

Believe Jesus and Proclaim Jesus

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[0:00] I don't think we're at the potter's house.

Okay, John's Gospel. Let's go to John's Gospel, John chapter 20. As I said earlier, I'm going to finish off John 20. Starting in verse 24, 20, 24, chapter 20, verse 24, through 31, the first of a two-part conclusion to John's Gospel is what this is.

In chapter 20, starting in verse 24, here, I'll read. But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, the twin, was not with them when Jesus came.

The other disciples, therefore, they were saying to him, we've seen the Lord. But he said to them, unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and put my finger into the mark of the nails, and put my hand to his side, I will never believe.

And after eight days, again, his disciples were inside, Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been locked, and stood in the midst and said, peace to you.

[1:38] Then he said to Thomas, reach your finger here and see my hands. And reach your hand here and put it into my side, and be not unbelieving, but believing.

Thomas answered and said to him, my Lord and my God. Jesus said to him, because you've seen me, you believed. Blessed are those who did not see and believed.

Therefore, many of the signs Jesus also did in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book. But these have been written, that you may believe that Jesus is to Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.

A Scotsman demonstrated a new game of golf to President Ulysses Grant.

Carefully placing a ball on the tee, he took a mighty swing. The club hit the turf and scattered dirt all over the president's beard and the surrounding vicinity, while the ball placidly waited on the tee.

[2:46] Again, the Scotsman swung, and again he missed. The president waited patiently through six tries, and then quietly stated, there seems to be a fair amount of exercise in the game, but I failed to see the purpose of the ball.

I think the Scotsman failed to see the purpose of golf. It's to hit the ball. Maybe the old saying by Henry Wheeler Shaw is true.

He wrote this in 1876, he who aims at nothing is sure to hit it every time. What's our purpose as a church? We're talking about purpose, intention, aim.

What's our purpose as a church? Quite interesting how we strike this at the time when we are at this church right now. Interesting, isn't it?

God in his providence knows what he's doing. What is our purpose as a church? Well, we see the purpose of John's gospel is to come receive Jesus, believe into Jesus, know Jesus, and we see believe Jesus, believe Jesus and proclaim Jesus.

[4:05] This is our purpose as a church. We believe Jesus and we proclaim Jesus. This is our purpose. This is why we exist. Believe Jesus, proclaim Jesus.

Simple way to do it. Simple way to put it. Simple way to say it. Here's other simple ways to say it. We trust the risen Jesus and his identity and mission.

We proclaim the risen Jesus and his identity and mission. We trust the risen Jesus. We proclaim the risen Jesus. This is our purpose as a church.

The purpose of this gospel is to give the factual, historical, eyewitness account of Jesus' disciples so that readers may trust Jesus and so that we as his disciples may proclaim that account.

That's the purpose of this gospel. We trust the risen Jesus. We proclaim the risen Jesus and his identity and mission. Here's a longer way to put it.

[5:16] We fully rely upon the evidential, historical, factual, scientific eyewitness testimony of the apostles of the risen Jesus so that we may believe and proclaim Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God

and may have life in his name.

That's the long way to put it. This is our purpose as a church. And by the way, to believe in the risen Jesus means to confess his identity and mission, to personally devote oneself to Jesus and all that he is, declaring him to be one's Lord and God and proclaiming him to others.

That's what it means to believe. If you believe, you embrace him and then you proclaim him. That's what it means to be a follower of Jesus. That's what it means to be a Christian. That's what we're all about.

That we're trusting Jesus and as we trust in Jesus and say, you're my Lord and my God, we're proclaiming this to others. John's gospel testifies to this gospel which was entrusted to Jesus' disciples who were eyewitnesses of his identity, eyewitnesses of his mission.

So we rely upon their evidential witness so we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and have eternal life. So our belief is not based on physical sight but upon the historical fact of these eyewitnesses.

[6:58] And as I said earlier, this is the first of a two-part conclusion to the gospel to explain John's purpose in writing. We hit chapter 21 next week and the week after.

There's another conclusion or second part of the conclusion. So this gospel is a true proclamation to those who are not Jesus' followers about the historical, factual reality of Jesus' identity and mission.

You're gonna hear me say that over and over again. Identity and mission. Identity and mission. But not only is it a proclamation to those who are not Jesus' followers, but it's a source of comfort, encouragement, and teaching for us as Christians.

We find comfort in the fact that we have peace and forgiveness in Jesus. We saw that a couple weeks ago. We find encouragement that He rose from the dead and the Spirit is the one who works in us, enabling our minds and warming our hearts.

