

UNLEASHING THE GREATEST POWER OF ALL JOHN 20

When Jesus stepped from the Tomb on Resurrection morning, God unleashed the greatest power of all.

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. 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!

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 ½ 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 – 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 – 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 trapped by time and space to be ***in one place at a time***. He seems to be everywhere at once.

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.
- He meets the grieving women at the Tomb, comforts the sorrowing Mary, calms the frightened disciples inside the locked room without opening the door, shows up at dawn on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, confronts and restores a soaking wet Peter, assures a doubtful trembling Thomas, visits with everyone of the 500 others who had believed on Him.
- All that in an occupied country crawling with spies, soldiers, and religious leaders filled with hatred.
- And for forty days after the Empty Tomb, He is never seen even once by any unloving eyes, He is never touched even once by unloving hands. Christ's Presence was available unstoppably – everywhere.

Now think again with me about Resurrection morning. The Empty Tomb 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, and oppression lifted, any chain broken, any defilement cleansed away...**if you could find Him.**

Jesus solved all problems by His presence. Jesus came to people where they were and one by one transformed them. But Jesus was only ***in one place at one time.***

But 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, any defilement could be cleansed...anywhere, anytime, and by anyone!

A quick walk through the Gospel by John reminds us of what Jesus does in one place at a time. With each of these scenes think about this going on around the world, night and day for nearly 2000 years now! The greatest power unleashed in Jesus now that He is available anywhere, anytime, and by anyone. In fact John lists 21 chapters of Jesus meeting people right where they were.

- 1- Watching Nathaniel sit and think under a tree Jesus answers his questions (1.46-49).
- 2- Attending a wedding Jesus rescues the servants when the wine runs out (2.9).
- 3- Waiting up Jesus explains salvation to Nicodemus when he slips to Christ's side in the dark (3.2).
- 4- Sitting on the well Jesus reveals His true identity to a seeking woman overflowing with sins (4.18-19).
- 5- Approaching the paralytic laying on the ground Jesus heals him when he was hopeless and helpless (5.6).
- 6- Coming across the waves to a storm tossed boat and quieting the fearful disciples (6.17-19).
- 7- Crying for anyone who thirsts to come to Him (7.37-38).
- 8- Looking into the heart of the adulteress woman who stood stained by her sins (8.3).
- 9- Finding the man born blind in his darkness and opening his eyes (9.6-7).
- 10- Opening the door to a safe and secure home for lost sheep (10.9).

- 11- Defeating death facing the grave of Lazarus and its hopelessness (11.25-27).
- 12- Accepting the worship of Mary who loved Him so (12.3).
- 13- Confronting his disciples with dirty feet and hearts stinking with pride (13.5-15).
- 14- Assuring his disciples when they had troubled hearts (14.1-6).
- 15- Coming close to prune away our unprofitable parts when our lives are fruitless (15.2).
- 16- Promising to convict us when our hearts are sinful (16.7-9).
- 17- Praying for our sanctification by the truth of His Word (17.17).
- 18- Watching over His disciples in their darkest hour (18.8).
- 19- Caring for His mother even as He died (19.25-27).
- 20- Finding Thomas in his doubt and bringing him to faith (20.25)
- 21- Standing on the shore when Peter needed restoration and restoring us (21.15-18)

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. Thomas had not been present on that first occasion when Jesus appeared to his disciples. The others told Thomas about it afterward, but Thomas replied, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it" (John 20:25).

A week later Jesus appeared again, Thomas being present, and offered to fulfill the conditions of Thomas's test. But the mere sight was enough for Thomas. Thomas fell at Christ's feet and worshiped, saying, "My Lord and my God" (v. 28).

Is that sight not clear enough for you also? Are Jesus' wounded hands not evidence enough for you of his love? God says that his action in Christ is perfectly clear, so much so that there is no excuse for a failure to believe it. In fact, he says that the way of salvation in Christ has been "made known" (Rom. 3:21). The way of salvation has been made as clear as a striking hand or a blow to the face.

