

John Ch 18:19-42

“Encountering The Risen Christ”

As we step into the midst of this ch Mary Magdalene has seen with her own eyes the risen Savior. She was the 1st to seek Him that day, and consequently the Lord honored her diligent commitment to Him by allowing her to be the 1st to see Him that day, (that is resurrection Sunday) He unveiled and revealed Himself to her in a powerfully profound yet very personal way.

We left off with Jesus speaking to her words of a new relationship, new relatives, and a new responsibility. No longer was their relationship going to be predicated upon His physical, tangible presence in their midst. He was ascending to the Father, but the Holy Spirit would be with them, leading them, guiding them, giving them the strength and assurance that they'd need to carry out His plan and His purpose for their lives. and As to where before Jesus called His disciples friends, now He called them brethren, in Christ we're not just friends, we're family, brother's and sisters. and He commissioned her with a new responsibility, to testify of the resurrection of Jesus Christ to tell the disciples all that she'd seen and heard from the Lord. and As we said last week we all have that same responsibility, the things we've seen *in* Jesus, the words we've heard *from* Jesus, we're to testify *of* and bear witness *to*. The fact that Jesus is alive, and forgiveness of sin flows forth from Him to all who will call *upon* Him and place their trust and their faith *in* Him. Well, Mary fulfilled her direct commission and went to the disciples and told them that she'd seen the Lord and had spoken those things to her.

Now as you put it all together from the other gospel records your realize that Jesus made at least 5 appearances resurrection Sunday. 1st to Mary Magdalene, then to the other women, He appeared to Peter privately, (then restored him at a later date publicly), He appeared to the 2 disciples on the Emmaus Rd and then finally to the disciples here behind closed doors. So the news of the resurrection has been circulating through them no doubt all day, some having seen it personally, others excited yet not sure what to make of the news specifically.

Vs19-20

So we have the 1st record of a Sunday evening service, people gathering together with Jesus being their common bond, and what do you know, Jesus shows up. Now He had told them, *“For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”* Matt 18:20 and Now He's demonstrating that to them, physically and tangibly, but as we'll see the lesson ultimately is for them to realize that He's there *with them* even when they can't *see Him*. It's that new level of relationship that's on the horizon that they find themselves in the interim period of presently being prepared for, it's a transition that's being made. and Of course we have just a bit of insight regarding the resurrection body here and that is that apparently its not bound by the physical laws that our bodies are presently bound by. The doors were shut, securely locked because the disciples feared that with the empty tomb and all that the chief priests would be on the look out for them.

You remember the chief priests and the Pharisees had said to Pilate, “*Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.' Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last deception will be worse than the first. Pilate said to them, 'You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how.'*” Matt 27:63-66 and Yet here it is the 3rd day, and the tomb is empty, translation, the disciples are wanted men. So they all meet up together, no doubt they’re discussing the events of the day, but they’ve got the doors locked tight, they’re scared for their lives. and As they’re all gathered around discussing the day, having dinner and all the rest, Jesus is suddenly there, standing in the midst of them.

He says, “Peace be with You.” The word of God has a way of transforming our fears, and our paranoia into peace, we get so worried about this, fearful over that, but when Jesus speaks into our lives all that dispels. The bible says, “*God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.*” 2 Tim 1:7 and Sometimes we just need that reminder, that Jesus is *with us*, and He wants to give His peace *to us*. The bible tells us that the thoughts God thinks towards us are that *of peace* and not evil. Perhaps they were expecting a word of rebuke, “Where have you guys been! There I was dying on the cross, and you were all running off, denying that you knew me, and here you are in fear for *your own* lives, when you ought to be out there sharing the good news that *I’m* alive!” But instead He doesn’t bring any of that stuff, why? Because their fickleness, failures, and frailties have all been washed away by the shedding of His blood there on Calvary, they’re forgiven.

Jesus had bore our sin, paid the price in full, no longer did man need to be at enmity *against* God, there was the offer of peace *with* God. Roman’s 5 says, “*Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,*” Rom 5:1 Jesus comes to them and speaks peace into their otherwise frightened and frustrated lives, yeah He could’ve rebuked them for their unfaithfulness and cowardice, but as the Psalmist said, “*He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities.*” Ps 103:10 Aren’t you glad that in Christ God doesn’t deal with us according to our sins, or punish us according to our iniquities? Man, I am! The work of the cross is peace, peace with God through Jesus Christ and In order to assure them all the more of the reality of the resurrection He showed them the wounds on His hands, and in His side. But it was more than simple *identification* that was going on here, it was the *verification*, and *ratification* that these were the wounds that made, and that the price had been paid, for our *salvation*. We might say that this vs brings new meaning to the scripture, “*Faithful are the wounds of a friend,*” Prov 27:6 Jesus is a friend that sticks closer than a brother, and His wounds are faithful to you and to me, He Himself is our peace. and Of course once the disciples dialed into what was happening and that the risen Jesus was standing there in the flesh right in front of them, they were absolutely elated.

