

A Resurrected Body

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- [0 : 0 0] Father, even as we stand here or sit, as the case might be, some of us struggle with disbelief. Maybe some of us have no faith at all, and some of us, Father, believe, but we struggle with disbelief.
- And some of us maybe believe quite well and deeply. You know our hearts. You know the different ways, Father, that we feed disbelief and lack of trust in you. And you know the different ways that we are feeding our belief and trust in you.
- We ask, Father, this morning, that the Holy Spirit would fall with gentle and deep power and bring this, your word, home deeply to our heart. And as you bring your word deeply to our heart, we ask that you would grip us with the gospel and reveal to us, Father, the ways that we feed disbelief and create within us a desire, a greater and greater desire to feed belief and trust in Jesus.
- And this we ask in Jesus' name, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. In my family with the grandkids, the grandchildren call me Papa, and they call my wife Nana.
- And this Monday, true story, this Monday, Easter Monday, a little three-year-old granddaughter of mine, they came to our house. I had been out because I went to a Starbucks to begin to work on my sermon for this week for a little bit.
- [1 : 2 2] And I come back in the house, and as I come in the house, Sarah announces with a loud voice, Nana, your father is home. And so there you go.
- I'm Louise's dad. I always knew she looked a lot younger than I do. So this doesn't really have anything to do with the sermon text, other than the fact that we're going to be looking at John 20, verse 19, and we're going to have the first event, first time that Jesus appears to all of the apostles, or at least to the disciples.
- And it says they're glad. And you know what? I mean, some of them, I don't know, some of them were probably gobsmacked. They probably weren't just sitting down and saying, oh my, look at that. Jesus is here.
- Like it was probably not like that. Some of them were probably jumping up and down, punching the air. There was probably lots of laughter, hilarious. Maybe one of the things that will happen to us in heaven is that we'll actually get to sort of relive or see what it was like when the apostles saw Jesus for the first time.
- And that would probably be a very, very wonderful thing to be able to do. So we're looking at this text, John 20, verse 19. Please turn with me in your Bibles to this first appearance.
- [2 : 3 4] And as I said just a few minutes ago, whenever I talk to non-Christians about these things, I tell them I have a bit of a difficulty.
- I'm a bit of a handicap. If you came to see me, I probably wouldn't have my Bible with me when I was just talking to them. I said, you get a Bible in a store.
- Like in mine, it has this really, really expensive paper. And you folks from there can maybe see originally there was some type of gold type of stuff on the edge, not real gold or it would be expensive, but like some type of gold.

And it looks very fancy. And that's like there's an appropriateness to it. But really what I tell them is really what you're looking at is an ancient biography of Jesus that was written by an eyewitness who knew eyewitnesses and who wrote it at a time when lots and lots of eyewitnesses were alive and what we're reading is a biography of Jesus.

And it's an ancient biography of Jesus. It's one of four of them. And it's not a fantasy book or a myth or anything like that. He wrote it as a biography.

[3 : 40] He wrote it to explain who Jesus is, what he accomplished, and why he's really important. And that's what we're going to be looking at right now. And so what's happened is the way that John is told the biography of Jesus is if you go back and read chapter 19, it talks about how Jesus is sentenced to death and how Jesus dies on the cross and how the body of Jesus is taken and put in a tomb after it's been embalmed.

And then just before this, we hear about the stone that was covering the tomb entrance has been removed and Mary's shocked and Peter and John go in and they see the grave cloths and the napkins set aside and it's all neat and tidy, not the way grave robbers or people involved in skullduggery.

I just wanted to put the word skullduggery into a sermon. That's why I said it. It's a word that is not used enough in average language probably. If they were looking for skullduggery, they would have taken everything including the grave cloths and John has some type of belief right away and then the apostles go and then Mary is there and she meets Jesus and now the story continues later on that day.

And here we are, verse 19, it goes like this. On the evening of that day, that's the same day that they discover the tomb is empty and that Mary has seen Jesus.

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, peace be with you.

