

John 20:19-29

“Life In His Name”

I. Intro.

II. Vs. 19-23 Receive the Holy Spirit

III. Vs. 24-29 In plain sight

I. Intro.

In John chapter 20 the first 23 verses conclude the events on the first Resurrection Sunday but our focus this morning won't be on those important truths instead we will look at how Jesus handled the doubters and unbelievers of those truths. On that first day four groups came forth having personally witnessed Jesus' resurrection. When word had gotten out that Peter had we come the 19th verse where we find the ten in the upper room with the doors locked for fear of the Jews.

II. Vs. 19-23 Receive the Holy Spirit

Vs. 19 While it may seem a bit odd to reference those who gathered that night as “doubters” I believe that John regards them as such at least on some level as he mentions that they gathered together with the door lock in fear of the Jews who were seven miles away. So to this group of “doubters” Jesus' first words to those locked up in the upper room was “*Peace be with you.*” I think if I was Jesus I might have shown up in the room and said, “*Where have you all been?*”

You might expect a rebuke from Jesus when He meets up with them but instead He offers His peace. Jesus handled their doubt because of fear with the antidote of love which turned their doubt to gladness. **This is the resurrection gift of Jesus to all who place their continual trust in Him, PEACE. I'm so thankful that twice Jesus revealed His wounds to His disciples so that**

we know that this wasn't some were hallucination that what they saw really was the risen Lord.

Vs. 20-23 John tells us the second reason that He appeared to them that evening was that they may receive the Holy Spirit and become **in dwelt**. In Acts they will be **immersed** in the Holy Spirit. After offering them His peace, He reveals His presence to them, invites them to continue His mission and then breathes life into them. In John 14:6 Jesus had said with regards to the Holy Spirit that He shall be "IN" them which suggests that He wasn't at that time and here we see Him breathing on them saying to them "*Receive the Holy Spirit*". Notice the curious words 21-22 as Jesus commissions them and then breathes on them and tells them to receive the Holy Spirit. These disciples were already following Jesus, but they weren't yet "*Born Again*" as He hadn't (before this) died for their sins but here they became born again. This reminds us of the passage in Genesis 2:7 where we are told that "*the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.*" This is the same word they used when they translated this passage from Hebrew to Greek.

III. Vs. 24-29 In plain sight

Vs. 24-26 In these verses we are introduced to the most famous of the "doubters" Thomas. It is he who in light of the new testimony says, "*Unless I see . . . I will not believe*". But to be perfectly honest Thomas' own confession doesn't make him a doubter instead it makes him an unbeliever who will NOT accept the valid testimony of others. ***I find it interesting that though John records Jesus' victory over sickness, sin, evil men, death and sorrow he saves the fact that Jesus can even conquers unbelief, as it is the faith of Thomas that is the climax of the gospel.*** Thomas:

- Refused to say he understood when he didn't
- Refused to pretend to believe when he didn't
- Refused to say he understood and believed, but when he does believe he goes all the way by proclaiming Jesus to be both Lord and God.

Thomas was a practical guy when he was faced with the possibility of death at following Jesus he said, *“Alright then let's go die with Him”*. When Jesus said to the disciples that He was going to prepare a place for them but that they knew where He was going Thomas belted out *“No we don't!”* Thomas won't say he knows if he doesn't, he won't say he is willing to die if he isn't and he won't say he believes unless he does, he is a real straight shooter. Thomas lost seven days of peace he could have enjoyed because he wouldn't trust Jesus. For seven days 10 of the fellows were rejoicing, victorious but Thomas was bummed acting as if all was lost, hopeless that's always the price for doubt. When the others were telling him that Jesus was alive he was persistent in his unbelief. While Thomas name is almost always given the sir name of *“Doubting Thomas”* notice that Jesus doesn't rebuke him for doubting. This is further proof that Thomas' problem was not doubting as Jesus speaks to him concerning his unbelief. The difference between these two things is:

- **Doubt is an intellectual problem:** We want to believe, but the faith is overwhelmed by problems and questions. Doubt says, *“**I cannot believe! There are too many problems!**”*
- **Unbelief is a moral problem:** We simply will not believe. Thomas would not believe the reports of the other Christians that Jesus Christ was alive. Verse 25 in the Greek says that they *“kept saying to him”* that they had seen the Lord Jesus Christ alive. Unbelief says, *“**I will not believe unless you give me the evidence I ask for!**”* In fact, in the Greek text, Thomas words include a double negative as it literally says he said: *“**I positively will not believe!**”*

Thomas' solution to this was to lay down conditions upon his belief and insisted Jesus prove Himself to him. He had been there when Jesus raised Lazarus, so why should he question our Lord's own resurrection? And all of this happened to him because he was not there on the Lords Day. Thomas whose name means twin has many twins in this today. But I'm impressed by the

fact that at least he showed up the next week. The other ten men had told Thomas that they had seen the Lord's hands and side so Thomas made that the test. How gracious of Jesus to stoop to our level of experience in order to lift us where we ought to be. There is no record that Thomas ever accepted the Lord's invitation to do what Thomas had requested; perhaps Thomas needed no more proof! Verse 29 indicates this as Thomas' own testimony was that his belief did not come from his touching Jesus, but from his seeing Jesus. When someone says, "*I will not believe unless*" **they are already admitting that they don't believe and what they believe in is the validity of the test or experiment which they have devised!** There are far too many Christians that don't show up to the meeting and end up not seeing Jesus. **Thomas missed church, he missed Sunday service and because of this he went through a week of doubt and despair while the others were glad.**

Thomas has always had the rap of being called doubting Thomas, but few realize that it was Thomas who said in John 11:16 "*Let us also go, that we may die with Him.*" Thomas was a fellow who was willing to go for it and while all the other fellows were huddled together in a room with locked doors "***for fear of the Jews***" (verse 19) Thomas was out in the open boldly walking around. He may have wanted to make sure of the resurrection but don't associate that with him of not being willing to stand up for Jesus. **Thomas had shattered expectations that the person who he followed was dead and he didn't want to again trust as he was afraid that his hopes might be shattered again.** Have you pulled back afraid to dream because you don't want to be disappointed? It was 8 days later that Jesus appeared to them again and I wonder if they drug Thomas around with them to make sure he didn't miss seeing Jesus the next time He showed up.

Saint's sometimes that's what it takes for us just keep hanging around those who are hurting and have lost hope and sooner or later the Lord will show up and reveal Himself to them.

Vs. 27-29 Jesus says to Thomas in verse 27 "*Reach your finger here and look at My hands; and reach your hand here and put it into My side.*" Go back a few verses to verse 25 and remember that Thomas said those words when he was with the other disciples, but you may have noticed that there was no mention of Jesus being there when Thomas said them; here we see a powerful truth that Jesus was there all along. **Doubt and unbelief doesn't keep Jesus from seeking us it keeps us from seeing Jesus!** Jesus' words was to all of them, "*Do not be unbelieving, but believing.*" What a great word not only for the Thomas' out there but for all of us this morning that even when we don't sense His presence, even during our times of doubt He is right next to us. Open your hearts to Him He is here, He is as close as your breath to you. Notice Thomas' conclusion as he said, "*My Lord and My God!*" **It was not only the physical evidence that caused that affirmation, I believe that when Thomas realized that when he was unbelieving and had said those words Jesus was there.**