

John Ch20v24-31 - Stop Doubting And Believe

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Preacher: Jonny Grant

[0 : 00] And put my hand into his side. I will not believe. A week later his disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them.

! Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, Peace be with you. Then he said to Thomas, Put your finger here.

See my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.

Thomas said to Jesus, My Lord and my God. Then Jesus told him, Because you have seen me, you have believed.

Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book.

[1 : 12] But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Well, let's pray together and ask for the Lord's help as we look at his word. Father God, these words have been written down for us.

That we may have life. And we pray that we may encounter afresh the risen Lord Jesus, each and every one of us.

That we may see and know the life that the risen Jesus comes to give us.

We ask for your help. We ask for your help. That we may be changed. As we see Jesus.

[2 : 19] Amen. So, do you believe in Jesus?

I don't mean do you believe that Jesus existed. Most people believe that there was a man in history, a great teacher, a great leader called Jesus.

But do you believe in, do you trust in the resurrection of Jesus? Most people don't believe.

Perhaps you're here this morning and you don't believe. Or maybe you've got friends or family who don't believe. What do you think it will take for a doubter to become a believer?

Well, in our text that we've just read, we meet a sceptic. Someone who was a doubter. Someone who does not believe.

[3 : 31] His name is Thomas. And Thomas has got questions. He wants to know if the resurrection is true. And if it is true, what will that mean for our life?

Well, to help us understand and to get to the heart of this account, we're going to listen to three voices.

We're going to listen to what the disciples say, what Thomas says, and what Jesus says. So three voices that we're going to listen to this morning.

First, let's listen to what the disciples have to say. We have seen and we believe.

Look at verse 24. Now, Thomas, one of the twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came.

[4 : 36] So Jesus had already visited the other disciples. So the other disciples told him, Thomas, we have seen the Lord.

Of course, the disciples weren't the first ones to see the resurrected Jesus. This was the privilege of Mary. If you look back at verse 18.

This is just after the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. Verse 18. Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news, I have seen the Lord.

Mary was the first eyewitness of the risen Jesus. And although she had seen and believed, it seems the disciples were not so convinced.

They needed to see Jesus too. So verse 19. On the evening of the first day, so a week after the resurrection, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, Peace be with you.

[5 : 57] After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. And the disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

They saw the risen Jesus with their own eyes. And so they go to Thomas in verse 25. Thomas, we have seen the Lord.

Jesus was alive. He died. He was buried. And now he lives. They believed in Jesus.

But you say, that's easy for the disciples to believe. I think if I was a sceptic, and I saw the physical risen Jesus right here, right now, my goodness me, I too would believe.

You see, that's how so many unbelievers respond. I will believe if. I will believe if Jesus came and spoke to me audibly.

[7 : 09] I will believe in Jesus if he would heal my sick son or daughter. I will believe in Jesus if he would just end all the wars right now in the Middle East.

I will believe if Jesus appeared to me in Barry Collins. Just bumped into him and there he was. What would it take for you to believe? What would convince the most hardened friend that you have to believe in and trust in the resurrection of Jesus?

I will believe in Jesus if you fill in the blank. It's a reasonable way to think, isn't it?

You see, if I said to you, I could jump up right here from now and touch the roof up there. I can.

What would you say?

[8 : 23] Prove it, Johnny. Well, I'm not going to prove it. Because I can't. You see, in the same way, if we say to our friends or to family, Jesus died, and Jesus was raised from the dead, and he lives forever.

And they turn around and say to you, well, prove it to me. What are you going to say to your friends to say Jesus was risen from the dead?

What proof have you got? Well, it comes back to our statement, I will believe in Jesus if. In other words, people want proof. They want evidence.

Which is exactly what Thomas wants. So, we've heard the disciples. Now let's listen to Thomas.

Unless I see, I will not believe. Look at verse 25. The disciples came to Thomas and said, we have seen the Lord.

[9 : 34] But Thomas said to them, unless I see the nail marks in his hands, and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.

So just as Christ was nailed to the cross, and the Roman soldier pierced the side of Jesus with a sword, Thomas saying, unless I get to actually put my finger where those nail marks were, and see the side, and put my hand where he was cut with the sword, I'm not going to believe.

I need to see. I need to be able to touch. I need evidence. Well, it seems that the risen Jesus was very gracious to Thomas, because evidence he asked for, evidence he gets.

