

Untitled (30)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 11 April 2021

Preacher: David Bena

[0:00] Let us pray. Lord, guide us as we study your word, as we learn of your power, and as we use it for your glory.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen. There was a gospel song we learned years ago, Trust and obey, for there's no other way than to be happy in Jesus, than to trust and obey.

You know that's easier said than done. Gee, I look at that finding that trusting and obeying, there's no other way to be happy in Jesus. I doubt it. I doubt the song.

This is called Doubting Thomas Day. On days like this, I think of myself as a teenager, as a rebellious teenager. My father has told me to go out and paint a picket fence. I doubt that he's chosen the right color, and I really want to play football.

I'm not trusting him, and I'm not obeying him. My scientific, often questioning mind, somehow, sometimes, refers to God in the same way.

[1:16] God, you want me to do what? Why are you doing this? I'm not sure I trust you, and I'm not even sure I want to get involved. So, Doubting Thomas Day, Doubting David Day, let's look at what doubting does and how God combats it.

We're going to be using the gospel lesson from today, John chapter 20, verses 19 through 31. It's on page 1077 of the Pew Bible.

And we're going to look at this passage to figure out about doubting and how we remedy that. This passage, 19 through 31, is a three-act play.

It's a true play, but we're looking at it as three portions of the passage, each one teaching us something else. The first passage is 19 through 23, verses 19 through 23, second 24 through 29, and the third 30 through 31.

Let's look at them each as we go along, because they represent our call to eternal life. Alright, so as we begin, verse 19 of John chapter 20, it says, So this is the resurrection day.

[2:41] This is the evening, and Jesus had been raised that morning. He had appeared to Mary Magdalene and several others, but not enough to deter the disciples from hiding.

So it says, Translation in Greek is actually locked. The doors were locked where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews.

They were absolutely afraid. Look what they did to our leader, Jesus. They may do the same thing to us. So they hid in that, what's probably the upper room where the Last Supper took place, hanging away so that they don't get punished by the Jewish leaders or the secular authorities.

And then it says, Jesus came and stood in the midst and said to them, Peace be with you. How did he get in? If the doors were locked, how did he get in? Did he just break through the door in his resurrected body?

Did the doors fall open the way they did for St. Peter when he was in the prison in the book of Acts? How did Jesus get there? Well, the Holy Spirit doesn't care to tell us.

[3:53] But it does say that Jesus came and stood in the midst of the apostles, the disciples. And he said to them, Peace be with you. Commentators have done a lot to try to work on this whole thing to find peace that Jesus might be giving them in a special way.

Actually, he's just giving the typical Jewish greeting. Shalom. Peace. Shalom. Aleikum. Peace be with you. He's saying hello.

And then it says in verse 20, When he had said this, He showed them his hands and his side. He looked into their faces and realized they were not ready to accept him as a resurrected person.

He looked different. The pain was gone. The blood was gone. The only thing left of what he had endured were the holes in his wrists and the stab wound in his side.

He had to convince them of who he was. So he showed them the hands and he showed them his side. And then in the Gospel of Luke, it says he asked them if they had anything to eat.

[5:01] And they produced fish and they watched him as he ate it. Yes, this was Jesus, the resurrected Jesus. And so it says, And then the disciples were glad.

It says rejoice in Greek. They rejoiced when they saw the Lord. What a wonderful thing. What happened is what Jesus said would happen.

He was raised from the dead. He had come back to them. So verse 21, Jesus said to them again, Peace to you. As the Father has sent me, I also send you.

Here's the evangel. Here's the call to evangelize, to share the Gospel. As the Father has sent me, I also send you. We think of Matthew 28, Mark 16, and Acts 1-8.

When we think about this, three different ways of giving the Great Commission. Matthew 28, Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

[6:06] Mark 16, Go out into the world and preach the Gospel. Acts 1-8, You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses.

Jesus is calling the apostles with a mission, a mission to share this Gospel of Jesus. But not only that, but he gave them the power to do it.

Verse 22, And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit. My mind travels back to Genesis chapter 2, where God in the creation breathed into Adam, gave him the breath of life.

He created him. This is like a second creation here, as Jesus breathes on these disciples, gives them the power of the Holy Spirit to share the Gospel.

Now we'll celebrate in five weeks, the Feast of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came upon them with tongues as a fire, and they went out and converted 3,000 new members.

[7:13] In this passage, it's kind of like the first installment of the Holy Spirit, the first installment of Pentecost, giving them the power to share the Gospel.