[5 : 09] And just sort of pause there as we're reading this text. You know, it's really, really interesting the way they described the apostles, even though they have now probably been told by Mary and maybe by some other women that they've seen Jesus.

But what characterizes their life here right now is that what's characterizing their life is not faith. They're not all sitting around singing praise songs, plotting their evangelistic strategy to spread the gospel to the ends of the earth.

No, they're afraid. They're sitting there afraid. And so because they're afraid, the doors are locked, the windows are locked, everything is shut. They're in a dark, dark room being quiet because they're afraid.

And if you go and look in my blog, which I wrote this week, that's in the bulletin, I have a little bit of a talk about how Jesus might have appeared into a locked room, but they're afraid. And the very, very first words that Jesus says to them is very, very significant.

If you think about it, I mean, people have talked about this many times. I'm not being particularly unique. He didn't say, in the words of Donald Trump, you're fired, which he could have said.

[6 : 16] You're fired. You failed the belief test. You failed the courage test. You failed listening to the woman test. Three strikes. You're fired. He could have said, you bums. He could have said, do you know how much you hurt me?

Like he could have said all sorts of things to them. He doesn't say any of these things. He announces to them, peace be with you. And just so we know, now obviously it's so funny because he says, peace be with you.

So they've gone from being very, very afraid. All of a sudden, Jesus is standing in front of them, even though all the windows and doors are locked. He's all of a sudden in front of them. He catches them by surprise.

We're going to read in a moment that they're really glad that they see Jesus. And he says, peace. So probably what they're not experiencing is what we think of as peace. So this is just an important thing for us to understand is most of the time when you see the word peace in the New Testament and in fact in the Bible, the Old Testament as well, is it's not usually talking about an emotion.

And it's not usually talking about the fact that there was a big fight and now they've stopped fighting. Although it has that aspect, obviously, if it's talking about a war or something. But the main thing is we North Americans, when we hear words like this, we think of it usually in emotional terms.

[7 : 33] And Jesus is referring to something which is more structural, so to speak. Sounds really boring. But it would be as if, you know how the ancients figured out that without mortar, they were able to build an arch.

You know, they were able to cut stones in a particular way and sort of hold things up. But eventually, when all of the stones were put in the arch and if they were cut the right way, the gravity would actually help the whole thing to stand.

And then you could go on top of it or you could build a wall or a roof on top of it if there was an arch. And so in a sense, when you see the word peace, you can imagine as if some of the rocks have been pushed out and the whole thing has collapsed and now somebody has come and put all of the rocks back in place so that the arch is in balance.

The rocks are all in their proper place. Everything's held together. It would be a way of, another way to think of it would be as if, not just as if an instrument is put into tune, but imagine that there's an orchestra with lots and lots of instruments and every one of the instruments has now been not only tuned, but tuned to each other.

And when you have an orchestra where every instrument is tuned and all of the instruments are tuned to each other, that's peace. It's balance. It's structurally fixed so that it's ordered correctly and in harmony.

[9 : 01] That's what Jesus is talking about. And out of that, if you think about it for a second, out of that might come a feeling of peace at different times. But it might not be. Out of it sometimes might come unbelievable joy, like I'm fixed.

Sometimes when we understand that that peace is there, it might cause within us embarrassment or shame. And we might say to ourselves, you mean that Jesus took that rock in my life?

He put his hands in that embarrassing, shameful part of my life and put it in order? Or if we're using the analogy of the instrument, does he, did Jesus actually know what I did to that instrument and why it's out of tune and why it's broken?

And he put his hands on that? He put his lips on that, so to speak, to tune it? And so sometimes when the knowledge of this peace that God is, that Christ has won for us comes to us, it might be thankfulness, it might be embarrassment, it might be conviction of sin, it might be peace, it might be joy.

But the main thing is he's not saying all of a sudden you feel peaceful. That's not what's happening. He's announcing that something has happened. It's a little bit like just about a month or so ago I finally watched the Pacific, that series of DVD videos done by Spielberg and Tom Hanks.

