

Witnesses to the Resurrection

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[0:00] You can be turning to John chapter 20 this morning. John chapter 20. Now I don't want to confuse you.

I want to read this because I think it well sums up the thoughts and expectations of the disciples at that time.

Now this is actually an account that takes place after Christ is risen from the dead. But it shows you what they're thinking. That very day, two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem.

And they were talking to each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them.

But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk? And they stood still, looking sad.

[1:36] Then one of them named Cleopas answered him, Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?

And he said to them, And he said to them, What things? And they said to him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, A man who was a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, And how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, And crucified him.

But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. For the disciples, The day Jesus died on the cross was the darkest day in history.

It ended three and a half of the most amazing years anyone could dream of. A teacher that spoke with authority.

A teacher that could look into your heart and thoughts. A teacher who could heal the sick. He could raise the dead, turn water to wine.

[2:55] Whose voice stilled the wind and calmed the sea. A teacher that said he had come to bring the kingdom of God. We had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.

That dream died in their hearts. When the Roman soldiers nailed Jesus to a cross. And he didn't come down. Instead he cried, It is finished.

And his last words were, Father into thy hands I commend my spirit. And he died. And they knew he was dead.

And to prove it, A centurion pierced the side of the Lord Jesus right to his heart. Water and blood flowed out. Everyone knew Jesus was dead.

When it was the Sabbath. The next day. So they quickly took him down. Anointed him with spices.

[4:04] Wrapped him in grave clothes. And buried him in a stone tomb. That was close to the cross. And they closed it. With a stone.

And they sealed it with a Roman seal. And posted guards. There was no one more dead than that. We had hoped. We had hoped. That he was the one. To redeem Israel. Now to John chapter 20.

I'm going to read the first 18 verses. Now on the first day of the week. Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early. While it was still dark. And saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.

She ran and went to Simon Peter. And the other disciple. The one whom Jesus loved. And said to them. They've taken the Lord out of the tomb. And we do not know where they have laid him.

[5:09] So Peter went out with the other disciple. And they were going toward the tomb. Both of them were running together. But the other disciple outran Peter. And reached the tomb first. And stooping to look in.

He saw the linen clothes lying there. But he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came. Following him. And went into the tomb. He saw the linen clothes lying there.

And the face cloth. Which had been on Jesus' head. Not lying with the linen clothes. But folded up in a place. By itself. And the other disciple. Who had reached the tomb first.

Also went in. And he saw and believed. For as yet. They did not understand the scripture. That he must rise from the dead.

Then the disciples went back to their homes. But Mary stood there. Weeping outside the tomb. And as she wept. She stooped to look into the tomb.

[6:09] And she saw two angels in white. Sitting where the body of Jesus had lain. One at the head. And one at the feet. They said to her. Woman. Why are you weeping?

She said to them. They have taken away my Lord. And I don't know where they have laid him. Having said this. She turned around and saw Jesus standing. But she didn't know.

That it was Jesus. Jesus said to her. Woman. Why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking? Supposing him to be the gardener.

She said to him. Sir. If you have carried him away. Tell me. Where have you laid him? And I will take him away. Jesus said to her. Mary.

She turned and said to him in Arabic. Rabboni. Which means teacher. Jesus said to her. Do not cling to me. For I have not yet ascended to the father.

[7:14] But go to my brothers and say to them. I am ascending to my father. And to your father. To my God. And your God. Mary Magdalene went.

And announced to the disciples. I have seen the Lord. And that he had said these things to her. Let's pray together. Father.

Already. We have seen. From your word. Glorious pictures. Of what you've done. And who you are. And pray that you would open our eyes.

To what's here. And pray that it would. It would. Make us to love you more. Make us to rest in you more.

Make us to go. And tell others. I have seen the Lord. We ask your help. In this service. In Jesus name.

[8:16] Amen. Three days have gone by. Since Jesus has died. All of them were Sabbaths. So no one could do anything.

No work. Stay home. And even though 75 pounds of ointment. Had been quickly applied. To Jesus's body. The job had been rushed.

And Jesus's body. Had not been properly. Prepared for burial. Especially one. So sweet. And so dear to them. That's probably all.

That the women were thinking about. Those three days. The one. They had followed. Had not been properly.

Prepared for burial. It was hard to believe. That the one. Who displayed. Such authority. And power. Now lay dead.

[9:17] In a stone tomb. Well that third day. Sabbath. Had ended. The evening before. When day came. They. Could be able to see.

Soon. So they left early. I say they. Scripture here. Speaks. Of Mary Magdalene. Because Mary. Is a big part. Of this story.

