

LIFE IN HIS NAME THE TRIUMPHANT LIFE

John 20

We are going to be doing John 20 today and 21 next week. If you've been with us for a while, we have been working our way methodically through the gospel of John for over a year now. The series that we are doing is called "Life in His Name." It comes out of the theme of this gospel. John tells us the purpose, actually, if you'll look at the end of chapter 20. We are going to preach that today, and it is: **"I write these things so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ and find life in his name."** John has written this book because in him, in Christ, is life and light, and when we come to faith in Christ, his light comes into us and his life comes into us.

Last week we looked at the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. We stared and beheld the glory of Christ as he was lifted up. We saw his glory revealed, to provide the forgiveness for our sins. Today we are going to look at John chapter 20, where we see the resurrection of Jesus Christ. There are three resurrection encounters, then it ends with the purpose of this book.

I'm going to read the first portion, verses 1-10, pray for us, then we are going to look at the glory of Jesus, the triumph of Jesus, the victory of Jesus revealed through his resurrection. Let's look together at verses 1-10 of chapter 20:

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. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved (referring to John), and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." (Notice the "we" there. She wasn't alone. There were other women with her). 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 cloths lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first (John), 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.

Let's pray. Father, we pray that you would pour out your Spirit upon us as we look to your word this morning. Jesus, we thank you that you are alive and that you give life to all who turn to you. We pray, God, that you would turn our eyes to Jesus this morning. For those who believe, that our faith would be strengthened; and for those who do not, that faith would come for the very first time. Jesus, you are victorious. You are triumphant, and we have victory and triumph in you. We pray that the power of the resurrection would rest upon us, that the power that raised Jesus from the dead even now would be raising life in our souls. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

In John chapter 10, if you remember, Jesus described himself as the good shepherd. He said the following: "I am the good shepherd and I lay down my life for the sheep. No one takes my life away from me. I have the authority to lay it down and I have the authority to raise it back up." As we enter into John 20 this morning, we see the power of Jesus to raise himself up from the dead. The good shepherd is alive, and he appears three times in John's gospel to reveal his glory in chapter 20. We are going to see in each of these encounters, and we learn through the resurrection of Jesus, that he is victorious. **Jesus is triumphant. He is triumphant over the grave, over death, over darkness, over sin, over Satan. Jesus has defeated everything evil in this world through his resurrection glory, and through faith in Jesus we have victory too. That's the claim of Scripture.**

As we look at this account this morning, we are going to discover four areas where Jesus brings triumph into our life. The first account is with Mary Magdalene, and we see that our risen Lord triumphs over sorrow.

I. Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, our risen Lord triumphs over sorrow.

Verses 11-18:

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. 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 do not know where they have laid him." Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not 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 you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have

Life In His Name - The Triumphant Life

John 20 | Sunday, August 13, 2017 | By Stefan Bomberger



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.'" Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"—and that he had said these things to her.

The resurrection of Jesus triumphs over sorrow. We see in this scene that Mary is crying. She went to the tomb and her assumption still at this point is that his body has been stolen. This would have been *devastating* for her. This is a woman who has given her whole life to following Jesus, to supporting Jesus.

We learn in Luke chapter 8 that Jesus had encountered her and delivered her from seven demons. Her entire life was in bondage to the evil one before Jesus showed up. She experienced deliverance and freedom and life and hope in Jesus Christ.

There she is. Last week I didn't draw attention to her because we were looking at Mary, the mother of Jesus. Look over at chapter 19, verse 25: "...but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene." She was there when he was pierced through, when the spear went into his side. She was there to watch her hopes and her dreams die. The one who experienced freedom and light is now in darkness.

Then she goes in the very early morning to visit her Lord, and he's gone. She is weeping and she is sad. Time and time again the angels ask her, Jesus asked her, and she doesn't know what's going on. She is overcome with grief. "Mary, why are you weeping?" "What a foolish question. I'm weeping because they killed Jesus! My hope was in Jesus and he's dead and he's gone. My dreams have died here at Calvary."

Then Jesus shows up and says, "Mary." **She recognizes his voice and her sorrow is overcome with joy. Jesus is alive. Her sorrow is overcome with joy and no one can take that joy from her.** This is *exactly* what Jesus prophesied would happen. Flip to chapter 16, the farewell discourse. I want to read a couple verses to you. Jesus is telling his disciples, "I'm going to go away. I'm going to come back." "What does he mean by he's going away? He's coming back? We can't follow what he's talking about here."

Then in verse 19, Jesus asked them:

"Is this what you are asking yourselves, what I meant by saying, 'A little while and you will not see me, and again a little while and you will see me'? Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep

Life In His Name - The Triumphant Life

John 20 | Sunday, August 13, 2017 | By Stefan Bomberger



(she is weeping) and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy.

Your sorrow will turn into joy at the resurrection of Jesus. Our sorrow turns into joy. Verse 21:

When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.

No one! Amen! **Jesus is alive! And he turns our sorrow into joy. Whom are you seeking this morning? Because if you are seeking Jesus, no one can take your joy from you. No one. He's alive. You follow a risen Lord.** No religion can say that but Christianity. He is alive. Think of all the other ones. Great, wise teachers – they're dead. Not Jesus, not so. It makes all the difference. Because as we've said before, Jesus, didn't say, "This is the way. This is the truth. This is the life." He said, "I am the way. I am the truth. And I am the life." And when he died, he came back to life. He is the life! In him is life and light, and the darkness that overtook Mary was overcome with light.