[10 : 27] I've watched the Band of Brothers several times which talks about a platoon, I don't know if I have the right military term, a group of guys, a band of brothers who fight a whole series of battles throughout the Second World War in Europe and then a few years later they did another one in the Pacific.

And in both of them, whether it's the Pacific or in the Band of Brothers, the day when the war is over and it is announced there is great rejoicing. And this is a similar type of thing just as in that thing when they said the war is over, we've won.

This is what Jesus is saying. Peace be with you. The war is over. I've won. And that's his opening announcement. Not you're fired, not you're bums, not you're failures, not I'm ashamed of you, not I'm embarrassed of you, not you should feel terrible about yourselves.

His first words are, it is over. Peace be with you. The battle is won. And then he says something more because you see it's important for those people, those people, you know, just, I love this phrase.

I actually got the phrase by the way from one of my favorite movies which is Black Hawk Down. There's this wonderful scene in Black Hawk Down where they've caught a fellow, one of the, they've caught a Somali leader and he's smoking this cigar and he's speaking to the general and he says, do you think, you think that just because I grew up without running water that I'm stupid?

[11 : 50] And he says, I'm not. I know history. And it's very easy for us to look back at the past and say they didn't know anything about cell phones, they didn't know anything about germs, they didn't have, you know, they just, you know, pooped in a hole.

So they must, just because they lived a long time ago doesn't mean they're stupid. They also want proof. It matters just as much to them as it does to us. And so that's one of the things which Jesus is going to be providing for them and that's what happens very next.

So he says, peace be with you. If you go back to verse 20, it says this, when he, that is Jesus had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

So he takes the time to show them that he's real, that he's physical, that, and it's, you know, that, that he has the marks. He must have lifted up his clothes so they could see that there was, I don't know if it was a scar.

Later on, we're just going to see that it says the word marks. I don't know if it was a wound or what it was, but where the spear went in, you can see it, where he would have rolled down his sleeves and where the nails were there, you could see that there was still very clearly a mark that this is the same man who on Friday was crucified, who's now standing in front of them completely and utterly alive.

[13 : 06] And what this does is it means Jesus is vindicated. It means that who he said he was, what he said he was going to do, all of the things that he said about life, about sexuality, about money, about the meaning of life, all of these things, it vindicates that what he says is true.

It is true and trustworthy. You can stake your life on it. And at the same time, it vindicates that he's accomplished what he said that he is going to accomplish. It vindicates and it also, it also, it also connects, as we're going to see, especially in a moment, it connects this peace be with you, this declaration that the war is over, there is a just peace.

He is going to vindicate, he's going to show that that peace is connected to his death. That's why, one of the reasons it's so important that he shows that he still has the scars or the marks or whatever it is in his hands, I guess in his ankles as well, but he doesn't refer to it in the side, that what he has just gone through, his death upon the cross and his resurrection, he's vindicated and this is going to be for us the source of peace.

And that's what Jesus does. He's going to make this connection for us. It's very clearly connected. In fact, if those of you, I guess in this version of the Bible, if you look at a version of the Bible, it's very interesting.

It goes, peace be with you. Then he shows you the marks and then it says, peace be with you as well. It's like a sandwich. Peace be with you and in between is the reality that rose from the dead and the mark of the scars.

[14 : 49] And now Jesus is going to talk about something which has caused lots of division in Christianity for almost 2,000 years. And the discussion about this controversy so overwhelms our reading of the text that we miss all the very important things for us that he says.

So just look at verse 21. We'll get to this controversial thing. Some of you probably noticed it when I was reading it earlier. 21. Jesus said to them again, peace be with you.

As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, receive the Holy Spirit.

If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them. Or they have been forgiven them. I'll talk about this in a moment. If you retain forgiveness from any of them or withhold forgiveness from any of them, it is retained.

That may be another way to translate that. And well, okay, let's just try to unpack this. So here's the four things. What we see here is Jesus says four basic things. And the first thing is he gives them the message.

