

Encountering the Risen Jesus

Easter Sunday

Thesis: Today is Easter Sunday, Resurrection Sunday! We celebrate the risen Lord Jesus Christ. We are so glad you are here in person and online.

Text: John 20:1-31

In John 20:1-31, God has given us the transforming testimony of the resurrection of Jesus. Men and women saw Jesus and testified that God has raised him from the dead and that Jesus is alive forevermore.

John 20:1–31 (NIV84) 1 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. 2 So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!” 3 So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. 4 Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, 7 as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus’ head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen. 8 Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. 9 (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.)

10 Then the disciples went back to their homes, 11 but Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb 12 and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus’ body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. 13 They asked her, “Woman, why are you crying?” “They have taken my Lord away,” she said, “and I don’t know where they have put him.” 14 At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. 15 “Woman,” he said, “why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?” Thinking he was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.” 16 Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher). 17 Jesus said, “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’ ” 18 Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them that he had said these things to her.

19 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" 20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. 21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

24 Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "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." 26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." 28 Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

30 Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

In John Chapter 20, we have 2 different kinds of encounters with the risen Jesus.

1. **One encounter is a physical, tangible experience with the risen Jesus and with a believing response in Jesus.**
 - a. **Mary Magdalene** (John 20:10-18). Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her (John 20:18).
 - b. **The Disciples** (John 20:19-23). The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord (John 20:20).
 - c. **Thomas** (John 20:24-28). Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28).
2. **Another encounter comes in the context of believing in the risen Jesus without seeing him personally. Rather, we choose to respond to the testimony of what others have seen, heard, and experienced of Jesus.**

- a. It took the appearances of the risen Lord himself to convince most of the early followers of Jesus that the resurrection was a reality.
- b. **However, John, the beloved disciple:**
 - i. ... is a symbol of those who had not seen an appearance of the risen Lord and yet believed (cf. 20:8; 20:29). It must be remembered that the combination of seeing and believing has been a repeated theme in John (cf. 2:23; etc.). Many had seen his signs and had failed or refused to believe (cf. 6:30; 9:38–41; 12:37; etc.). But to believe without seeing the actual reality was marked by the evangelist for special note (cf. 4:50; 9:35–36; 20:29).... It took the appearances of the risen Lord himself to convince most followers that the resurrection was a reality. The beloved disciple, however, is here viewed as the model for the believing community. (Borchert, Gerald L. *John 12–21*. Vol. 25B. The New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2002.)
- c. *John 20:28-29 (NIV84)* 28 Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!” 29 Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed”
 - i. How good is life for those who have not seen yet believe.
 - ii. **Blessed are those who choose to believe in Jesus in response to the testimony of Scripture or to the testimonies of what others have seen, heard, and experienced of Jesus.**
 - iii. *Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name (John 20:30-31).*

In John Chapter 20, we have the culmination of the entire Gospel of John.

If the Word who was God has now made the invisible God visible, so, as in the Prologue [John Chapter 1], this chapter [John 20] has described how he has brought **life and light** to the world. The **resurrection** is not an alien power breaking into God’s world; it is what happens when the creator himself comes to heal and restore his world, and bring it to its appointed goal. (Wright, NT. *John for Everyone, Part 2: Chapters 11-21*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2004.)

The Bible tells the unified story of Jesus.

1. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and it was good and really good (Genesis 1).
2. God has always intended that heaven and earth are together as one. God created us for intimacy with him. We have dignity because we were created in the image of God, to be a dwelling place for God in the earth. And, we were created to partner with God in exercising his loving servant leadership over the earth (Genesis 2).
3. But ever since Adam and Eve, humans have decided to choose for themselves what is right and wrong. And, we have decided to build our own kingdoms rather than submitting to God and to his kingdom (Genesis 3.)
4. Now, with the birth, life, suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, God has made a way for the story to find ultimate fulfillment in Jesus, who is putting heaven and earth back together (Revelation 21 – 22).

We have been praying that this week would be a place of encounter for all of us.

1. Though the years, this **Prayer Room** as been a place of encounter for people **where they experience the presence of God.**
2. We are praying that this would be a place of encounter with God for those whom God doesn't fit in their box.
3. And, we are praying for each of you who are in this room today to have an encounter with the Living God.

Praying for Encounter for Resurrection Sunday

Ephesians 1:15–23 (NIV84) 15 For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. 17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. 18 I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, 20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. 22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

1. **May God give you his Spirit of wisdom and revelation so that you might know him better** (Ephesians 1:17).
2. **May the eyes of your heart be enlightened so that you experientially know 3 things:**
 - a. So that you may know **the hope to which he has called you** (Ephesians 1:18).
 - i. God has called you into intimate relationship with himself through Jesus.
 - ii. And, we are called **to join Jesus on his mission and in his power** in the earth and in our spheres of influence together with others.
 - b. So that you may know **the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints** (Ephesians 1:18).
 - i. God is making his home in you and wants you to at home in him.
 - c. So that you may know **his incomparably great power for us who believe** (Ephesians 1:19).
 - i. That power is the same resurrection power that raised Jesus from the dead and seated him in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 1:19-20).
 - ii. That power is the same resurrection power that put Jesus far above every rule and authority, power and dominion, and title in this age and the one to come (Ephesians 1:21).
 - iii. Far too many Christians today... are quite unaware that this power is there and is available.... If someone says, 'Well, I don't seem to have much power as a Christian,' or, 'I can't see the power of Jesus doing very much in the world,' **that simply shows that they need this prayer of Paul. Paul doesn't imagine that all Christians will automatically be able to recognize the power of God. It will take, as he says in verse 17, a fresh gift of wisdom, of coming to see things people don't normally see. And this in turn will come about through knowing Jesus and having what Paul calls 'the eyes of your inmost self opened to God's light.**
(Wright, NT. *Paul for Everyone: The Prison Letters: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2004.)
3. **May the eyes of your heart be enlightened with his Spirit of wisdom and revelation:**
 - a. So that you grasp the reality that God has placed all things under the feet of Jesus (Ephesians 1:22).
 - b. So that you grasp the reality that God has appointed Jesus head over everything for the church (Ephesians 1:22).

- c. So that you grasp the reality that we, the church, are the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:23).
- d. So that you grasp the reality that the fullness of Jesus fills our lives and his church in every way (Ephesians 1:23).

Invitation:

1. **I invite you to choose to stop doubting and to start believing that Jesus is Lord and God.**

*John 20:17-31 (NIV) 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. **Stop doubting and believe.**" 28 Thomas said to him, "**My Lord and my God!**" 29 Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." 30 Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

2. **I invite you to receive Jesus as Lord and God of your life by believing in Jesus and following Jesus.**

*John 1:10-14 (NIV84) 10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12 **Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God**— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. 14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*