And her testimony. Is a big part. Of this story. But we know. That there were other women. With him. We know that. From the other gospels. So they left early.

To finish preparing. The body of Jesus. John here. Speaks of Mary. But as I mentioned.

There are more. John backs that up. In verse three. But as we look again. At the first two verses. Now on the first day. Of the week. Mary Magdalene.

[10:11] Came to the tomb. Early. While it was still dark. And saw that the stone. Had been taken away. From the tomb. So she ran. And went to Simon Peter. And the other disciple. The one whom Jesus loved.

And said to them. They have taken. The Lord. Out of the tomb. And we do not know. Where they have laid him. The picture seems to be. As they are approaching. It has been dark.

It is getting twilight. As they grow closer. To the tomb. Even from a distance. They begin to see. That the stone. Is not where it is supposed to be. I don't think Mary makes it.

To the tomb that time. We can read from other gospels. That as the other women. Make it there. They find an angel. Sitting on that stone. Mary Magdalene. Doesn't seem to see that at all. It is as if she. Comes close to the tomb. Sees the stone. Is rolled away. And immediately. Her mind goes. To where it has been. All these three days.

[11:10] He's dead. And now my worst fear. She thinks has happened. They have taken the body of Jesus. She doesn't investigate.

She turns. And runs. There's no thought. About how. Many times. Jesus said. I must go to Jerusalem. Suffer at the hands. Of the religious leaders. Die. And rise again. Jesus had said it.

Many times. But that was not her thought. She saw her savior die. And all she could think. Was this. Savior of hers. Body. Was now gone. She runs first. Well she runs only. To Peter and John. They are the only two.

[12:09] Who come to the grave. At this point. And so she runs. So now the grave is open.

At least that much. We do know. If the grave had remained closed. No one would have known. If the body was. The body of Jesus. Was still there.

There. This goes to show. That it was necessary. For this first step. To happen. That stone. Had to be rolled away.

If no one. Had seen. Jesus rise. How could we have known. That Jesus was alive. You've heard the illustration. Of Schrodinger's cat. The cat.

That's. May. Or may not be in the box. Because. The cat is in a box. That's sealed. Is the cat there. Well we put it there. But the box is sealed.

[13:06] Is the cat still there. We'd have to open the box. It's. It's. It's a. Worldly puzzle. But the same thing. Would have been true. If that stone.

Hadn't been rolled away. Is Jesus still there. If they happen to have seen. Jesus. Would it have really been Jesus.

If the grave was still closed. And so. Here. At this point. The grave is open. And we can know. We can investigate. Whether the tomb was empty. But Mary. Didn't do that. She ran. To get Peter and John. Thinking.

The worst. And as we read. Peter and John. Take off. Running. They run to the tomb. Themselves. John.

[14:02] Outruns Peter. Probably. Because he's younger. But it says. He doesn't go in. That's probably. In deference. To Peter. Peter's been seen.

As the. Lead. Disciple. And so. He gets there. Stops. At the doorway. Waits.

For Peter. Peter. When. Peter gets there. He's first. In the tomb. It's interesting.

The first thing. They notice. Is that there's. Definitely. No body. You don't hear. Peter and John. Came up. Coming out. And say. Mary. What's wrong with you?

He's still there. There's no body. And at this point. Peter. And John. Become.

[15:03] The first. True. Legal. Witnesses. To the resurrection. Now they don't understand it all. As a resurrection. At this point. But they could testify.

All their lives. I was in that tomb. And there was no body. They could also.

Testify. That the body. Had not been stolen. Thieves. Grave robbers. Would not have left.

The situation. That was left there. Thieves. Might have. If they were in a hurry. Would have taken the body. And run. Grave clothes.

And all. The weight of the body. The weight of the 75 pounds. Of ointment. The weight of the clothes. That would have been difficult. Oh.

[16:01] But maybe they just. Unwrapped the body. But no. Peter and John. Were both. In amazement. They would not have been. In amazement. If they had come in.

And found. Grave clothes. Everywhere. Ointment. All over the floor. No. They came in. And they examined.

The grave clothes. Scripture says here. That. John believed. Did Peter not believe?

Luke 24. 12. Says. But Peter rose. And ran. To the tomb. Stooping. And looking in. He saw the. Linen clothes. By themselves. And he went home. Marveling.

At what had happened. Not. Not. Somebody took the body. Not. The body. Still there. But as they went in.

[16:59] And saw the grave clothes. There was obviously. No Jesus there. It was obvious. That his body. Had not been stolen. Both. Both.

Recognized. That as they looked. At the grave clothes. That something. Amazing. Had happened. What did John believe? What response.