[16 : 03] Basically what it is, he gives them a message. He tells them that they have to go. He gives them power and he explains to them why it matters. That's the four things that he does. He gives them the message that they're to proclaim.

He tells them that they have to go. They're not just sort of to sit on a mountaintop and wait for people to come to them. He gives them the power to do what he tells them to proclaim. And then he's trying to tell them that what I'm doing for you right now, what I'm telling you right now is of eternal consequence for people.

So you have to take it very seriously. So if you could put up the first point, that would be very helpful. So the first thing is this message, peace be with you.

And the problem is not that God is at enmity with you, but that you are at enmity with God. The problem is not that God is at enmity with you, but that you are at enmity with God.

Now this is an idea which basically nobody in Canada believes. And basically, most of us don't believe it.

[17 : 11] We have a hard time with it. In Jesus' day, when he was going to pagan religions, if he was to say to them, you know, you have done things that have made God your enemy, they would probably say, you're probably right.

I have acted in a way that means there's now enmity between me and God. You're probably right. And if you were maybe to go to many traditional Hindu or Buddhist cultures and that there's something out of whack with you, which means you're going to have to be reincarnated again, you haven't achieved nirvana, that there's something fundamentally wrong with you, probably most people would say you're probably right.

But you say to the average Canadian that the problem, the problem that the Bible here is addressing with this message of peace is not that God is at enmity with you, but that you're at enmity with God.

There's a type of a blankness that comes over most of us. So just think of these examples. If you're a guest here this morning, my wife's name is Louise, and this is, it'll help you to understand what I'm saying.

If I went somewhere with Louise, and I pretended I did not know her, it's a big party, and I go with Louise, and I pretend I don't know her.

[18 : 27] In fact, if I was standing talking to some people, and she comes up along to stand up beside me, and all of a sudden I sort of stand like this with my back to her to keep talking, afterwards she would say to people, why does he hate me?

Why does he hate me? If it turned out that I found out at work that Louise was in trouble, and not only did I continue at work and not go to help her, but after work went to a different city for a holiday, leaving her alone, she would ask, and you would understand why she would ask, why does he hate me?

If I just decided after this church service to move to a different city because I had a new job, and I just never actually even email her or talk to her, I just go and live a very happy life in a different city, she would ask and you would ask, why does he hate me?

If one of you were to track me down in that different city and you saw that I felt no guilt, no sense of obligation to even talk to her or send her a message, you would wonder, what's going on?

Does he think he's the center of the universe? That he can just do whatever he wants and not have to deal with his wife at all? If you then went back and confronted me about how I'd been treating my wife, and I said to you, oh, this is so tiring.

[20 : 25] This is the problem with wives. Like, listen, I have all my friends right here, and, like, we're all, we're having fun.

Like, we're making money, we're having fun, and everybody here agrees with me. Like, what are you doing giving me a hard time about that? That's the problem with wives. Like, leave your wife alone.

If you want to have a wife and do all that stuff, that's fine, you know, but you know what? I'm having a fine life where I am. That's how each one of us is with God. This is how, so whether you're Richard Dawkins, shaking your fist at the God you do not believe exists, whether you're a soccer mom in Canada or Orleans, whether you live in a big fancy house along the Rideau River in Manik or in Rockcliffe in a big mansion, whether you spend every night in bars partying, we're all united.

We've all been described by what I just described. We're at enmity with God. We've turned our back on him and life is fine without him.

And how irksome, how irksome, what gives him the right to actually say anything at all about how I spend my money, what I do with my sexuality, anything at all. Like, why on earth?

[22 : 03] Like, that is so tiresome. We are enmity with God. In fact, if you go back thinking about this, in Romans chapter, if you go back and read Romans 1, 19 or 18 and following right through to the, almost the end of chapter 3, what Romans talks about and what's talked about in a lot of the Bible is that when we actually appear before the judgment seat of God, we will discover that it's, we actively suppress the knowledge of God.

It would be as if you discovered like that it's not just that I actually in another city don't pay any attention to Louise. It might look like I don't. I'm actually suppressing knowledge of that.