It teaches us who Jesus is, His identity, and the teaching, how it involves, what it all involves, what evangelism means in talking to people and proclaiming this gospel truth.

[8:25] This gospel is not just for people who don't know Jesus. It's a source of comfort and encouragement and teaching for us as Christians who are followers of Jesus.

As far as Thomas is concerned, Thomas represented all future believers, us, who are called to trust Jesus through the eyewitness historical testimony of the apostles.

And those who come to faith proclaim what He, Thomas, proclaimed. Those of us who come to faith, we proclaim what Thomas proclaimed.

We are, so to speak, the apostles' representatives. We represent the apostles. So six aspects will arise, will develop from our passage this morning.

So the first aspect we'll look at is this one. And again, excuse my allergies, I'm just so stuffy. Thank you for being gracious to me in that way. First aspect, proclaiming the risen Jesus.

[9:37] Proclaiming the risen Jesus. 24 to 25. 25. Thomas, one of the 12, called Denimus, the twin. He was one of the 12 apostles. He was not present with the disciples that day when Jesus appeared to the 10.

And we're not told why. So we will not speculate. Well, some people, ah, because of this, ah, because of that. We don't need to figure that out because we're not told. So we're not going to, we're not going to talk about that.

But He is significant. significant. In this aspect that we see proclaiming the risen Jesus, Thomas represents those who have not seen or touched Jesus.

Which means He represents us. We rely upon the eyewitness accounts of these disciples. Thomas was with, was not with them.

Excuse me. Thomas was not with them when Jesus came from verse 24. So this is vital because this will answer the question before us.

[10:45] The question is, how is the Lord Jesus encountered today though He's physically absent from us? There's actually two ways.

How is the Lord Jesus encountered today though He's not physically here with us? There's two ways. The first way we've talked about this before, one, two, three, four weeks ago, whatever, is through the local church.

We are the physical representation of Jesus here on earth. But there's another way. A person encounters the risen Jesus through the eyewitness account of the apostles in the writings of the

New Testament.

So there's two ways. One is the physical aspect of us, the body of Christ, but really the first way we should say is through the eyewitness account of the apostles in the writings of the New Testament. That's how people encounter the risen Jesus today though He's physically not with us. So notice what it says in verse 25.

[11:57] Here's the proclamation. The other disciples, therefore, the other disciples were saying to Him, we've seen the Lord. Here's the proclamation.

The ten bore testimony to Thomas that they'd seen the Lord Jesus as eyewitnesses to the resurrected Jesus. They testified to Thomas about the truthful, historical, scientific.

I use that scientific on purpose because He really was there. Appearing of Jesus. And this is what we're called to do as His followers. We proclaim Him just like these ten proclaimed Him.

Now the difference is for us though is we haven't physically seen Him. That's why we represent Thomas. us. But we still proclaim Jesus. The risen Jesus.

Paul understood this. Colossians chapter 1. Colossians chapter 1 verse 28 Paul says, And we proclaim Him admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom that we may present every man complete in Christ.

[13:11] And verse 29, and for this purpose also I labor. Striving according to His power which mightily works within me. That's the purpose. We proclaim Christ.

We trust Christ and we proclaim Christ. That's our purpose. So here's this first aspect. Proclaiming the risen Jesus.

Now notice the next aspect. Aspect number 2. Rejecting the disciples' testimony of the risen Jesus. Verse 25 because look at what Thomas says. Unless I shall see, unless I see in His hands the mark of the nails and put my finger into the mark of the nails and put my hand to His side, I will never believe.

New American Standard says not, in the Greek it's ume, which has the connotation of never. I will never believe unless I see physical evidence.

You ever had somebody tell you that? You're talking to them about the gospel? Well, I'm not going to believe in that. I need physical evidence. See the mark of the nails in His hands?

[14:27] Put my finger into the mark of the nails, put my hand in His side. Thomas' demand is absurd. Well, actually in all reality, he was declaring that the eyewitness account of the apostles was absurd.

which is what people do today when we speak to them about the truth of Jesus from these ten apostles. It's written down.

People think you're absurd. You're unscientific. They balk. People balk at the historical, factual, scientific truth of the New Testament given to us by the apostles.

As one person said, he said, I'm going to write something down on the napkin and then I'm going to proclaim this is the word of God. That's how they think of it. They balk at it.

