

UNLEASHING CHRIST'S RESURRECTION POWER

JOHN 20

As we open to John 20, think of what God accomplished at Christ's Resurrection. When Jesus stepped from the Tomb on Resurrection morning, God unleashed the greatest power of all.

Not only had Jesus paid the price for the sin of the world as the Lamb of God (John 1:29), He now was no longer limited to one spot at a time, as He had been in His earthly ministry. First, remember with me:

The Power of Jesus Christ Displayed

From the Manger to the Cross Jesus had been for 33 years ***in only one place at one time***. He had humbled Himself, He had emptied Himself, and He had limited Himself. He was localized, operating ***in one place at a time***.

Even in this condition of being localized, Jesus accomplished more than any human ever has or will. He grew up perfectly, mastered God's Word perfectly, and related to His family, friends, and neighbors perfectly for 30 years.

Then at the dawn of His Public ministry He obeyed God perfectly at His Baptism, He defeated Satan's advances perfectly in the Wilderness, and He began to serve God's will perfectly as He set out as an itinerant preacher.

For 3 years Jesus awesomely served in the power of God.

- Wherever He went, Christ's very Presence made sure that death fled, disease faded, and despair melted.
- Broken bodies that came in contact with Jesus were mended, ruined lives repaired, sightless eyes restored, empty ears filled with sound, missing fingers returned, and hungering lives satisfied.
- Everywhere He went, wherever He was, whenever He was there: the Presence of Jesus meant that death, disease, and despair were no more. But Jesus only did that from being ***in one place at a time***.

As far as we know Jesus only ventured outside the borders of tiny Israel but once, and then it was quite a brief stop in the north to help a troubled woman.

Crowds came to Him, multitudes flocked to Him, and none were disappointed: if you came to Him, He helped them all. But sometimes the crowds were so great that people were pressed out and had to resort to digging through rooftops, climbing trees, and reaching down through the feet of the crowds just to grab the tassel of His robe. All this because He was just One person who was limited to being ***in one place at a time***.

Yet everything Jesus accomplished ***in one place at a time*** couldn't be all written down. It was amazing to see that which was captured for us in the Gospels. So much done so powerfully by One person, ***in one place at a time***.

By now after having said it so many times, you have probably caught the drift of where we are going. As we step into the Garden that surrounded the borrowed Tomb on Resurrection morning: something has wondrously changed. Jesus is no longer limited by time and space to be ***in one place at a time***. He seems to be everywhere at once. So that

The Unlimited Power of Christ Is Now Available Everywhere

Please listen to the final, and greatest of all the Gospel accounts of Christ's Resurrection. As we read these verses think of that new dimension of the Risen Christ, they were just beginning to experience.

Please stand with me, as we read John 20:1-10 (NKJV).

Now on the first *day* of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw *that* the stone had been taken away from the tomb. ² Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him."

³ Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb.

⁴ So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. ⁵ And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying *there*; yet he did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying *there*, ⁷ and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. ⁸ Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. ⁹ For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. ¹⁰ Then the disciples went away again to their own homes.

¹¹ But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down *and looked* into the tomb.

The Empty Tomb on Resurrection morning meant something had changed. It was Christ's availability. For 3 ½ years anyone who could find Him could have: **any** need met, **any** fear removed, **any** oppression lifted, **any** chain broken, **any** defilement cleansed away...but ONLY **if you could find Him**. We can call that:

The Power of Christ's Presence

Often we fail to understand the magnitude of what really happened. Here is what had changed: after the Resurrection Jesus was no longer **limited to one location**. Jesus could be at anytime with everyone in anyplace.

As we will see this morning: Jesus meets the grieving women at the Tomb, Jesus comforts the sorrowing Mary, Jesus calms the frightened disciples inside the locked room without opening the door.

Then after a despairing Thomas laments not seeing Christ, eight days later, through locked doors, Jesus appears to assure a doubtful trembling Thomas.

And after that, Jesus shows up at dawn on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, where He confronts and restores a soaking wet Peter. Finally, Paul tells us that Jesus was able to visit and be seen by everyone of the 500 others who had believed on Him (I Cor. 15:6).