And that's what the Bible says. We're actually suppressing it. See, one of the hard parts for us as Canadians now and it's very present in the church is that the common things that we like to say and they're fine words.

We like to talk about our brokenness. We like to talk about our shame. But the problem is in both of those cases they're passive words. It's something that happens to us and we don't like the word sinner because sinning is something I do.

I suppress a knowledge of what is right and wrong. And so we have a hard time understanding this analogy of Jesus being, making our peace with God.

[23 : 35] If you could put up the next point that would be very helpful. Jesus did everything. See, when Jesus says peace be with you, when the message that we are to pronounce is that the problem is not that God is at enmity with you because God is love.

He never stopped loving you. He never did anything wrong to you. Anybody, it doesn't matter if they have five PhDs, can speak 15 languages and maybe they're an archbishop or a bishop, anybody who talks about how we have to learn how to forgive God is not talking biblically.

If they talk about how we have to learn how to forgive ourselves, it doesn't matter if they're a bishop. They're not speaking biblically. They're not speaking Christianly. Those are wrong ideas. They're not biblical ideas.

The problem is not that God is at enmity with you and me, but that you and I are at enmity with God. And Jesus does everything needed for you to enter into a real, just peace with God.

Jesus did everything needed for you and for me to enter into a real, just peace with God. You see, that's why this is one of the great proclamations in the Bible.

[24 : 47] If you go back and you read John all the way from the beginning to the end, I've talked about this three times in a row. I'll say it a few more times because we're coming to the end of the book and it's just important for us to understand, is that John begins the gospel describing how everything came to be before human beings became at enmity with God.

And John reveals that all things that exist are a result of light, life, and love. All things that exist are a result of light, life, and love. John 1, verse 1-5.

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and that with God is a relational word. It's an affectionate word. It's as if you talk about Louise is with me and we love each other.

You know, you're with your friend and you care for each other. It's a relational word. And so it says, in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.

All things were made through him and without him nothing was made that was made. In him was light and the light is the life of the world. See, the Bible describes that all things ultimately come about as a result of light, life, light, life, and love.

[25 : 58] And what happens when we turn our back on light? When you turn your back on light, it means you're walking towards darkness and in darkness. When you turn your back on life, it means you are walking in sickness and in death towards sickness and death.

And when you turn your back on love, it means that you're walking in indifference and hate towards indifference and hate. And God saw that and God so loved the world that he sent his one and only son to the end that whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

And so you go all through the gospel of John and how is Jesus described? He is the light of the world. He is the life of the world. He is bread and life. He is the one who gives living waters.

He is the way, the truth, and the life. All the way through the gospel, it describes who Jesus is in terms of these categories upon which we have separated ourselves from light. We have separated ourselves from life and from love.

And we live at enmity with God and Jesus is described as God himself coming to rescue us and when he dies on the cross, as he dies upon the cross, he bears in himself our darkness.

[27 : 16] He bears in himself our indifference and hatred. He bears in himself our sickness and death. And he does everything that has to be done that I cannot possibly do for myself to make me right with God, at peace with God.

not only to remove the darkness, the indifference, the hatred, but to actually give us those realities in the already not yet.

it's as if to use the analogy that what, from a heavenly point of view, if every one of us is like an orchestra with lots of different things, musical instruments, is that Jesus not only deals with the punishment and all that for having broken and wrecked and trampled and done all those types of things, but he actually repairs every instrument.

He gives us instruments that we didn't even have that we were lacking and he tunes everyone and he tunes them to each other and he does it all. And we now stand in a new relationship with him in a new way and he's done it all.

And that's the message. Peace be with you. And then, so, look here at verse 21. Peace be with you. That's the message. And then he says, as the Father has sent me, even so, I am sending you.

[29 : 09] We often think of a church as a building and there's something appropriate for that but we need to see here it's always a problem because buildings just sit there. If a building moves, that's bad, generally speaking, unless it's a little house that they put on a pickup and put on a trailer to move somewhere else.

