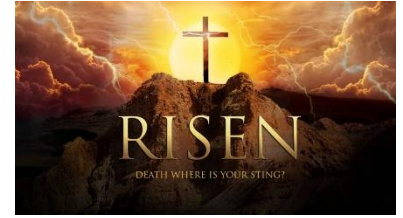


The Gospel of John Pt. 30

John 20:1-31

Big Idea

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the crown of Jesus' earthly ministry and the event that has galvanized Christians for 2000 years to take the Good News to the ends of the earth.



Exposition – John 20:1-31

The life of Jesus is fascinating to say the least. But, the jewel of His life is His resurrection from the dead. In this chapter, John records the details surrounding the empty tomb Jesus' appearances with His disciples. Many of the unique characteristics of Christianity flow out of the story of Jesus' resurrection: faith, hope, and joy to name a few. But, it is also easy to see the strong relational life of Jesus to His disciples.

1. The Empty Tomb

- A. (V1) – "... first day of the week" – this is a reference to Sunday. Other gospels loosely reference the time that Jesus was dead as three days. This is not meant to mean that He was dead for three whole days. But, in Jewish culture, any part of a day equaled a whole day. Thus, part of Friday, Saturday, and part of Sunday equals three days. From this time forward, believers met on Sunday as a celebration of the Resurrection. Previously, the Sabbath was the weekly event that anchored the week of the people of God (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2).
Mary Magdalene came to the tomb to finish the burial preparation on Jesus' body. Burial was ordinarily done the same day, but the Sabbath prohibited work. All the other gospels report that other women; Mary, mother of James; and Salome; accompanied Mary Magdalene to the grave on Resurrection morning.
- B. (V2-3) – John again identifies himself, as "the disciple whom Jesus loved". It is hard to know why exactly the women went to Peter and John. Was it that they were in closer proximity or was it because of their leadership among the disciples? By "they" Mary could be referring to the Jews or the Romans. However, it seems likely to think that she was referring to the Jews. However, we must remember that the Romans had placed a seal on the tomb and assigned guards to stand watch (Matthew 27:65-66). How could anyone have stolen away the body? Further, Matthew 28:4 reports that the guards shook with fear and acted like dead men when the angels appear at the tomb to announce Jesus' resurrection.
- C. (V4-8) – It is fitting that John be the one to see the empty tomb first. Only he remained at Jesus' side through the crucifixion. And, it is fitting that Peter also be present to witness the empty tomb since it was he that denied Jesus and it was he that Jesus told would be sifted as wheat by Satan (Luke 22:31). John specifically mentions that it was seeing the empty tomb that led to his belief in the actual resurrection. At this point, there is no mention that anyone else actually believes that Jesus has been resurrected.
- D. (V9) – The two disciples that are mentioned that were on the Road to Emmaus in Luke 24 (25-27, 32, 44-47) give some insight into the statement that John makes here in verse 9. It was not until Jesus opened their eyes AFTER the resurrection that they understood all that had been taught to the them about His resurrection.

- E. (V11-13) – Evidently Mary had not met up with Peter or John after they witnessed the empty tomb. John, like Matthew, reports the angels. John’s purpose here is to prove that Mary’s first instinct, that the body had been stolen away by robbers, is not true.
- F. (V14-16) – We don’t know exactly why Mary doesn’t recognize Jesus. It may be that she was turned away from Him, or that her eyes were filled with tears, or that it was veiled from her as it was the disciples on the Road to Emmaus. However, when Jesus says her name, she immediately recognizes Him. This calls us back to John 10:3-4, 27 when Jesus talks about being the Good Shepherd and that His sheep know His voice and follow Him.
- G. (V17-18) – “Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father” – Mary seizes on Jesus in fear that He will leave again. Jesus tells her to go to the disciples to tell them about His upcoming ascension to the Father. The other gospels report that Jesus told her to tell the disciples to meet Him in Galilee (Matt. 28:10)

2. The Appearance of Jesus

- A. (V19-20) – The disciples were all together and hunkered down in fear that the Jews would enact some revenge for the disappearance of the body of Jesus. It is still the same day as the resurrection. Jesus says, “Peace be with you”. The last words they heard Jesus utter were from the cross, “It is finished”. These two statements correspond to one another. It is by Jesus’ finished work on the cross that we have peace with God (Romans 5:1).
- B. (V21-23) – The commission that Jesus gives the disciples here corresponds to His high priestly prayer in John 17:18-21 (See also Matthew 28:19-20).
The Holy Spirit is not actually given until Pentecost in Acts 2 (still forty days away). So, we should understand that Jesus is pledging the Holy Spirit to them.
Verse 23 is a difficult verse. Jesus is not saying that Christians have the power to forgive sins. He is simply saying that Christians can declare forgiveness if a person has believed the gospel and repented of their sins and likewise they can declare judgment on any that will not believe and repent.
- C. (V24-25) – It is unclear why Thomas was not with the disciples when Jesus appeared to them on the night after the resurrection. Nonetheless, his statement is essentially that he will live by sight rather than by faith. However, it is known that Thomas would grow in faith greatly to the point that he was martyred for his faith while taking the gospel to India years later.
- D. (V26-28) – Jesus offers the same opening statement as He did when He appeared eight days earlier to the group, “Peace be with you.” The omniscience of the Lord Jesus is evident – He knows Thomas’ doubt and He knows what Thomas said would be required for Him to believe, “Reach here... reach here...”.
- E. (V29) – Jesus is contrasting the fact that at the moment it is possible to see then believe, but there is coming a time very soon that everyone who believes would do it by faith only, in what they cannot see. Jesus said these are blessed. Faith should always be preferred over sight (1 Peter 1:8-9).
- F. (V30-31) – It is important to remember that not everything that Jesus did and not everything that Jesus said in His earthly ministry are recorded in the Bible. The chapter closes with John telling us why he wrote his gospel – that others may believe in the Son of God and therefore have life in His name. John is notorious for statements like these (John 19:35; 1 John 5:13).