They mock this. So Jesus, Jesus is not going to rebuke Thomas for asking for physical evidence.

[15:40] Jesus is going to rebuke Thomas because he rejected the testimony of his brothers.

So rejecting the disciples' testimony of the risen Jesus. So there's the proclamation and there's going to be a rejection.

And now notice what happens, this third aspect. Jesus gets into Thomas' kitchen. The appearing of the risen Jesus.

Look at verse 26. And after eight days, again, the disciples are inside. Thomas was with them.

Interesting. Eight days later, this is the next Sunday.

This is the Lord's Day. This is the reason why we gather on Sundays. It's not because all this, no.

[16:43] And it's not supposed to be the Sabbath. Sorry, Seventh-day Adventist. You're wrong.

The Lord is present with His people, with us. Interesting. Did the disciples decide to meet together again the next Sunday?

We don't know. Notice, though, Thomas was with them. Jesus came. The doors have been shut, locked again. But just like Jesus did before, He passed through those locked doors and said, Peace to you.

Jesus and His mission. His scars. They are the source of our peace, aren't they? They are the source of our peace. And look what happens.

Verse 27. Then, next, He said to Thomas, Reach your finger here and see my hands. And reach your hand here and put it to my side. Huh.

It was almost like as if Jesus heard the whole skeptical conversation. Oh, wait. He did. Look at the verbs. Reach. See.

[17:50] Reach. Put. Put. Touch the physical markings on my body from the cross, Thomas. Thomas. This.

What your brothers have been telling you. This. Is the legitimate witness, Thomas. Shame on you. Did Thomas touch the markings on the side?

We're not told. But Jesus did command him to believe. Notice, He says. Be not unbelieving or could be translated as unbeliever but believing or believer.

What does Jesus mean by this? Was Thomas not a Christian? Not a believer? Well, there was no such thing as Christians at this time. They weren't called Christians then. Right? Was he a follower of Jesus? Well, yeah.

But that's interesting here. What was Thomas doing? Or not doing? Well, Thomas wanted to believe Jesus on his terms.

[18:51] Not on God's terms. Oh, that sounds familiar, doesn't it? People are very willing to believe in God as long as it's on their terms. Right?

That's not how God works. Thomas wanted to return to the kind of relationship he previously had with Jesus. Jesus in that flesh. So really, you know, people call Thomas Doubting Thomas.

Excuse me. People call Thomas Doubting Thomas. He really should be called Rebellious Thomas. He did not want to relate to God on God's terms but on His terms. And that's the rub with the unsaved. They want to believe Jesus on their terms.

And they want to define things the way they want to define them. Not how the Bible defines them. Not how God defines them from His Word. I mean, isn't this what the Jewish authorities displayed?

[20:02] In that they did not want to relate to God through Jesus but on their own terms? It's exactly what the religious authorities were all about. Thomas was not rejecting his fellow disciples.

He was rejecting God. People are not rejecting us. They're rejecting God when they want to see some kind of physical proof for evidence.

evidence. The evidence is right in front of them in the historical, factual, scientific account of the New Testament.

It's right there in front of them. Remember, they balk at that. So here's the appearing of the Lord Jesus and then you see this response.

Excuse me. The fourth aspect that rises from the text. Aspect number four is confessing devotion to the risen Jesus. Verse 28.

[21:09] Thomas answered and said to Him, My Lord and my God! And by the way, there's not some exclamatory profanity. Oh my God! He wasn't saying it like that.

Joe, would I think say that? It's just absolutely insane why somebody would actually even think that, Thomas. A Jew would never say that. Especially right here.

No way. Thomas used words to extend himself to Jesus, calling Him His Lord and His God. Here's a climactic confession.

Very fitting for the end of the gospel, isn't it? Very fitting. This was a true confession about Jesus. You are my Lord. You are my God.

It was not merely Jesus' identity He proclaimed, but an identity with whom Thomas had a personal relationship. See, and that's what it means to become a Christian. A person not only acknowledges and agrees to the factual, truthful identity of Jesus, but she or he makes it personal.

[22:17] It begins a personal relationship with Him. That's what it means. This is the gospel. The gospel is, you are my Lord. You are my God. I confess. I come to you.

I repent, and I trust in Jesus. That's the gospel. I turn from my sin. I put my trust in Jesus. God, I know you should condemn me, but I come to you.

Please save me. This is a confession of devotion to the risen Jesus. That's what it means to be a Christian. This is what it means to honor the Father.