Vs21

Now as for me I don't just see Jesus repeating Himself here in regards to this phrase, "Peace to you." It would seem to me that the context of each scenario that *surrounds* the phrase makes for a different understanding or application *of* the phrase. So that when He shows to them His "faithful wounds" the context seems related to peace *with* God. But as He prepares them here to be sent out, the subject seems more related to the peace *of* God that will be *with* them, flowing *into* them, and going *before* them in the work. and The bible is clear regarding to distinct types of peace as it relates to man's relationship with God, and the follow in the same order that Jesus is using them here in regards to the context.

The 1st is peace with God, whereby there's no longer enmity between me and God, I've given my heart to Christ, I'm no longer at war with Him I'm at peace with Him through faith in Christ and His finished work there on the cross. and It's one thing to make peace *with* God, but it's altogether different to have the very peace *of* God flowing into and out through my life. and As Jesus shows them the print of the nails in His hands, and the place where the spear pierced His side He was in essence saying, "Through My sacrifice, peace *with* God belongs *to* you." But here where He's preparing them for service He's saying, "Receive the peace *of* God *in* you, allow it to flow through you, that you might have His peace in the work I'm calling you to." and It always flows in this order, how can you experience the peace *of* God, until you've 1st made peace *with* God. If you've never made peace *with* God, than there's no way you can experience the peace *of* God in your heart and in your life.

Peace *with* God comes to you in the sacrifice of Christ, the peace *of* God guides you in the work He's called you to. I gave you Rom 5:1 regarding peace with God, here's a couple vs regarding the peace *of* God. Phil 4 says, "*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*" Phil 4:6-7 and Again Col 3, "... *let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.*" Col 3:15-16 and Again the peace of God comes subsequent to making peace with God based upon the sacrifice of Christ.

Jesus says here, "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." and We discussed this a bit in John Ch 17 where Jesus made a similar comment as He was praying, but primarily this speaks of what? Service, Jesus didn't come to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many. Now obviously we could speak of the demeanor of Jesus which definitely applies as well, He was sent in humility, in love, He served with compassion, longsuffering and kindness.

Jesus Himself quoted Isa 61 in regards to His being sent of the Father which says, “*The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD,*” Isa 61:1-2 and So Jesus sends you, and sends me, to preach the gospel to the poor in spirit, to heal the broken hearted with the hope found in Him, to proclaim liberty to those taken captive and bound by sin by informing them of the fact that the one the Son sets free shall be free indeed.

Here we are on July 4th independence day, true independence, true freedom is found in Christ alone, other than that you’re enslaved to sin, enslaved to the flesh, or the world’s system, but whom the Son sets free, is free indeed. Jesus was sent with the *mission* of redemption, we’re sent with the *message* of redemption, not looking to be served, but to serve, in humility, and love and all those qualities we find in Christ. Jesus says as the Father sent Me, so I send you. You say, “How can I reflect Christ, there’s no way I can do that in and of my self, via my own strength, Isa 61 said that the Holy Spirit was upon Jesus?” That’s right, and even as the Father sent Jesus, so Jesus sends us, notice.

Vs22-23

I appreciated an observation made in the Wycliffe Bible Commentary regarding vs 19-23. It said, “This scene involves the death of Christ (his wounds presented), his resurrection (declared by his living presence), the resultant commission to go and bear witness to him, the equipment for this task, and the message itself, centering in forgiveness of sins.” The entire gospel message is seen in just the few vs, the fact of His death, the reality of His resurrection, the fact that we’re sent to bear witness of Him, the equipping of the Holy Spirit for the work at hand, and the message we’re to take, the forgiveness of sin to all who trust in Him.

