Jesus; they are meant to be appeals to take Jesus as Savior, Master, and Lord." They are written so that we might have faith in Christ, and obtain eternal life.

The resurrection is the key to the Christian faith. It proves that Jesus is the Son of God (Acts 2:32-36; Romans 1:4) and that His work on the cross is complete (Romans 4:24-25). Because of His resurrection, we can be confident that He will do what He says, because He said He would rise, and He did. We can be certain of our own resurrection because of His. There is life after death. Because He lives, we also live (1 Corinthians 6:14; Romans 8:11). The resurrection of Jesus was accomplished by God's power (Acts 2:24), Christ's power (John 10:18) and the Spirit's power (Romans 8:11). The empty tomb is proof! He is risen ... He is risen indeed!

3. How should the truth of the resurrection affect your life?  
(Practically and spiritually) Is it?
4. How is this chapter relevant to your life today?