Did Peter's marveling. Bring. As I mentioned. The body is not there. It had not been spoken. Stolen. But they believed.

A more amazing thing. Had to have happened. Now. I say this. And I am convinced. They didn't grasp. Even a part. Of what they were even thinking.

But I think that they saw. That something more than. Lazarus's resurrection. Had taken place. Now. That's just 20 chapters. Earlier. Or nine chapters. I said 20.

[17:57] Nine chapters. Earlier. In the book of John. In that. Jesus raised Lazarus. From the dead. He said. Lazarus came forth. Come forth. And he comes out. And he had to command them.

To unwrap him. He couldn't unwrap himself. Here was a resurrection. Where no one had to. Unwrap him.

And as I mentioned. At Lazarus resurrection. They. Jesus had to say. Lazarus. Come forth. He couldn't do it. On his own. Tomb. This. Jesus had been dead.

Sealed in a tomb. For three days. With a Roman seal. And Roman guards outside. No one was there. To move the stone. And call him out. No one was there.

With the authority. To call the son of God. Back to life. John 10. 18. No one takes it from me. But I lay down. He's talking about his own life. No one takes it from me.

[18:54] But I lay it down. Of my own accord. I have authority. To lay it down. And I have authority. To take it up. This charge I have received. From my father. Something different.

Than Lazarus's. Resurrection. Had happened here. As they stood there. Beholding the wrappings. Not disheveled. Folded.

And put. And right. They see. That something amazing. Had happened. They may. They may. Have begun.

To remember. That Jesus said. He would die. And rise again. But John says. Here in verse 9. For as yet. They did not.

Understand. The scripture. That he must. Rise from the dead. Dead. The old testament. Had been talking about it. All along. Psalm 1610.

[19:49] The psalm. That pastor Tripp. Read this morning. Isaiah. 53. Verses 10 through 12. Hosea. 6. 2. After two days.

He will revive us. On the third day. He will rise up. That we may. Live before him. He will raise us up. That we may. Live before him. They may have begun.

But they didn't understand. All these things. And then in verse 10. It says. The disciples went back. To their homes. They didn't quite know.

What to make. Of what they had now seen. They know that something. Had happened. But they haven't seen Jesus. And as I mentioned.

At the beginning. This story. Is not about Mary. This story. Is about Jesus. But this story. Uses Mary. In an amazing way.

[20:45] We find this woman. Who seems to have. Who seems to have. Presumed. Upon the facts. That she saw. Presumed. That things were. As she had imagined them.

But now. The Lord uses. Her. To point out. Some of the truths. That others. Couldn't see. While the disciples. Went back to their home.

In verses 11 and 12. Mary stood weeping. Outside the tomb. And as she wept. She stooped. To look into the tomb. Now remember.

Stooping. To look into the tomb. Changed. John's thinking. Going into the tomb. And looking further. Changed Peter. And John's thinking. But here she stands.

Outside the tomb. Weeping. And she stoops. To look in. And she sees. Two angels. Sitting.
[21:41] In white. Where the body of Jesus. Had been laying. One at the head. And one at the feet. Mark says. That.

Jesus. Or Peter. That Mary knew. Exactly where they laid. Jesus. Here she stands. Weeping alone.
Looking in the tomb. Sees two angels. Where Jesus had. Had been laid. And those angels say.
Woman. Why are you weeping? And apparently.

She does not recognize them. As angels. Their presence. At the head and feet. Of where Jesus had laid. Was not a coincidence.

They. They were. Defining the very spot. Where Jesus had laid. And Mary knew it. And as she looked. At that spot. It did not catch her attention.

[22:40] That there was no body there. She's still thinking. They have taken my Lord. Peter and John.

Had been convinced. That something. Marvelous. Had happened there. Though they didn't. Fully understand. Yet. The presence.

Of the angels. In the very spot. Where Jesus had laid. And their questions. Meant that Mary.

Should. Have responded. Differently. To what she saw.

But light. Didn't break through. Into her mind yet. Their words. Were a gentle rebuke. But she does not see. What she should have seen. And continues. To insist.

That someone. Has taken. The body. Of my Lord. Having said this. She turned around. And saw Jesus standing.

[23:37] But she did not know. That it was Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Then says to her. Woman. Why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?

And supposing. Him to be the gardener. She said to him. Sir. If you've carried him away. Tell me where you've laid him. And I will take him away. I will take him away. Jesus knows why Mary is weeping.

He knows. That she's weeping. Because he had died. And she. Still thinks. Someone is taking his body.