Now we want to notice a few things here in these couple of vs. What’s the scene there in vs 22 remind us of? It takes us all the way to creation there in Genesis Ch 2 doesn’t it? Where we read, “*And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.*” Gen 2:7 God breathed into man, and man was given life, the word “breathed” in Hebrew is the identical word that’s used for “Spirit” “Ruach.” The same is true in Greek, “Pneuma,” “breath” and in essence what we’re seeing here is the regeneration of the disciples, new life being “breathed” into them. It’s a “new creation” “born again” what’s the bible say, “*...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*” 2 Cor 5:17 So what we’re seeing here is the regeneration of the disciples, they’d followed Jesus, but Jesus hadn’t died upon the cross for their sin yet, that’s not to say they weren’t saved, they were under the old covenant. But on the resurrection side of the cross things are different, remember Jesus spoke of the *new* covenant in His blood. and Now they’re receiving the Holy Spirit, “life” is being breathed into them, they’re a new creation in Christ.

By the way, when Jesus says, “Receive the Holy Spirit” you can be sure that they received the Holy Spirit. Some would argue that He was saying this in anticipation of Acts ch 2, I would take issue with that. Jesus makes no allusion to that whatsoever, He simply tells them to receive the Spirit, and we’ll speak on this again in the book of Acts, but this is another support text for the 3 fold ministry of the Holy Spirit that the bible makes so clear. The “Para” of the Holy Spirit, the coming alongside, He’s called the “paraklete” the One who comes along to comfort us, or convict us, whatever the need may be. He comes alongside us to convict us initially of our need for Christ. But then when we receive Christ there’s the “en” experience of the Holy Spirit, remember in John 14 Jesus told His disciples that the Holy Spirit was *with* them and would be *in* them.

Two different prepositions there, “Para,” = “with” and “en,” = “in.” That’s what just happened, the “en” experience, they were born again, regenerated as the Holy Spirit came into them. But Jesus said, “...*you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*” Acts 1:8

Now that’s an altogether distinctly different experience regarding the Holy Spirit, which has nothing to do with salvation whatsoever.

The word there is “Epi,” “upon” and it’s for the empowering to be the witness Jesus has called us to be. But no matter how you slice it, Jesus uses 3 distinctly different words regarding our relationship to the Holy Spirit, “Para” “en” and “Epi” what we just witnessed in John 20 was “en,” the indwelling. What you see in Acts Ch 2 is “Epi” the upon experience of the Holy Spirit. Now, “en” and “Epi” *can* happen simultaneously, but not generally, and such is not the case here.

In vs 23 Jesus tells them that if they forgive someone’s sin, it’ll be forgiven, if they retain it, it’ll be retained. Prêt ell, I thought the bible was clear that only God can forgive sin? and That’s exactly correct, this is sort of a poor translation, in reality it would be more clear to say, “If you forgive the sins of any, they shall have *already* been forgiven, and if you retain the sins of any, they have *already* been retained.” Jesus isn’t giving us the power to *provide* forgiveness, that’s found only by His blood, He’s giving us the priority to *proclaim* forgiveness. But Forgiveness and unforgiveness is predicated upon an individual’s response to Jesus Christ and His sacrifice upon the cross for them. If someone receives Jesus Christ then with all the authority of the Word of God I can declare to you, your sins are forgiven, but they were already forgiven the moment you received Christ. But if you reject Jesus Christ it’s my responsibility to let you know you remain unforgiven and certain judgment is inescapable apart from Christ. But don’t be confused here, the *miracle* of forgiveness belongs to God, it’s the *message* of forgiveness that belongs to you.

The authority you stand on regarding your message correlates directly with the decision one makes regarding the person of Jesus Christ. As sure as they receive Christ, they're forgiven, as sure as they reject Him they're sins are retained. "Well, transcendental meditation is my thing," that's neat, it's not God's thing, you're sins are retained. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, and no one comes to the Father but by Him, and Him *alone*.

Vs24-25

Underline those words there in vs 24, "Thomas... was not with them when Jesus came." I suppose one of the most frustrating things as a Pastor is to see people out there struggling on their own. and For whatever reason they won't get together with the rest of the disciples when they meet and so when Jesus shows up, through the word, or through worship, they miss it. "Hey, I can do my thing at home." That's great, Jesus didn't go to Thomas' home did He? He went to the meeting where the assembly was gathered in His name.

What's the bible say? "... *let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*" Heb 10:24-25 The other disciples were being refreshed, restored, renewed, revitalized, refocused and all the rest. But because Thomas wasn't at the meeting he missed out on the blessing, he missed out on a personal and profound unveiling of Jesus that changed everyone else's life. But he had to go through another week miserable, faced with uncertainty, unnecessary frustrations, and desperation. He forsook the assembly and in so doing invited unnecessary struggles into his life. and He'd waxed and waned to the point where he wouldn't even believe the witness of all his best friends. Where it says, "We've seen the Lord."