Think of all of Christ's power we see in the Gospels available everywhere and all the time! That was God unleashing Jesus Christ to be everywhere available!

For the next forty days we find that Jesus crisscrosses the tiny land of Israel from north to south. We find Him on mountaintops, back roads, inside locked rooms, on the shore, and everywhere else that He is looked for or needed.

Christ's unlimited accessibility was demonstrated in part by these post-resurrection meetings He carried out. But think about what that meant, because all those meetings took place in an occupied country crawling with spies, soldiers, and religious leaders filled with hatred.

For forty days after the Empty Tomb, Christ's Presence was available unstoppably, everywhere; and:

Jesus Solved All Problems By His Presence

After the Cross and Empty Tomb, Jesus was available anywhere, anytime, by anyone.

So: **any sin** could be forgiven, **any doubts** could be overcome, **any sadness** could be comforted, **any disappointment** could be stopped, **any fearfulness** could be arrested, **any loneliness** could be ended, and **any defilement** could be cleansed. Christ's Resurrection meant that anyone could experience His Presence, anywhere, and at

anytime!

There are more than ten times Jesus is seen in the Scriptures after His Resurrection.

In each of these situations where He appears, it is to meet a very special need that all of us share in one way or another this morning. In other words, Our Risen Lord is here with us this morning, and He will be anywhere we are from today to our last heart beat and final breath.

As we pause to watch Christ from the Resurrection onward, we get an idea of what He is doing now. First notice:

Christ's Power to Reward Devotion

In John 20:11-18 we see Jesus first: rewarding the devotion of those faithful women who were last at the Cross and first at the Tomb. He noticed what they had done, He saw their devotion. Jesus rewards those women who followed Him, not those men He had called to follow Him: with being FIRST to see Him alive from the dead. Jesus sees our devotion for Him.

Do you love the Lord with all your heart?

Is you desire to love and serve, and worship Him?

Then I have good news: Jesus always rewards those who are devoted to Him.

Now follow along as we see Jesus rewarding the devotion of those faithful women in John 20:11-18 (NKJV).

But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. 12 And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. 13 Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him." 14 Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. 15 Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away." 16 Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher). 17 Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'" 18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her.

Are you devoted to Christ today? Do you love the Lord with all your heart? Is you desire to love and serve, and worship Him? Then I have good news: Jesus always rewards our

devotion to Him.

How about joining me in giving devotion to our Risen Lord by singing a song to Him. I think most of you will know the words to that chorus:

“I Love You, Lord”

I love you, Lord, and I lift my voice
To worship you, Oh my soul rejoice!
Take joy, my King, in what you hear
May it be a sweet, sweet sound in your ear

Second, notice:

Christ's Power to Re-Deploy the Committed

In John 20:19-24 we see Christ's power again at work as He redeploys those faithful disciples. They were committed to Jesus. They were His disciples that had followed Him those 3 ½ years amazing years. They had watch His arrest, His crucifixion, and His burial.

Now they were there, back in that place where He had warned them all this was coming. They had waited for Him in the Upper Room, they had waited for Him to rescue them from their doubts and fears; and now He does. Jesus understands our struggles.

Jesus never expects perfection. Jesus knew that they had doubts, so He comes to re-deploy them. They were useful, they were committed, they just needed a fresh start.

Have you forgotten how precious it was way back then, when you first were saved? Have you lost some of that fire and devotion that you used to have? Then I have good news, just like Christ's visit to those deeply committed disciples, this morning Jesus also wants to anoint us afresh and anew with His Spirit.

Now follow along as we see His power to re-deploy, renew, refresh, and restart those deeply committed disciples of His in John 20:19-24 (NKJV):

Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, “Peace be with you.” 20 When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. 21 So Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” 22 And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” 24 Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus

came.

Are you committed to Christ this morning, but its not like it was way back then, when you first were saved?

Have you lost some of that fire and devotion that you used to have?

Then I have good news, just like Christ's visit to those deeply committed disciples, this morning Jesus also wants to anoint us afresh and anew with His Spirit.