Verse 26. A week later, so this is now two weeks after the resurrection of Jesus, a week later, his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them this time.

But it's a similar account, isn't it? Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, peace be with you.

[11 : 13] You see, Jesus' resurrected body was a transformed body. He could walk through walls and doors. But to dispel any thoughts of this being an apparition, or a kind of a ghostly or spiritly figure, verse 27.

Jesus said to Thomas, Thomas, put your finger here. See my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side.

Well, Thomas heard the voice of Jesus. He could see Jesus.

And he could actually touch Jesus. His request for proof has been met. But with the evidence, or the call for evidence, comes a call on his life.

Verse 27. The end of verse 27. Thomas, stop doubting and believe.

[12 : 27] The risen Jesus has come to Thomas and demands a response. It's as if Jesus were saying to him, I've done what you've asked for. Now believe in me.

Put your trust in me. Place all your confidence in me. You see, believing is much more than just an intellectual acceptance.

It is a relational commitment. Jesus is saying, entrust your life to me. Submit yourself to me.

depend upon me for your life. In around 1840, 1850, there was a man who was famous for his tightrope walking, Blondin.

One of his most famous acts was to walk along a tightrope across the Niagara Falls, about a thousand feet in distance, 160 feet from the raging waters below.

[13:43] And there he performed his act in front of a crowd of about 25,000 people back and forth, up and down the rope he went. And then he produced a wheelbarrow.

And he asked the crowd, do you think I can walk across this tightrope with a wheelbarrow? The crowd roared, yes, yes. And then he asked the crowd, do you think I could push someone in the wheelbarrow across?

Yes, yes, said the crowd. And then came the question, any volunteers? Nobody answered.

You see, it's one thing for you to say or for me to say, oh yes, I believe, but it's another thing to act on it and to entrust yourself to someone.

Well, Jesus is coming before us this morning as he did to Thomas. and he is saying, entrust your whole life to me. Commit yourself to me and I will bring you through not just a tightrope across a river, but I will bring you from death through to life.

[15:09] I will take you from darkness into light, from condemnation into salvation. Trust in me and I will guarantee you eternal life.

How is Thomas going to respond? He has the evidence before him, the call upon his life. Well, there is the confession.

Verse 28. Thomas said to Jesus, my Lord and my God.

Now, this isn't an expletive of one of fright or confusion. It's a confession of understanding and commitment. My Lord or my Master.

But more than that, my God. Here, the risen Jesus stands before Thomas and Jesus has risen from the dead demonstrates to Thomas that because he is alive, he is God.

[16:22] And Thomas saw the evidence. He heard the call and now he confesses, my Lord and my God. Thomas entrusts himself to Jesus.

He commits his life to God. He is the one who actually gets in the wheelbarrow. he entrusts himself to Jesus.

Thomas sees and he believes. Now, the risen Jesus not only speaks to Thomas, Jesus speaks to us.

So, we've heard the voice of the disciples, the voice of Thomas. Now, listen to the voice of Jesus. Blessed are those who have not seen and believe.

Verse 29. Then Jesus told Thomas, because you have seen me, you have believed.

[17:35] Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. You see, Jesus is saying to us and to our skeptic friends, even though we cannot physically see the risen Jesus, we can still believe.

And this isn't just a step into the dark. This is not blind faith. No, this is a sure and certain faith which rests on the historical fact of the resurrection.

Well, how can we believe? How are we to expect any of our family to believe? Or friends to believe if they cannot see Jesus? Well, three things for us to consider.

First, it is written. Look at verse 30. Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples which are not recorded in this book.

But these are written that you may believe. John, the author of the gospel, has recorded at least seven miraculous signs that Jesus performed.

[18:58] He changed water into wine. He healed the royal official's son. Then there was the lame man by the pool who was made to walk again. Then Jesus went on and he fed a crowd of more than 5,000 people with five bread rolls and a couple of fish.

Then there was the blind man, blind from birth, but Jesus touched him and he was healed. And then there was that resurrection of Lazarus from the dead.

Jesus raised a dead man. And all of these signs have been recorded and written down for us in the gospel of John.

It's like it's a book of evidence. And the seventh and final sign is the resurrection of Jesus. The testimony of those who saw him have recorded it.

Mary saw the disciples saw. Thomas saw. These were the first eyewitnesses and they believed and their stories have been written down for you and for me today.