If the building moves, it's because there's a flood. If the building moves, it's because there's an earthquake or something like that or a sinkhole. They're not supposed to move. They're supposed to stand there. But you see, really, Christians aren't supposed to be like churches.

We're supposed to be more like boats in motion. We're to be like boats in motion. And so, Jesus says, I'm sending you.

In other words, you have to go and you have to proclaim peace be with you. And then, in verse 22, when he said this, he breathed on them and said to them, receive the Holy Spirit. And this is a bit of a forerunner for what's going to happen in the book of Acts.

It's a really important thing to show that, you know, it's not as if we Christians can say, okay, well, you know, there's those people here, like we're Acts 2 Christians because we're all about the Holy Spirit.

[30 : 16] And others of us say, no, no, no, no, no. Like, we're like Paul type of Christians. We're all about the crucifixion. And other Christians say, no, no, no, no. We're like all about God the Father types of Christians.

It's that one of the things that the Gospels are trying to show us is that, first of all, Jesus is the one who reveals who God is. It's through Jesus that all of our faults and culturally contaminated notions of who God is are going to be corrected about him.

That whenever we even talk to somebody else, we have to try to always remember, okay, one, one, one moment. We're time out. We're both using the word God, but I have a feeling we mean somebody completely and utterly different, even though we're using the same word.

I think you're using God as if he's some abstract, distant type of person who's often very, very mean, but you need to understand that when I talk about God, I'm talking about God as revealed by Jesus, and that means it's a God who ends up dying on a cross because he loves you.

We're talking about different gods, okay? And so, what the Gospel here is showing is it's all this one act of revelation, it's all this one act of giving, that the Father sends Jesus, and Jesus willingly comes as God, the Son of God, he comes, and it's the Father who sends the Son and the Son who sends the Holy Spirit, and there's this one unbroken moment, and you don't choose between like Genesis 1 type of Christian and a John 1 Christian or an Acts 2 Christian, it's one act, it's one God, and Jesus is giving us the power to proclaim the message as we go.

[31 : 49] And then this final complicated bit, which I'm only going to say something very briefly about, that's verse 23, if you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them, if you withhold or withhold forgiveness than from any, it is retained.

Just a couple of basic things. As you're going to see now in a moment, generally speaking, I don't like to critique other churches.

We have enough crap in our own church, we can critique ourselves, and the Anglican way, but I tell people when they tell, like you can't make up stuff about how bad the Anglican church is often.

Like, you don't need to make it up, just follow the news. Like it's, so I don't need to make fun of, so I'm not making fun of things, but the Roman Catholic doctrine of the priest having the power to bind and lock and loose, and it's connected to this in Matthew 16 and 18, and I just, it's not right.

It's wrong. And if what you had was just verse 23 and nothing else in the Bible, then the Roman Catholic position on this would have to be correct. But you don't just have this verse.

[33 : 04] Have it in a context. You have it in a whole book. And it, the idea that Jesus gives an institution power to give them power that I can say, Ken, sucks to be you, not forgiven.

Dick, I like you. Two thumbs up, forgiven. Like, if you think that comes from the text, it makes no sense. Now, it's complicated because of the fact that in the Greek, it's a passive, which means it's, when it's in the passive tense in a context like this, it means that we're not doing something or human beings not doing something, God's doing something.

And it's in the perfect tense and it's aspectual. I think I pronounced that correctly, which means it's a completed act, a completed act in the past.

Sorry, a Greek, sorry, I've lost all of you, a little grammar moment. The bottom line is, if you look at it within its whole context, everything is about us believing to receive forgiveness of sins.

Jesus has done everything to make me at peace with God and I need to receive that. It's not something I do, not something I accomplish. And so what the Bible text here, complicated by Greek, complicated by church history, and what it's fundamentally saying is this, you need to go, I am going to tell you this right now, disciples, I have done everything that has to be done for you to be at peace with God.

[34 : 27] It's connected to this right here. It's connected to this right here. It's connected to the fact that I stand before you alive. I have accomplished everything for you to be made as unworthy as you are.