Once again, to apply the power of Christ's resurrection right here where we are this morning, Jesus is unlimited in His accessibility.

He is here, He knows the desires of each of our hearts. He knows we love Him, and want so deeply to serve Him. All that we need to do is ask.

Yes, Jesus said all we have to do is ask, and He will again and again give us a fresh new start, a new beginning.

There is another chorus that I use for my fresh starts. Usually I find a place where no one else can hear me. Often it is in the car, or in my study when I am all alone.

I tip back with my eyes closed and I say aloud: Spirit of the Living God, fall fresh on ME. That is what Jesus wants to do today, right now, right here.

How about standing once again, and if you know the words, close your eyes, look up into the face of the God of the Universe, and sing with me to Him: Spirit of the Living God.

“Spirit of the Living God”

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me;
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.
Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Third, notice:

His Power to Re-Confirm the Faith of the Doubting

In John 20:24-31 we see one last display of power by Jesus Christ. This time it is Jesus re-confirming the faith of His precious, doubting disciple named Thomas.

Do you have some doubts this morning?

Have others passed you by, and their experience of Christ you don't seem to be able to

share?

Do you wish that Jesus could just come and show His wounded hands and feet to you?

Then I have good news: Christ's accessibility is unlimited. He actually already knows every doubt, every struggle, and every dark moment that you and I have waded through. Jesus knows our doubts and wants to answer them, right now, here today. Christ is here this morning and will respond to your reaching out to Him, even in doubting faith. He will confirm that He is alive, and real, and your Lord and God. You can fall before Him and confess that to Him now.

Now follow along as we see His power to re-confirm our faith as He answers the honest questions of the seeking Thomas in John 20:24-31:

Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So 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."

26 And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" 27 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." 28 And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

29 Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." 30 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 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.

Jesus Knows All Our Doubts

Do you have some doubts this morning?

Have others passed you by, and their experience of Christ you don't seem to be able to share?

Do you wish that Jesus could just come and show His wounded hands and feet to you?

He is here this morning and will respond to your reaching out in doubting faith. He will confirm that He is alive, and real, and your Lord and God. You can fall before Him and confess that to Him now.

Just think what He can do now that He is available anywhere, anytime, and by anyone.

Wherever you are Jesus is passing by right now. He is offering you salvation. Pause on Thomas.

“Thomas is our pattern. Today it is the hand of a gracious God who holds out the way of salvation to you.

If you reply that you cannot see it, he asks you to look at the hand itself; for it is a wounded hand, one bearing the print of the nail received by Jesus in dying for your salvation.

By faith you may put out your hand and touch that wound. You may know that it is evidence, irrefutable evidence, of God's great love for you. That hand was struck for you.

The one extending that hand died for you. Allow him to enclose your hand, to enclose you, and to bring you into that great company of those who possess eternal life and who shall never perish.”¹

To rescue us from our hopeless sinful state, God has communicated with us and has taken on humanity by becoming the man Jesus Christ.

Come to Jesus Today

Christ's life is recorded in the Bible. Jesus has revealed to us, in a life identifiably human and unmistakably divine, that the true nature of God is love.

If you are devoted to Jesus: affirm your love.

If you feel distant from Jesus: ask for a fresh anointing of His Spirit.

If you doubt that you even know Him: cry out to Christ today.

Are you unprepared to die? Do you want to MAKE SURE you really know Jesus Christ personally, and are going to Heaven?

Here is a prayer you can pray, a prayer that expresses your desire to transfer your trust to Christ alone for your eternal salvation.

This prayer can be the link that will connect you to God.

And if you pray it in faith, God will receive you.

Wherever you are, you can look up into the Father's face and say:

“O God, through Chrit's work on the Cross: be merciful to me a sinner.”

¹ James Montgomery Boice, *John Volume 3 Those Who Received Him John 9-12*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1999, pp. 785ff.

You can be assured that He hears you.

Jesus says, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out".

Jesus has unlimited accessibility.

He will hear your prayer today, if you will only let Him.