[20:10] In other words, what this is saying to us is that what's written down is enough. God's word is sufficient.

We don't need any more signs or wonders. Can God do miracles today? Yes, he can. But we don't need signs or wonders to believe.

No more I will believe if Jesus turned up at Barry Collins. No, it is written second so that we may believe.

Look at verse 31 again. These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

You see, all of these signs performed by Jesus have a purpose to show us that Jesus is the Messiah. He is God's chosen king. And the only right response is to believe and to confess like Thomas, my Lord and my God.

[21 : 34] You see, it's not that there's not enough evidence. It's that some people just don't want to believe the evidence.

look back to chapter 11 with me, to this amazing account of Lazarus being raised from the dead. Chapter 11, verse 43. So this is the sixth miracle or sign that Jesus performed.

We'll pick it up in verse 43. So Lazarus is in the tomb and Jesus comes along and in a loud voice, Lazarus, come out.

the dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen and a cloth round his face.

[22 : 46] And Jesus said to them, take off the grave clothes and let him go. Therefore, many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, Mary was the sister of Lazarus, they had come to mourn for him.

when they had seen what Jesus did, they believed in him. But not everyone was happy, were they?

Look at verse 48. This is the religious leaders. If we let him go on like this, if we let Jesus keep going on, everyone will believe in him.

And then the Romans will come and take away both our temple and our nation. Verse 53. So from that day on, they plotted to take his life.

Let's go back to chapter 20. You see, some saw and believed and looked to Jesus for life. Others saw and would not believe and instead of coming to Jesus for life, they wanted to take his life.

[24 : 07] You see, it's not that there is no evidence, it's that some just don't want to believe. The reality is Jesus could do anything and everything you asked for.

Heal my child, stop the wars, appear to me, talk to me, but still, they would not believe.

You see, believing in Jesus demands that we devote ourselves fully and completely to Jesus. True belief means we embrace Jesus as my Lord and my God.

and that's the crux of the issue, to entrust yourself completely to him, to get into the wheelbarrow, to give your life to him.

well, it is written that we may believe and have life.

[25 : 14] You see, as we do believe, as we trust in Jesus, we experience life in all its fullness. Look at verse 31 back to chapter 20. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

That's what is promised, life. Well, what is this life? Well, listen to what Jesus said to those who encountered him.

Here's a taster of what John promises. Jesus says, whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst.

Indeed, the water I give them will come in them, a spring of water welling up to eternal life. I am the bread of life.

I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever.

forever. I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.

[26 : 41] I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live even though they die and whoever lives by believing in me will never die.

I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Here is life that will quench you and satisfy you and fulfill you. It is life now and life to come.

You see, this gospel has been written down so that we may believe and have life and so we can go and proclaim this life with absolute confidence and assurance to our skeptic friends.

We don't have to produce miracles or signs and wonders. we tell them the same story which is exactly what John went on to do.

[27 : 56] Go with me as we finish please to 1 John chapter 1. It's just before Revelation. 1 John chapter 1.

Towards the end of your Bible. page number 1225.

So the same author of the gospel writes a letter and tells us that the written word about Jesus is sufficient, it is enough, and it leads to life.

Let's read from verse 1. This is speaking about Jesus. That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at, and our hands have touched, this we proclaim concerning the word of life.

the life appeared, we have seen it, and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and has appeared to us.

[29 : 31] We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us, and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

We write this to make our joy complete. you see, life is experienced as we hear the written word and believe.

No need for I will believe if. We have the testimony of those who heard, who saw, and who touched. And so we can go with confidence and share the same message and show that as we believe, verse 3, we enter and experience fellowship with the Father and with his Son.

We enter into that eternal, loving, joyful relationship of the Father and the Son. A relationship that quenches and satisfies and fulfills life in all its fullness offered freely because of what Christ has done for us.

Stop doubting and believe. Let's pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[31 : 15] Amen. As we look afresh at the evidence, as we hear the call to believe, we confess afresh, my Lord and my God.

We thank you, Jesus, for your death for us, for your resurrection, giving life to all who trust in you. Help us to go with confidence and assurance that we too may proclaim the written word that all may come and believe and receive life.

Father, we pray that for everyone gathered here today. We pray that for every child and young person who will come to rock, to rooted.

we pray that for our friends. We pray it for our family. Lord, help us to proclaim this word, this word of life.

[32 : 58] Help us now, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.