I love you. I've done everything so you may be right with God. And so I am sending you like the Father has sent you. You need to go to every people group. You need to go throughout the city of Ottawa.

You need to tell people this spectacular news that Christ, that Jesus, has come from the Father to make you right with God when you cannot make peace with God yourself. And I've given you the Holy Spirit to have the power to do that because you can't do it on your own strength.

And it matters because you see, when you proclaim this and people receive it, their sins are forgiven and they are at peace with God. And when you proclaim it and they do not accept it, their guilt is retained.

And they are not at peace with God. And that has eternal consequences. And that's the flow of the argument. It's the flow of the argument.

[35 : 38] It's the flow of the book. I just want to wrap up with some really, really, the following, the story that follows this is such an important addition to this.

It's so wonderful that not only that Jesus did it, but that John wrote it so we could know it. And so if you just look, it's a famous story of Jesus appearing to Thomas.

And it begins at verse 24. Now Thomas, one of the 12, called the twin. And John is, John's making a little bit of fun of Thomas here.

He's, he has a, probably when he was writing this, way, way back with his whatever, however he wrote it, he probably had a bit of a smile and maybe even chuckled about it. He just, earlier on, if you go back in the gospel, earlier on, Thomas is introduced as the twin.

I'm assuming it means that he had an identical twin brother. Okay? Because of what's going to happen next. And so John's just remembering, a bit of a smile. Oh, Thomas.

[36 : 40] So now, verse 24, now Thomas, one of the 12, called the twin, was not with them. We discovered there's only 10 people there when that happened, when Jesus came. So the disciples, verse 25, said, we have seen the Lord.

But he said to them, unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails and place my fingers into the mark of the nails and place my hand into his side, I will not believe.

In other words, maybe Jesus had a twin who didn't die. Or maybe Jesus had somebody who just really looked like Jesus. And he's fooling them.

A little bit of a mark, a little bit of red stuff over here, a little bit of red over here. It's just a lookalike. He's playing a bit of a joke. So, you can just, it's just like the identical twin to think maybe Jesus had an unknown identical twin that was fooling everybody.

But it's also going ahead and show this, you know, these guys aren't stupid. They're not just going to go believe that Jesus rose from the dead. Even with the empty tomb and all of that complication, he knows there needs to be more than just the empty tomb.

[37 : 51] He needs to actually see Jesus. And verse 26, eight days later, his disciples were inside. That's Jesus' disciples again. And Thomas, this time, was with them. He spent at least a couple of days, maybe a whole week, because it's a week later.

They're all now filled with joy that Jesus is alive. But Thomas says, I think you guys are smoking substances that used to be illegal, but now are legal in Canada. And that's why you're so happy, because unless I see it, I'm not going to believe it.

And then in verse 26, although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, not Thomas, you dumb, peace be with you.

Then he said to Thomas, put your fingers here. He knows what Thomas said, because he's God, the son of God. Put your finger here and see my hands and put out your hand and place it in my side.

Do not disbelieve, but believe. Let's talk about that just a moment. But Thomas answered him, my Lord and my God. This is the very clear declaration that the one who created all things and sustains all things by his power is standing, resurrected, physical, in front of Thomas.

[39 : 09] And here's this wonderful word. Jesus said to him, have you believed because you have seen, have seen me? Here he is. Every single one of us here who is a Christian, this is what Jesus says to you this morning.

Those of you who are beat up, those of you who are depressed, those of you who are happy, those of you filled with faith, those of doubts, he says to each one of us who have put our trust in Jesus, sitting or standing here today, blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.

That's what he says to you. That's not me. That's what Jesus says. Blessed are you. If you could put up the third point. If you notice again here what Jesus says to Thomas at the end of verse 27, do not disbelieve but believe.

It's actually two commands. The first one is, and I put the way to write it, I put it in a prayer. What has been going on with Thomas is that he's been feeding disbelief and lack of trust in Jesus.

