

4.07.19 ~ John 20:19-31, Jesus Appears to the Eleven

Read John 20:19-23... It is now Sunday evening and the resurrected Lord is showing Himself to His disciples, who are hiding from the Jews at some undisclosed location in Jerusalem.

In **verse 19** it says the doors are shut [Gk meaning here is that the doors are locked]. The Lord has been crucified, and buried in a tomb, the disciples are hiding, afraid that the temple police will find them and arrest them, and they might end up dead like Jesus.

While they are hiding, Jesus appears to them in the locked room. The Lord's resurrected body was not bound by the same limitations as mortal bodies, and it would seem that He came right through the walls of the house in which they hid (very likely, the upper room where they had celebrated passover).

They probably thought Jesus was a ghost, but He said to them, "Peace be with you," after which He showed them His wounds in His hands, feet, and side.

In Luke 24:39, Jesus says, "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."

The disciples rejoiced, realizing it was the Lord, and again Jesus says, "Peace be with you," then He adds, "as the Father has sent Me, I also send you," He then breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained." But what does that mean?

Did Jesus give the Holy Spirit to the disciples at that time? I don't believe so, for the Scriptures tell us so (see **John 14:16-17, 25-26; 15:26-27; Acts 1:4-5, 8**).

I believe Christ was looking ahead to Pentecost when the Holy Spirit would come upon the believers gathered together in the upper room; for He had told His disciples they would receive the Helper, the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Spirit, after He had returned to the Father.

On the day after Jesus' baptism in the Jordan, John said (**John 1:32-34**), he saw the Spirit of God descend and remain on Jesus; for it was the Spirit of God who set Jesus apart as the anointed one of God, the Messiah.

And it was on Pentecost, ten days after Jesus' return to the Father, that He asked the Father to send the Holy Spirit, to seal and indwell the believers in Jerusalem.

Back to our text, **John 20:21-22**. Jesus did not send out the disciples at that time, in fact, He had told them to stay in Jerusalem until the gift of the Spirit came to them from the Father. Neither did they receive the Spirit of God at that time, for they weren't commissioned to take the message of salvation to the world, until after His resurrection, just before His ascension back into heaven.

Look at **John 20:23**... What Jesus is not saying here is that the apostles, and the other followers of Christ who were there, have been given the authority to forgive sins; for Scripture is very clear (cf. Mark 2:1-12) that only God can forgive sins.

What Jesus is saying is that true Christians can confidently declare that anyone who genuinely repents of their sins and believes in Christ will have their sins forgiven by God; and anyone who rejects Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior will indeed die in their sins, as Jesus declared to the Jews (**John 8:24**), "unless you believe that I am He [God's Son, both Savior and Lord], you will die in your sins."

The authority given to the Church, to all true believers, comes from the Word of God, as we proclaim the message of forgiveness through Christ alone.

Read John 20:24-25... Clearly, not all of the apostles were present that first Sunday evening when Jesus appears to them, for Thomas, called Didymus [Twin], was not there with the others].

We do not know why Thomas was not there, but when the apostles later told him about seeing the Lord, we know that Thomas made a strong statement that he wouldn't believe them, not until he could touch the nail wounds on Jesus' hands or the spear wound on His side.

Read John 20:26-29... We are told here that after a week, on the following Sunday, the Lord came to them again, while they were hiding in a room with the doors locked; but this time, Thomas was present.

The Lord immediately invited Thomas to touch His wounds, so that he might believe. We are not told as to whether or not Thomas reached out and touched the wounds in Christ's body, but more importantly, we have Thomas's strong confession of faith and belief in the risen Christ, God's Son, as the Messiah (**verse 28**), "My Lord and my God!"

Jesus accepts Thomas's confession of faith, and then declares that in the future, after Christ has returned to heaven, those who will believe in Him without seeing Him, will indeed be blessed [not just a feeling of happiness, but instead, an assurance that they have been accepted by God, having been made righteous through Christ].

2Corinthians 5:21, "He [God] made Him [Jesus Christ] who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

Hebrews 9:22, "According to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."

Hebrews 10:3-7, "But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Therefore, when He [God's Son, Savior] comes into the world, He says, 'Sacrifice and offering

You have not desired, but a body You have prepared for Me. Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.” **10**, “By this will we have been sanctified [made holy] through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” **12**, “He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God.” **14**, “For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.” He then says, **17**, “And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”

Read John 20:30-31... These accounts of the life and ministry of Jesus are written here (and the Synoptics), as first person narratives of the sovereign revelation of God, through Christ the Lord, in order to provide forgiveness for sins, and eternal life, to those who are being saved.

1John 1:1-3, “From the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life —and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us— what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.”

And although neither you nor I were there to witness the words and works of Jesus Christ, or to see the risen Lord, we have this authoritative, inerrant, eternal, and supernatural, first person report, that we might believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and by believing we may have eternal life in His name, for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord (for the forgiveness of sins), will be saved.

Have you trusted in Jesus Christ’s death to set you free from the penalty of sin, and His resurrection to provide you with eternal life? If not, why not?

God loves you so much, and He turns no one away!

Look, if your heart is speaking to you today, don’t put it off, don’t delay.

Right now, right here, genuinely repent of your sins, confessing Jesus Christ as Lord, believing in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, for He is the Savior, and He will grant you forgiveness and eternal life.

Pastor Mike

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