

## **John Chapter 20**

**This manuscript is a Summary, for a full expression of this sermon, please download the audio file.**

The completing of the first Day!

We first started our investigation of the Gospel of John, and it was noted that the first two chapters of John reflected the six days of creation, in various terminologies and imageries. It is therefore fitting to see the concluding chapters of John as a way of reflecting the seventh day or to put it another way showing what happens on the completion of “the first day” of God’s new order and creation.

In Genesis 3, humanity is given a task, trust in God’s word, represented by leaving “the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” alone.

It is obviously recorded this task is failed, the consequences of the removal of God’s spirit from humanity, separation from God both spiritually and physically, the introduction of death into the world, at the start of the reign of sin upon God’s perfect creation.

Humanity in its desire for knowledge achieves only bondage. Where it is believed that understanding good and evil would make them on par with God, the truth is they found themselves locked into a position of evil, with no ability to change the situation.

Illustration-there is a game called horizontal bungee jumping. In it, the contestant is attached via a bungee rope to one wall, which is padded. They then must run towards the other wall and attempt to reach it, before the bungee rope snaps them back.

We are tethered by sin, often struggling to reach a position of righteousness by action, only to find ourselves snapped back to the reality of the situation where we have no choice to leave.

Illustration-“God is good, sin is evil”-I often imagine that the gates of heaven will have these two signs on the other side of it, stating a spiritual truth, the depths of which humanity is unable to comprehend.

Many people fail to comprehend the true concept of the position humanity is in, seeing sin only as a minor misdemeanour.

It could be argued, that the actions over one tree, were counteracted by the actions over the tree of life, that is in John's gospel, the deaths and resurrection of Jesus upon the cross. The tree of life the cross of Jesus overcomes the tree of Good and Evil. The implications of this are that now we can know what is good, and not just be informed, but appreciate the truth, God is good, sin is evil. And now sin is non-binding.

III- Movement in body/Muscles that have not been used for a long time (or even ever used)

Just as a person who has been bound in a set position for some time finds release their experiences soreness and weakness in the muscles of their body which has long lain inactive, so humanity freed from the bondage of sin, often do not express their true freedom as fully as they could, as they need to learn how to move freely again.

Women re-established.

Mary travels with the other women to anoint the body of Jesus. Finding his body gone and she runs to return with the information, Peter and John along with Mary returned to the tomb. It is recorded that John witnesses the inside the tomb and believes, both he and Peter return home.

"The beloved disciple saw and believed—and thus the Evangelist introduces the themes of seeing and believing that reach their climax in v. 29."- D. A. Carson

Mary in grief wanders, until she finds the two angels sitting on either side of where Jesus was laid, Mary apparently, and understandably, is so overwrought with emotion, she fails to see the imagery of the "Mercy seat", in the temple to carved angels sat either side of the place where the high priest went to offer his sacrifice during the feast of Atonement.

Their position at either end of the shelf where the body had been lying makes us think of the cherubim on the mercy seat (Ex. 25:17–19). It is as though God is saying, “There is now a new mercy seat! My Son has paid the price for sin, and the way is open into the presence of God!”- Warren W. Wiersbe

also

"What seems clearest is the contrast with the resurrection of Lazarus (11:44). Lazarus came from the tomb wearing his grave-clothes, the additional burial cloth still wrapped around his head. Jesus' resurrection body apparently passed through his grave-clothes, spices and all, in much the same way that he later appeared in a locked room (vv. 19, 26). The description of the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head does not suggest that it still retained the shape of the corpse, but that it had been neatly rolled up and set to one side by the one who no longer had any use for it. The description is powerful and vivid, not the sort of thing that would have been dreamed up; and the fact that two men saw it (v. 8) makes their evidence admissible in a Jewish court (Dt. 19:15)."- D. A. Carson

In the Garden of Eden, a fallen angel points humanity, and specifically first, a woman Eve, in the wrong direction. Here, angels point a woman, Mary, in the right direction by challenging her perception of what she is looking for.

Mary meets Jesus, but initially does not recognise him, through dialogue Jesus reveals himself to her, and sets her a new task. This is a monumental occasion, having broken the power of sin, having overcome death, Jesus re-establishes women, by giving her first, the greatest of tasks, announced my resurrection.

" The first (why are you crying?) becomes mild rebuke; the second (Who is it you are looking for?) becomes an invitation to reflect on the kind of Messiah she was expecting, and thus to widen her horizons and to recognize that, grand as her devotion to him was, her estimate of him was still far too small. The evangelistic implications for John's readers are transparent."- D. A. Carson

In contrast to the actions of Eve, Mary is a counterpoint of the love of God, a beautiful final action, as he seems to say “ I’ve conquered death, I’ve conquered sin, and have re-established women as well.”

The dialogue between Jesus and Mary can be summarised below.

"The thought, then, might be paraphrased this way: ‘Stop touching me (or, Stop holding on to me), for (gar) I have not yet ascended to my Father—i.e. I am not yet in the ascended state, so you do not have to hang on to me as if I were about to disappear permanently. This is a time for joy and sharing the good news, not for clutching me as if I were some jealously guarded private dream-come-true. Stop clinging to me, but go and tell my disciples that I am in process of ascending to my Father and your Father.’