You honor the Son. One proclaims personal connection to Jesus' identity and mission, and it's a confession of devotion to the risen Jesus. I will follow you.

If you don't know Jesus, that's what you say. I will follow you. You confess Jesus the way Thomas did. I confess you. You're my Lord and my God.

[23:15] That's what it means to become a Christian. Interesting. This confession takes us back to the opening words of John's prologue. The Word was with God and the Word was God.

So Jesus is the God and Lord of all creation. He's the God-man. So you see this confessing devotion to the risen Jesus, and then you see this next statement from Jesus in verse 29.

The rebuking and blessing of the risen Jesus. Or you could say from the risen Jesus. Verse 29.

Jesus said to him, Because you have seen me, you believe. This is a statement, not a question. It's a rebuking statement. The comparison is between seeing and believing.

Thomas was able to see Jesus the later believers. Us. We will not be able to see him. But this rebuke was not because Thomas demanded to see physical proof.

[24:32] This rebuke was not because Thomas wanted or demanded to see physical proof. It was because Thomas did not believe the signs already laid out before him, but even more, he did not believe the eyewitness account of his fellow disciples.

That's why. That's why Jesus rebuked him. The signs are right in front of Thomas. He saw them. He was right there. But he failed to believe after seeing those signs which pointed to Jesus' identity, which pointed to his mission.

But even more, he should have listened to his brothers, these other disciples there, the ten. But Jesus rebuked him for rejecting their testimony.

God rebukes people for rejecting when you proclaim this gospel, when you proclaim what the New Testament says, God rebukes them.

The rebuke is upon them for denying and rejecting this very testimony from Scripture. The factual, historical account of the Word of God.

[25:47] But notice, the blessing. Blessed are they who did not see and believed. This is us.

It's a beatitude. And it lends itself to be an exhortation to future believers because we will not see these physical aspects of Jesus. We've not seen those signs.

But if we embrace the eyewitness account, eyewitness testimony of Jesus' disciples, in parentheses, New Testament, we will be blessed.

We'll benefit. You benefit. You benefit because you have trust to Christ. We haven't even seen him. That's why we read from 1 Peter.

If you've not seen him, you love him. Do you not see him now? You have such joy. Why? See, Thomas was an example of future believers who had to rely on the factual testimony of the disciples, one of whom wrote this very gospel.

[26:58] They were eyewitnesses of Jesus' identity. Eyewitnesses to his mission. So this also served to confirm to the disciples that their factual testimony is indeed valid, true, real, historical, and guess what?

Authoritative. You know, it's ironic. Thomas' act here, he was actually undermining his own role as an apostle.

He was undermining his own role as an apostle. So, upon what? Will God's mission continue?

It will continue upon the apostolic witness of Jesus' disciples in the New Testament. So, follow suit. Jesus was the Father's representative.

The apostles are Jesus' representatives. And we continue this ministry by representing the apostles and Jesus in the Spirit as we speak this gospel truth.

[28:09] We proclaim it. We are blessed because we've not physically seen Jesus. But we actually end up seeing, seeing Jesus by means of the Spirit, the Spirit who quickened us as we've, as I've said, enabled our minds and warmed our hearts to embrace the testimony of His disciples.

So, oh, Christian, take hope that you are blessed by God for trusting Jesus. You are blessed by God for trusting Jesus.

By embracing Jesus, the very testimony from these disciples, you're blessed. And then last, what rises from the text, this last aspect, kind of the climax, so to speak, believing and proclaiming the risen Jesus is our purpose.

So, I've seen all that going through this, trucking through this. John really helps us to see bringing us right here to our purpose, believing and proclaiming the risen Jesus, that is our purpose, verse 30.

Therefore, many of the signs Jesus also did in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book. So, John, he breaks in to give us insight to the purpose of Jesus' signs and the purpose of writing his gospel.

[29:37] Jesus' ministry is not just for those at that time, but for, really, all the readers of this gospel. John's telling you, speaking to his readers. Jesus did many other signs.

They're not recorded in this book. I could have included them, but I decided not to do that. even though the disciples witnessed them too. The disciples witnessed these.

They saw them. And remember, the signs were meant to point to Jesus' identity, to point to his mission. There, there.

Not just to merely give some physical benefit to people, even though it did. But then John, he says this in verse 31, but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.

I chose these signs, John is saying, with an intentional purpose. And that purpose was that you, as the reader, believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and in believing you may have life in his name.