The tense of the words is such that they kept saying it, for days they pummeled him with the radical encounter that they'd had with Jesus, but he just refused to believe. He was like us, from the show-me-state, he said, "Until I see for myself the print of the nails in His hands, and place my fingers into His nail prints, and into His side, I *will not* believe." Notice that unbelief is a matter of the will, I "will" not believe. He could've chosen to believe, to trust in their testimony, but he chose not to.

The bible says, "*Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;*" Heb 3:12 Thomas was on the edge. Unbelief is a dangerous thing, because it'll keep us out of Heaven. Why didn't the children of Israel enter into the land that God had promised them the 1st time? Because of unbelief. The Word of God says, "*Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him. ' But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.*" Heb 10:38-39 Thomas was making a conscious decision as he was beginning to draw back, but why is he even in this position? He missed the meeting where Jesus showed up, consequently he's struggling with his faith. There's just a faith building dynamic that takes place in a setting of corporate worship, and study of the Word of God that just lacks when we're not apart of it. and Thomas is an example to us in that, we need to be together with Jesus in the midst of us.

Vs26

Remember that Sunday is the 1st day, so 8 days later it would be Sunday again, they've already began meeting on Sundays, why? It's the Lord's Day, the day of His resurrection was commemorated.

Vs27

Underline that, "Do not be unbelieving, but believing" believe in the witness of the resurrection of Jesus Christ Notice that Jesus basically quotes Thomas' statements, (he's often called doubting Thomas, Jesus didn't call it doubt, He called it straight up unbelief) how did Jesus know what Thomas said if He wasn't there? That's the point, He was there. This is what we were discussing earlier, He showed up physically/tangibly letting Him know that He was in their midst. But here Jesus is teaching them that He may not have been there physically, but He had never left them, nor forsaken them, He would be with them always, even to the end of the age. There may be times that you don't sense the Lord's presence, but He's there just the same, He's teaching them to walk by faith, just as you and I are to walk by faith.

Vs28

and Jesus said to him, "Wait a minute Thomas don't call Me God, I'm not deity" is that what your bible says? Mine doesn't, my bible says, "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*" John 1:1 My bible says that we're to be, "... *looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,*" Titus 2:13 So Thomas calls Jesus God, John calls Jesus God, Paul called Jesus God, Jesus referred to Himself as deity. Even God the Father calls Jesus God. We read in the book of Heb "*For to which of the angels did He ever say: 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You'?' And again: 'I will be to Him a Father, And He shall be to Me a Son'?' But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: 'Let all the angels of God worship Him.' And of the angels He says: 'Who makes His angels spirits And His ministers a flame of fire.' But to the Son He says: 'Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom.'*" Heb 1:5-8

So if Thomas, John, and Paul, call Jesus "God" under the inspiration of the Spirit, and even God the Father Himself refers to Jesus as God, what's my conclusion? Jesus *is* God, regardless of what the J.W.'s report, the Mormons, Hindus, or any other sect of people have to say about it. Jesus received Thomas' worship something no other man or angel in scripture ever does, why? Because worship is reserved for God alone, but with Jesus it's ok, He is God.

Vs29

That's you, faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen, and that's how people who please God live, by faith. We like to chide Thomas, he was called the twin, who was his twin? I don't know, but often times he finds his twin in us, we lack faith, refuse to believe the testimony of God's Word, Jesus says don't be unbelieving but believing.

There is a sense in which Thomas serves as an example to us, he refused to say he understood when he didn't, he refused to pretend to believe when he didn't. But when he *did* understand and believe, he went all the way and acknowledged Jesus as his Lord, and his God. and This is really the culmination of the book, the belief of Thomas, it's a practical example of why John wrote the book, in order to bring one who doesn't believe to a place whereby they encounter the risen Christ and believe. Ch 20 deals with the faith of Thomas, the hope of the disciples, and the love of Mary, faith, hope and love, all seen in these few vs.

Vs30-31

That's God's plan for you, that's His heart for you, that you would believe on Jesus Christ and have life in His name. One thing that every one of these encounters had in common in John Ch 20, changed lives, when you encounter the risen Christ in a personal way, He'll change your life forever. and If you'll just open your heart to Jesus, He'll breathe new life into you, and though you may be dead in sin and transgression, you'll be alive in Christ. Because if anyone is in Christ they're a new creation, old things will pass away, and all things will be made brand new. Liberty/true freedom can be yours today, independence day in truth in Jesus name.