And then in verse 23, he gives them another mission. He says, If you forgive the sins of any, they're forgiven. If you retain the sins of any, they're retained. He gave the church the power of forgiveness, the power to call people to repentance, that they might receive the forgiveness of their sins by God. What a wonderful gift that has been down through the years, to share with people when they feel guilty, that by repentance and turning to the Lord, the guilt is removed, and they are free from the sin.

So that's the part. That's part one, 19 through 23. And we move right into the part two. And here's where Thomas comes in. It says in verse 24, Now Thomas, called the twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.

Where was he? How did he miss that first night that Jesus arrived? Was he out buying bread? Did he have a sick mother? Did he have an appointment?

[8:29] We don't know. Once again, the Holy Spirit doesn't really care to tell us. But the fact is, he was not there when Jesus showed up. And so it says in verse 25, The other disciples therefore said to him, We've seen the Lord.

Well, they thought he would say, Wonderful! But he didn't say that, did he? Here's where the doubting Thomas comes in. He said to them, Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.

That's pretty doubting, isn't it? And so that's kind of you and me sometimes. We doubt the obvious because we haven't seen it with our own eyes.

And then it goes on. So after eight days, his disciples were again inside. So we're now at the next Sunday night. I can imagine what the week has been as the disciples have tried to convince Thomas that Jesus really was alive.

His disciples were again inside. And Thomas was with them this time. And Jesus came, the doors being shut or locked, and stood in the midst.

[9:46] You might say he did it again. And he said, Peace to you. Shalom. Shalom Aleikum. And then he goes right for the gusto. He says to Thomas, Reach your finger here and look at my hands.

Reach your hand in here and put it into my side. Do not be unbelieving, Thomas, but believing. Lose the doubts.

And that's the word for you and for me. Lose the doubts. Look at the truth. And Thomas did. He did. It doesn't say anything about him ever putting his hands in Jesus' nail holes or in his side. What it does say is that Thomas answered and said to him, My Lord and my God. It turns out, Thomas, the doubter, was the first one of the disciples to recognize Jesus as God in the flesh. My Lord and my God. And Jesus said to him, Thomas, because you've seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.

[11:00] This, by the way, is about you and me. You didn't know you were in the Bible, did you? You are in it, so am I. Blessed are those that you and me who have not seen and yet have believed.

We've received the gospel from those who have gone before us. We have believed. Praise God, the doubts are gone. And so we move to the last part, verses 30 and 31.

And truly, Jesus, this is John editorializing, And truly, Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book, but these 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.

What a wonderful gift we're given. We're given eternal life. That's our call to eternal life. Okay, so that's what the Bible means for us.

Now, this wonderful good news of God's grace trumps, actually, that song, Trust and Obey, because there's no other way.

[12:13] Well, there is another way, as important as it is to trust and obey God. The other way is what that verse I've asked you to memorize, Ephesians 2, 8 and 9.

For it is by grace you have been saved, not by faith. It is through faith. For by grace you have been saved through faith.

And this is a gift of God, not because of your works. No need to boast. What a wonderful thing.

Freely given eternal life through Jesus.

Pope Francis is an interesting Pope. I don't always agree with Pope Francis. He's a bit liberal for my taste. But he said something very, very wonderful recently.

He said, I invite all Christians to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus. And to do it unfailingly every day.

[13:14] That's what it's about. Thank you, Pope Francis. It's a personal encounter with Jesus, not an intellectual exercise. To renew that encounter with Jesus brings us great strength.

And so we move to the last point, to our new members. We're welcoming six new people into our fellowship. This worship service today introduces you new members to us as people who are consciously and publicly following Jesus Christ.

There may be a little Thomas in you as there is in me. There may be a little Peter. There may be a little John. There may be all the disciples wrapped up inside your spiritual life.

But the key is following the road that Jesus leads us on. We've got two things going on. One eye is toward eternal life after we die to this earth.

That's called salvation by the blood of Jesus. And the other eye is our life here until we die. And that's called sanctification.

[14:27] A daily walk as we get washed up and cleansed as holiness becomes part of our life. That's the daily, renewed, personal encounter with Jesus.

What a wonderful gift we're given. So I have an assignment for all of us this week. I noticed there are five days, weekdays, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, in case you hadn't known that.

And there are five resurrection experiences. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts. I'd like you to read through each day, like on Monday, to read through the resurrection experience in Matthew, Tuesday, Mark, Wednesday, Luke, Thursday, John, and Friday, Acts, chapter 1.

I'd like you to read through them, pray through them, follow Jesus. And the end of this, you are going to say to Jesus, you are my Lord and my God.

And may it be so, in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.