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

Over 55 million humans will enter eternity in 2003. Some will perish through starvation or murder, others through disease and accident. Some painlessly and others painfully, but all 55 plus million will DIE. Is that a result of a catastrophic tragedy? No it is daily life and death on planet earth! What's the real tragedy? Not death - all will die, some quietly, some slowly, and some violently as perhaps many thousands did in the terrorist attacks. But being unprepared - that's the ultimate tragedy.

Death is the ULTIMATE ENEMY, not Saddam Hussein or Osama Bin Laden or any of their henchmen. Death is the real enemy. All humans -- rich or poor, armed or unarmed, weak or powerful, known or faceless -- ALL ARE HELPLESS!

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

This is how the Bible states it:

"God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son (Jesus Christ), that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."

In spite of this love, in spite of this gift, in spite of this offer of eternal life, there is a barrier between man and God -- man's refusal to acknowledge God's prior claim to his life. Man is self-centered instead of God centered, and the Bible identifies this as rebellion and calls it sin. Furthermore, the Bible declares that 'the wages of sin is death. But God offers a solution in the gift of His Son, whose death on the

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

cross paid the penalty for man's sin and rebellion. God went the limit. Now comes your part.

- Are you willing to admit that God is right when He says you have rebelled?
- Do you recognize your need of a personal relationship with God?
- Trust God that He will forgive you and give you eternal life because Jesus took the penalty for your sins.
- Accept the Bible's invitation, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved. The Bible also says "if you confess with your mouth 'Jesus is Lord' and believe in your heart that God raised Him (Jesus) from the dead, you will be saved.- It continues by saying, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.
- As you hear me, simply speak to God and tell Him you want to change the direction of your sinful life and that you want to receive Jesus.

There is an unforgettable illustration in the very recent burial in Vienna of Empress Zita, the last Hapsburg Empress. Thousands fell in line behind the catafalque, drawn by six black horses. The procession came to a stop at the Capuchin Church, and there, a long-observed tradition was enacted. As a member of the funeral party knocked on the closed door of the church, a voice from within asked, "Who goes there?"

The titles were read aloud: "Queen of Bohemia, Dalmatia, Croatia, Slavonia, Galicia. Queen of Jerusalem, Grand Duchess of Tuscany and Krakow."

"I do not know her," came the response from within the church.

A second knock, and the question of "Who goes there?" brought forth the response, "Zita, Empress of Austria and Queen of Hungary."

Again the reply, "I do not know her."

When the inevitable question was put the third time, the answer was simply, "Zita, a poor sinner."

"Come in," came the welcoming voice, as the doors were slowly opened.²

² Ravi Zacharias, *A Shattered Visage, The Real Face of Atheism* (Michigan, Baker Books, 1990), 167.

Perhaps today your name will be called and your life will end.
Are you ready? Do you want to MAKE SURE you 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.

Dear God,

- o I know that I am a sinner and there is nothing that I can do to save myself.
- o I confess my complete helplessness to forgive my own sin or to work my way to heaven.
- o At this moment I trust Christ alone as the One who bore my sin when He died on the cross.
- o I believe that He did all that ever will be necessary for me to stand in your holy presence.
- o I thank you that Christ was raised from the dead as a guarantee of my own resurrection.
- o As best as I can, I now transfer: my trust to Him.
- o I am grateful that He has promised to receive me despite my many sins and failures.
- o Father, I take you at your word. I thank you that I can face death now that you are my Savior.
- o Thank you for the assurance that you will walk with me though the deep valley.

Thank You for hearing this prayer.
In Jesus' Name. Amen.

He'll take your³ sins and put them behind his back never to remember them against you forever! How complete is the deliverance our God has provided for sinful man! Friends of mine, outside of Christ, with no peace in your heart, will you come God's way? Wherever you are, you can look up into the Father's face and say, "God be merciful to me a sinner." And you can be assured that He hears you. Jesus says, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out," He will hear your prayer, He will save your soul if you will only let Him.

³ Charles E. Fuller, *The Tabernacle In The Wilderness*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Fleming H. Revell Company, No Date, p. 27-38.