It is a commonplace of the New Testament writers that in the wake of his resurrection Jesus was exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high. But as long as his resurrection appearances continued, the disciples might expect him to show up at any time. His final departure was therefore dramatic and decisive, a kind of acted farewell, so that the finality of what was taking place might be clear. In that sense, in both John and Luke/Acts, Jesus is in the process of ascending to the Father until the culminating ascension. To use John’s language, Jesus is not at this point in the state of ascension: he is still in process. But the farewell discourse has made it clear that he must depart to prepare a place for them (14:2), to send the promised Paraclete (16:7), and ultimately to return to take them to be with him (14:3).”- D. A. Carson

and also

"Do not cling to Me"? One reason was that she would see Him again because He had not yet ascended to the Father. He remained on earth for forty days after His resurrection and often appeared to the believers to teach them spiritual truth (Acts 1:1–9). Mary had no need to panic; this was not her last and final meeting with the Lord.”-Warren W. Wiersbe

The Giving of the Spirit of God- The return to life for all, and the first fruit of promise.

"But His first word to them was the traditional greeting, "Shalom—peace!" He could have rebuked them for their unfaithfulness and cowardice the previous weekend, but He did not. "He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities" (Ps. 103:10). The work of the cross is peace (Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:14–17), and the message they would carry would be the Gospel of peace (Rom. 10:15). Man had declared war on God (Ps. 2; Acts 4:23–30), but God would declare "Peace!" to those who would believe.

Not only did Jesus come to them, but He reassured them. He showed them His wounded hands and side and gave them opportunity to discover that it was indeed their Master and that He was not a phantom. (The Gospels do not record wounds in His feet, but Psalm 22:16 indicates that His feet were also nailed to the cross.)"- Warren W. Wiersbe

Jesus visits the disciples, and to complete the next part of this new first day, breathes upon them, and returns the Spirit to humanity. This promised counsellor and comforter is also the person who would illuminate the Scriptures, so these disciples of Jesus would now understand many of the references in our Old Testament and self-references that Jesus taught about during his earthly ministry. God was once again living with his creation.

III- Poker chip example- Give out randomly poker chips of two different colours, then announce who's what colour by looking at them.

Point the announcing of the colour was not determined by the announcer, it was declaring a self-evident truth. In the same manner...

"All that the Christian can do is announce the message of forgiveness; God performs the miracle of forgiveness. If sinners believe in Jesus Christ, we can authoritatively declare to them that their sins have been forgiven; but we are not the ones who provide the forgiveness."- Warren W. Wiersbe

"A correct understanding of the Greek text helps us here. Some years ago, I corresponded with the eminent Greek scholar Dr. Julius R. Mantey (now deceased) about this verse, and he assured me that the correct translation both here and in Matthew 16:19 should be: "Whosoever sins you remit [forgive] shall have already been forgiven them, and whosoever sins you retain [do not forgive] shall have already not been forgiven them." In other words, the disciples did not provide forgiveness; they proclaimed forgiveness on the basis of the message of the Gospel. Another Greek scholar, Dr. Kenneth Wuest, translates it "they have been previously forgiven them.""- Warren W. Wiersbe

Challenge- We need to "Find the people of Peace.", those on who the Spirit of God is calling and reach out to them to offer deeper knowledge of the message of the truth of Jesus Christ.

Thomas-Taking, a man who doubted and giving him another chance.- How we need to overcome our arrogance.

"Thomas reminds us that unbelief robs us of blessings and opportunities. It may sound sophisticated and intellectual to question what Jesus did, but such questions are usually evidence of hard hearts, not of searching minds. Thomas represents the "scientific approach" to life—and it did not work! After all, when a sceptic says, "I will not believe unless—" he is already admitting that he does believe! He believes in the validity of the test or experiment that he has devised! If he can have faith in his own "scientific approach," why can he not have faith in what God has revealed?"- Warren W. Wiersbe

How many of us have created our paradigms, and insisted that God must fit into that. In fact, God does exist, far from him fitting into our paradigms, we need to acknowledge, we must conform to his.

Other things may be taken from Thomas.

"Why was Thomas not with the other disciples when they met on the evening of Resurrection Day? Was he so disappointed that he did not want to be with his friends? But when we are discouraged

and defeated, we need our friends all the more! Solitude only feeds discouragement and helps it grow into self-pity, which is even worse.

Thomas is a good warning to all of us not to miss meeting with God's people on the Lord's Day (Heb. 10:22–25). Because Thomas was not there, he missed seeing Jesus Christ, hearing His words of peace, and receiving His commission and gift of spiritual life. He had to endure a week of fear and unbelief when he could have been experiencing joy and peace! Remember Thomas when you are tempted to stay home from church. You never know what special blessing you might miss!" Warren W. Wiersbe

#### Application

What if this were true?

This is the eternal question, what if, all that John records is true?, How would you live your life differently?

Historical faith says, "Christ lives!"

Saving faith says, "Christ lives in me!"

Implications if it is true?

What are the implications for us as a race of humanity? as individuals, and as collections of believers?

Do you want it to be true?

This becomes the litmus test, are you interested in this type of reality

How would you react to this truth?

Finally here is an opportunity, some may have heard many stories sermons anecdotes and testimonies about Jesus, but never reacted positively by committing their lives towards him, this can change now. We find in this passage.

"1) The beneficiaries of the appearance are engulfed in a human emotion (Mary, grief; the disciples, fear; and Thomas, doubt). (2) The risen Christ appears to them in the midst of their condition. (3) As a result, their condition is transformed (Mary, mission; the disciples, gladness; Thomas, faith). Thereby John depicts the appearances as experiences of liberation, much as Christ

liberated Lazarus from the grip of death ... and as his death is a  
“new Passover.” ”-D. A. Carson

"The life and ministry of Jesus Christ were simply too rich and full  
for any writer, even an inspired one, to give a complete record.  
But a complete record is not necessary. All of the basic facts are  
here for us to read and consider. There is sufficient truth for any  
sinner to believe and be saved!"- Warren W. Wiersbe