He's feeding it. If you think about it, and maybe most of us don't think about it, there are things that we do in our week or don't do in our week that feeds not trusting Jesus, not believing the gospel, not believing what he said.

[40 : 33] It's the same thing with any type of relationship. You know, a husband can do something throughout the week that feeds him not thinking well of his wife. A wife can do things throughout the week that feeds, that nurtures, that nourishes a resentment or a lack of love or trust of her husband.

And we can do those same things with the Lord. And at the same time, there are things that a husband can do throughout the week that nourishes his love for his wife.

And a wife can do things throughout the week that will nourish and nurture her love for her husband. And there's the same thing in terms of our relationship with Jesus. And so part of it, this moment, I'm not going to give you a whole sermon on it.

It's just to ask the question, Lord, what am I doing? What habits do I have that nurture distrust of you and your word?

And Lord, could you please reveal them to me and then help me to put them to death? Why? Because Lord, please help me, please grip me with the gospel so that I will stop habits of feeding disbelief and lack of trust in you.

[41 : 51] And if you cover up the next point, that would be great. And Lord, please grip me with the gospel so that I will grow habits that feed belief and trust in you.

And ask the Lord, Lord, what can I be doing this week? If you're going to help me to stop doing those things that feed disbelief and lack of trust and lack of belief in your word, Lord, I don't want to just be, I want to, I know I need to keep eating.

I need to feed. By nature, I seek nourishment. So Lord, help me to understand what I can be doing that nourish belief. See, that's one of the reasons why small groups are so important for so many people.

that not only that you spend time, it's out of that time you build relationships so that when you're really having a hard time you can go say, you can say, you know, Bob, can I have a beer with you?

I just need to talk about some things that are going on. It's how you do life with each other. It's, whether it's a small group or through a men's ministry or a woman's ministry or relationships or whatever it is, one of the, those things can be so important on top of our devotions and other types of things.

[42 : 55] But the main thing is, Lord, show me what I can do, what I am able to do, what I must do that I will feed and nourish and nurture belief in you and the gospel and what you said, that your words are true and trustworthy and wise, even if they go against all of the glitz and all of the world, whatever the world says is right with all of its glitz and all of its authority and all of its self-confidence and it goes against your word.

Lord, I just want to believe you and what you said, that it's wise in the face of this which wants to crush me into its own mold.

I want to be molded by the gospel, by this wonderful word, Jesus, that I am blessed because I believe in you without having seen. And that's why this whole book is written.

Look at verse 30 and 31. Now, Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book, but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Please stand. Just bow our heads in prayer. If there are any here who have not yet believed or trust in Jesus, there's no better time than right now to just call out to him and say, it might even be, Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.

[44 : 24] That's a biblical prayer. One I am very familiar with in my own life. Lord, I want to be yours. I want to be, I want to trust that you are my Savior and my Lord and I turn to you, I give myself to you, I acknowledge that I have been in enmity with you and I want, that you have made my peace with God and I want that.

I want to be at peace with you, Lord. And so, Jesus, be my Savior and Lord. Use your own words, but you can call out to him right now that that would be the new story of your life and then say, Lord, please feed me, feed, help me to, help me to know how to feed belief and help me to know how to starve disbelief and for all of us here, those are prayers for us to pray.

So let's pray. Father, you know right now the different ways that each of us here nourishes disbelief and distrust. Father, every one of us has them.

None of us is better than the other in terms of that never happens to us. Father, you know that some of us do it, we're just blind to it. We actually think maybe it's wisdom when it's actually just starving belief and feeding disbelief.

So, Father, we ask for a wonderful work of your Holy Spirit that you would convict us of those ways that we are nourishing disbelief and distrust in your Son and his word.

[45 : 44] And, Father, help us to put that to death to no longer go there. And, Father, we ask that you would, by your Holy Spirit, you would convict us once again of those things that we can do that build belief and trust in you.

Father, pour out the Holy Spirit upon us and lead us to develop these habits. Habits, Father, ultimately of grace and mercy that come from you. Father, help us to do that.

We ask these things in the name of Jesus and all God's people said, Amen.