Want you to notice. That Jesus does not say. What are you seeking? She's just told the angels. She is seeking. The dead body of Jesus.

He asks. Who are you seeking? So she answers him.

[24:43] I'm seeking the dead body of Jesus. Jesus. The fact that Jesus told his disciples. That he would die.

And rise from the dead. I'm going to list several facts. In a row here. The fact that Jesus told his disciples. That he would die. And rise from the dead. The fact that the Old Testament.

Said that the Messiah must die. And be raised. Has not been realized. By her yet. The fact that the grave was open.

Has not helped her yet. The fact that the body of Jesus. Was gone. But the grave clothes. Speak of something miraculous.

Happening there. Has not changed her thinking yet. The fact that angels. Had emphasized. Those empty grave clothes.

[25:39] Have not helped her yet. The fact that Jesus is standing right. In front of her. Has not helped her yet.

In front of her. In front of her. Mary is stuck. Mary is stuck. Because of the weakness. Of her flesh. She's stuck. In dead.

Dead. Is the only thought. That is ringing in her mind. She was at the cross. She saw him die. She saw. Where they laid him.

In that tomb. She saw them. Roll that rock in place. Dead. Dead. Dead. Dead. My Lord is gone. He's dead. Until.

Jesus said to her. Mary. Everything changed. When Jesus called her name. She answered.

[26:41] Rabboni. John talks about how she speaks to him in Arabic. Rabboni. It was her native language. She used a term of endearment. She used a term that would have been reserved.

For the most important rabbis. Remember earlier. She said. I'm looking for the body. Of my Lord. Now she exclaims.

My teacher. She recognized. The voice of her shepherd. Jesus said. In John 10.

Three. My sheep. Hear my voice. She heard. Jesus's voice. Mary.

Is no longer. Stuck. Now. Now. The stone is rolled away. That makes sense. Now. The body of Jesus is gone.

[27:40] That makes sense. Now. The presence of the grave clothes. Makes sense. The angels. Make sense.

What Jesus had said. Woman. Why are you weeping? Whom do you seek? All makes sense. And all this happened. To show. That Jesus was truly. Raised from the dead. If the stone was closed.

No one would even know. If the stone. Or grave was opened. But the body was still there. He wouldn't be raised.

If the rags were a mess. You would always wonder. If someone had stolen him. Or if. If there was no body or rags at all. They would have wondered. If he had been stolen. But all these events.

[28:45] Go to prove. Through the. The. The misery of one woman. Now other things also. But in this account. The misery of one woman.

Prove. That Jesus. Had truly risen from the dead. And her reaction. Well we get a reaction better. From Matthew. Or Luke rather. From Matthew. From Matthew. Or Luke. Her reaction after saying. My rabbi. Is to fall to his feet. Grab his feet.

But John 20. 17. Says to. It says. Jesus said to her. Do not cling to me. For I have not yet. Ascended to the father. But go to my brothers. And say to them.

I am ascending. To my father. And your father. To my God. And your God. Now I want to point out. Something here. I grew up reading the King James.

[29:41] And the King James. Says in verse 17. Stop touching me. And it's. Really not a good translation. Of those words. The ESV and others. Get it much better.

When they say. Stop clinging to me. It's not that Jesus. Couldn't be touched. Jesus himself. Encouraged the disciples. To touch him. When he appears. In seven or eight days. Finally with Thomas. With them. And he says. My hands.

Thomas. Reach hither. Put your fingers. In the palms of my hand. Thrust your arm. In my side. Be not doubting. Doubting. But believing.

There was nothing wrong. With Mary touching Jesus. We see here. Just another instance. Of the mercy. Of the Lord Jesus. As Mary has now realized.

[30:39] She has news. That everyone needs to know. Don't stay here. Go tell my brothers. It's so sweet.

The words that Jesus uses. Uses. Go tell my brothers. Not my slaves. Not my students. He didn't even use the term.

Disciples. Which would have been a fine term. Is go tell my brothers. His desire is that. Folks know. That he is indeed. Alive. You have to let me go. Stop clinging to me. He's alive. He's alive. He's alive. He's alive. And then he makes this phrase.

He says that he is ascending. To my father and your father. To my God. And your God. Two things I'll point out from that. One is.

[31:38] The relationship. Is changed. He's already called. His disciples. His brothers. But now. He goes further.

And says the relationship between. Them. And the father. Them. And God. Same. Has changed. He says.

I go to my father. And your father. To my God. And your God. Now there's a lot. That he does not. Does not teach us here. But in the places of scripture. We know that. Because of the work of Christ. When he saves us. We're made to be in union. With. With Christ. We are one with him. And all that. He. Has gained. Through his work. Is ours. Because we are in Christ. And that's part of what he's sharing here. Now. Because Christ has risen from the dead. The relationship with God.