[30:50] So, he expected his readers to believe in the identity and mission of Jesus responding in the same way Thomas responded.

You are my Lord, you are my God. Working all the way back to chapter 20, working all the way back to chapter 1, working all the way back, John has been working through, showing this, and then revealing this and making this known.

Peace and forgiveness, he said in chapter 20. And then we see our purpose and our aim, we talked about that, that we looked at last week, and then he closes and deals out the last hand, here it is.

Jesus must be the object of our faith. A faith that sees these facts, agrees to these facts, and commits oneself to these facts, to Jesus, to the person of Christ.

Notice he says, Jesus, the Christ, this is the Old Testament Messiah, the anointed one. He fulfilled God's plan to bring a king to redeem humanity.

[32:04] Jesus is the Christ, the son of God. Jesus is the unique son of God, intimately related and intimately united to the Father. Jesus, the Savior, Christ, the Messiah, son of God, the ultimate disclosure of the Father.

He powerfully, he personally expresses the Father. So our faith is based on what is read or heard about Jesus' identity.

We believe certain propositional truths regarding Jesus, and then we personally commit ourselves to this truth about Jesus. to Jesus.

It's a personal thing. It's not just facts. It's a personal, relational devotion to Jesus. And notice, he says, and that believing you may have life in his name, eternal life, John 3.16, John 5.24, John 6.40, what John had been saying all along in his gospel.

Jesus provides life, and that life is totally grounded in Jesus, which is eschatological salvation. And notice, you may have life in his name.

[33:28] You may have the eschatological salvation in his name. name is all that he is in his character. His power, his love, his grace.

So, this was John's goal for all his readers, that she or he would believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing that one may have eternal life in all that Jesus is in his character.

There's the purpose. And this means John's main purpose in writing his gospel was to evangelize his readers. So his readers would come to faith and then proclaim it like he did.

We trust Jesus and we proclaim Jesus. So you, as a reader, you're invited to trust Jesus and then join God in his work through his Son, becoming a member of his family, and being one who is on mission.

Remember we talked about that last week. To bring this message to the world. Jesus is the perfect agent. Jesus is the perfect representative of the Father. Come, believe.

[34:42] Here's the truth. We're just messengers of truth. We don't convert anybody. Right? We can't convert anybody. We're just messengers of truth.

We proclaim this. Jesus is the ultimate self-expression, ultimate self-disclosure, ultimate self-revelation of the Father.

He's truth, life, grace, peace, forgiveness, and it can only be found in the Son of God, the Christ, Jesus, the risen Lord. So we fully rely upon the evidential, historical, factual, scientific, eyewitness testimony of the apostles of the risen Jesus so we may believe and proclaim Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and may have life in His name.

That's the purpose of the gospel. It's to give this factual account, an historical account, an eyewitness account of Jesus' disciples so that readers may trust Jesus so that we as His disciples may proclaim this account to others.

So again, we trust Jesus and we proclaim Jesus. That's our purpose. I have it up here on the screen. We trust the risen Jesus and His identity and mission.

[36:10] We proclaim the risen Jesus and His identity and mission. This is our purpose as a church. So let's pray for this for us as a church. Father, in Your providence in this time of unrest within Your church, You gave this text to us that we would hit this at this time.

So we pray that we would be faithful to this purpose. That Jesus, we will trust You. We'll find that this gospel is a source of comfort, encouragement, and teaching for us and toward us.

But in trusting You, we will proclaim You. We still have that 2023 challenge before us so that one person or a five, one to five, that we've been praying for since January, we pray for them once again.

Ask for an open door for the gospel and to see the person come to Christ, inviting them here that we hear the gospel and be taught the truth.

Find us faithful. Spirit, we pray You would work in us as a body, as a church.

[38:06] Thank You for Your grace You've shown to us. We do not speak this in arrogance. We speak truth in humility because we know we're not anything worth saving.

but You're just gracious and kind. Thank You for showing us Your grace and Your kindness. Take this moment to fill your mind with truth.

Take this moment and pray for us as a church. Take this time to reflect back what we've seen from God's Word. and we'll sing a couple songs.

We'll sing two songs and pray. We do that all the time. I encourage you between you and the Lord this will be a sweet time of fellowship. Praying and reflecting back upon the truth of God's Word.

Please do that now. Thank you.

[39:26] EXCELLEN BUT TRADE foi ■■■■aced from God's Word. Etika it took you from God's Word to his love for baby to wake up called Him to your heart with a sMa