

Not Seeing, Yet Believing

John 20:19-31

Series: Topical

1. Introduction –
 - a. In this portion of Scripture, Christ has arisen from the dead.
 - b. The disciples, not privy to this information, are in a state of flux and uncertainty.
 - i. They are afraid for their lives.
 - ii. They are hiding – the same Sanhedrin that crucified Christ would surely want to kill Christ’s disciples.
 - iii. They are dumbfounded; that is to say, they thought that Christ was the Messiah but how can he be dead.
 - c. In the midst of this emotional and spiritual upheaval, the post resurrected Christ appears to comfort and commission his disciples.
2. Verse 19 – the very first words to his disciples
 - a. Notice the doors were locked
 - i. Notice the mood was one of fear
 - ii. The same Sanhedrin that killed Jesus would want to destroy all of Jesus’ disciples.
 - b. Christ appears and bids them, “Peace.”
 - i. Christ bids that in the midst of upheaval and chaos his disciples need to be at peace.
 - ii. Christ comforts his disciples pain and uncertainty
3. Verse 20 –
 - a. Christ demonstrated to them his scars to prove to them that he was:
 - i. Alive
 - ii. Real
 - iii. The scars prove to the disciples that Messiah is always a victor and never a victim.
 1. They are following the one which death could not hold.
 - b. They were glad to see the Lord –
 - i. The one that they loved is with them.
 - ii. This Easter, we take the same comfort in knowing that Christ is with us.

4. Verse 21-22 –

- a. Peace be with you – again the peace of God is given to them
- b. Their commissioning – as the father sent me, I send you
 - i. They are the Shaliach (SHA lee ah) of God – the sent ones of God as his representatives
 - 1. They are authorized by Christ to act on his behalf.
 - 2. They are to go where he is sending them and know that the mission of Christ is not over, it is continuing.
 - 3. I stand here before you in the continuance and furtherance of the ministry of Christ.
- c. He breathed on them – reminiscent of Genesis
 - i. Life is being given - **Genesis 2:7** then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.
 - ii. This is the power to be the Shaliach (SHA lee ah) of God – to be a living spiritual being no longer dead in trespasses and sins.
 - iii. Fear dies here and boldness in Christ is born

5. Verses 23 – As God’s Representatives

- a. The disciples are able, based upon the authority of Scripture, to forgive and retain sins.
- b. This is our authority as Christians.
- c. This is why we preach to you.

6. Verses 24-25 – Thomas

- a. The heart of Thomas is summarily condemned in Scripture
 - i. This was also the unbelief of every man in that room for they had refused to believe the testimony of others.
 - ii. They had refused the women’s testimony.
 - 1. **Luke 24:9-11** and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. (10) Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, (11) but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.

- iii. They had refused the testimony of those on the road to Emmaus.
 - 1. **Luke 24:33-35** And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, (34) saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" (35) Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.
 - b. This type of heart refuses to believe that God has moved unless the individual himself has seen some sort of great working of God.
 - i. It dismisses the testimony of others.
 - ii. It dismisses the work that God has done throughout history.
 - iii. It dismisses the love and affection of God for his people.
 - c. This type of unbelief wants to place fingers in hole and hands into the side of Christ.
 - d. This type of unbelief ends with a flat out declaration "I will never believe"
 - e. Sadly, this type of unbelief is what we see much too often in this cynical and doubting world.
7. Verse 26 – Jesus again enter a locked room
- a. Jesus bids them all, including Thomas, peace.
8. Verse 27 – The awareness of Christ
- a. Christ was aware of Thomas' unbelief.
 - i. Christ had heard his disbelieving heart.
 - b. Christ dares Thomas to experience the signs by which Thomas had said that unless he experienced he would never believe.
 - c. Injunction:
 - i. Do not disbelieve, but believe!
 - ii. This is the command that goes forth for all today.
 - 1. **Acts 17:30-31** The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, (31) because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed;

and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

9. Verse 28 – Thomas' absolute surrender
 - a. Thomas does surrender to the Lord
 - i. He is Lord
 - ii. He is God
 - b. Thomas believed because God in his mercy gave him exactly what he demanded.
 - i.
 - c. Christ does not rebuke this affirmation

10. Verse 29 – The singularity of faith
 - a. However, Thomas' declaration would always have a caveat.
 - b. His is a faith by sight.
 - i. **2 Corinthians 5:7** for we walk by faith, not by sight.
 - ii. Because you have seen me –
 1. This was the only reason why Thomas believed.
 - iii. Blessed are those who not seeing, believe
 1. Christ here declares that he will not give each and every person whatever sign they must have in order to believe.
 2. The history of Christianity is enough
 3. The witness of millions is enough.
 - iv. Not seeing and believing is the highest form of faith –
 1. **Hebrews 11:1** Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.
 2. **Hebrews 11:6** And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.
 3. **Hebrews 12:1-2** Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, (2) looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

11. Verses 30-31 – the signs of Jesus

- a. Many other not written
- b. What is written is for a purpose
 - i. That we would believe
 - ii. That we would have eternal life
- c. Notice, what is written is enough –
 - i. Will you believe?

12. Benediction –

- a. **1 Peter 1:7-9** so that the tested genuineness of your faith--more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire--may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (8) Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, (9) obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.