[32:35] God has changed. We are now. Enjoying God. As Jesus enjoys God. Because we are in him. He is. Not only Jesus's father.

But he is our father. He is not only Jesus's God. He is God. But. As the God man. He is. Jesus's God. And God is our God. That relationship has changed.

But he's also said. I have to ascend. Now it'll be. A few weeks. Before he does. But you can praise the Lord. We mentioned this just recently.

In a prayer. You can praise the Lord. That Jesus didn't stay on earth. Now you say. Oh. What. It would be most dear. If Jesus would stay.

No. He's sending his spirit. And we need his spirit. But he's also going. What is he going to do? He's going to ascend. And he's going to be seated.

[33:31] At the right hand. Of God the father. And you remember. The scripture I read. For the pastoral prayer. That's the picture. There. Exalted in the heavens.

Glorious. All power. He's gone. There. To be exalted. Above all things. But not only that. He's gone. There. There. To serve us. He intercedes for us. Those who have trusted Christ. We still struggle with sin.

But he. Pleads his blood. Before the throne. Five bleeding wounds. He bears. All of our sin is covered. Because of his intercession.

And he prays for us. We don't know how to pray. As we ought. But instead. We pray. He takes our prayers. And makes them right. Before the father. He asks the perfect things. The things we would ask for.

[34:32] If we had the wisdom. And knowledge of God. He has. He has ascended. That he might be our intercessor. And then of course. He'll come again. And Mary goes.

Back to the disciples. And. I don't think she whispered this. I think she walked in the room. And said. I have seen the Lord. The best news. This woman.

In whom seven devils. Had resided. And been cast out. Was the first. Human being. To see our Lord Jesus.

And she carried the news. You can read on. Time's sake. I chose not to do that. You can read on. The next verses. And that evening.

[35:36] Jesus appears to many of the disciples. But Thomas isn't present. And they see for himself. They're trembling. Till they see him.

And then. A few verses later. Thomas is in the midst. And Jesus says that. Put your finger in my hands. And Thomas.

Thomas. Believes. Christian. What do you do. With the resurrection. Of Christ.

Well first thing you should do. Is you should encourage yourself. In this gospel. It's true. There is. Irrefutable. Irrefutable. Proof. That Jesus. Is alive. Be assured.

[36:37] Of the gospel. Because it's true. What should you do with this? I think you should also. Be encouraged. There was a point.

For all of us. All of us. Who now know Christ. There was a point. For all of us. We were just like Mary. The truth. Was right.

In front of us. And we didn't see it. Until. God called. Your name. Quickened you.

Made you alive. Mary. David. Put your name there. Let this be a reminder.

To you. That that power. Of the gospel. Has the power. To open the eyes. Of the blind. And he did that. For Mary. And if you're trusting Christ.

[37:36] He's done it. For you. Stand. In your new relationship. You are now. A child of God.

A son. Of the father. Stand in that new relationship. What should you do with this.

This reminder. Remind your brothers and sisters. That he is alive. We all need.

Encouragement. We all need. The truth of the gospel. Brought before our minds. When it looks like. There is nothing. But death. Death. Death.

Death. Death. All around. Jesus is alive. I have seen. The Lord. Encourage one another.

[38:34] And then. Exactly what he said to do. With the resurrection. Go. And tell the world. Make disciples.

Jesus is alive. Friend. If you're here. You don't know. Of your. Soul's destiny.

Because Jesus is alive. You have hope. He's here. To offer you. This new relationship. With God. Let not.

Doubting in the resurrection. Cause you to stumble. He is risen. Amen.

Let's pray. Father. We thank you. For your word. Thank you for the truth. That is here. Thank you. That you have been gracious. To people.

[39:34] To people who should have seen the truth. And you were powerful. To those who didn't see the truth. And father. Those of us who know you. Can stand before you.

And say. You have been. Gracious. And you have been. Powerful to us. Help us to see the truth. Of the gospel. Help us to rest in it. Remind ourselves of it.

Remind one another of it. And lord. May we go and tell. The lord. Is alive. I pray that you would be with us. And lord. If there's one. That doesn't know you.

Today. May today. Be the day. Where they see the truth. That Jesus. Is indeed alive. And the suffering. That he bore. On Calvary. The death. That he experienced.

Being buried. And raising again. Is to provide salvation. For all who will trust in him. And I pray. That you would draw. These. Ones. To you. Today.

[40:27] We pray in Jesus name. Amen.