There is a sorrow that plagues this planet because of sin -- death. Go to any funeral and we feel it. We feel the enemy creeping upon us. It's the most unnatural thing that's ever come upon our human race. Don't believe the lies. It is *not* a natural thing. When you look at your loved one in that tomb: **This should not be.** Right? This should not be! If it was natural, I wouldn't be weeping right now. Just like when a woman is giving birth, it is a lot of pain!

But when Jesus came back, joy broke in. And listen church: The resurrection becomes a paradigm for our own spiritual life, one day our own future resurrection. We even sang about it earlier. The earth awaits to be made new. The resurrection of this entire planet is coming – when all sorrow will be overcome with joy because Jesus has defeated the grave and Jesus has defeated death! Sorrow – out of here into the lake of fire – gone, darkness gone. We won't even need the sun anymore because God will be your light forever. Through the resurrection of Jesus, Jesus triumphs over sorrow.

II. Through his resurrection power, our risen Lord triumphs over fear.

Verses 19-23.

Life In His Name - The Triumphant Life

John 20 | Sunday, August 13, 2017 | By Stefan Bomberger



On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."

Do you see where the disciples are when Jesus appears? Where are they? They are hiding. They are not concocting a really good story to build a movement to take over the world at this point. They are not sitting around, "Hey, maybe we could just say he's alive. Then we could turn this whole thing around!" No, they are afraid. The door is locked. They are hiding, looking out for their own skin. The shepherd has been struck and the sheep have been scattered. They are afraid. They are not thinking about turning the world upside down for Jesus. They are just looking to not die like Jesus at this point.

But Jesus walks through that locked door. He walks right through it in his glorified body. I don't know how that works, but he walks right through. He's got flesh and bone like you and me, but he walks through the locked door! He stands before them and says, "Brothers, peace be upon you." His peace drives out their fear. His peace rests upon their souls and he breathes on them like God breathed into our first father Adam and gave them life. The breath of the Spirit of God comes upon them and he says this: "As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you." And as he breathes, the fog of fear is pushed out of their souls and the light of Jesus and the courage and the boldness and the power of Jesus found in the Holy Spirit grips their souls, and the doors are unlocked and opened and the disciples go to reach the world.

You know, this is essentially John's version of the Great Commission here. You know what I mean by that. In Matthew 28 they are separate occasions, but here is the account where we are sent to go. In Matthew 28: "Go and make disciples." In Mark, the additional ending says, "Go and preach to all creation. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you." We are a sent people of God. Jesus was sent on a mission to save the world and now he is sending you.

The church is apostolic. That means a lot of things to a lot of people, but the Greek term here "as the Father has sent me" is "apostello." That's where we get the term apostle. "Sent one" - apostles

Life In His Name - The Triumphant Life

John 20 | Sunday, August 13, 2017 | By Stefan Bomberger



are sent ones. “You guys, as I was the apostle par excellence, as I was the Great Sent One, the great apostle of your faith, now I’m sending you apostles to go. And I’m sending the apostolic Church to the world to be planted through *all* the nations -- that in *every* nation, tribe, and tongue, there would be a witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, that Jesus is alive.”

Do you ever wonder why we worship on Sundays? “I thought they did this thing on Saturday.” Notice that Jesus shows up on the first day of the week. Chapter 20, verse 19: “on the evening of the first day of the week.” We worship on Sundays to remind ourselves this: This is the Lord’s Day. He’s alive! He showed up on the first day of the week and church, he’s going to show up here and all around the world on the first day of the week to bless his people with his presence because Jesus is alive! Jesus is alive, and church, we go.

But there’s a problem, and it’s the same problem that they had 2000 years ago – it’s that big f-word. And I’m not talking about the four-letter f-word. It is a four-letter word. It should be a four letter word in the church -- let me put it that way. “Fear.” Fear! We are plagued with fear, aren’t we? How many decisions do you make in your life – be honest with yourself – that are driven by fear? How often is it fear that keeps you from going? Most of the time, right? That’s why we have the door locked. That’s why it’s safe in here, but out there – sheep among wolves, right? Fear.

What is the antidote to fear? The resurrection of Jesus with the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus has triumphed over our fears! Jesus is alive and he goes with you, before you. “Behold I am with you, even to the end of the age, and you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you to be my witnesses.” If you are feeling fear this morning, God come. I pray, Lord, right now, fill us with your Spirit and drive out the fear. Lord, we want to be driven by boldness, by courage, by fortitude, by strength. The Spirit of God will give it to you. Seek him. Seek the fullness of the Spirit, because as Jesus breathes afresh upon you, as he pours out his Spirit on you, the fear will go away. The fear that kept them locked up – they turned the world upside down when they were filled with the Spirit. And through the resurrection of Jesus, he said this: “When I go back to the Father, you will get the Spirit, and it’s better than if I was even here right now.” **Seek the Spirit.** Through the resurrection of Jesus, our risen Lord triumphs over fear.

III. Through the resurrection of Jesus, our risen Lord triumphs over doubt.

Verses 24-29:

Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."

Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came (you're seeing a pattern here) and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, (I'm sure he turned his gaze and looked him straight in the eyes, aware of the conversation, though physically he wasn't present -- the omniscience of Christ on display) "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." (NIV translates that: "Stop doubting. Stop doubting but believe.") Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Ever hear of a doubting Thomas? It comes right from here. Thomas does not get a lot of face time. Really, most of the disciples don't get a lot of script. They are just kind of collectively bumbling around. Let's just be real. Until they get the Holy Spirit they are a little bit clueless at times, and Thomas is no exception. Three times he gets some lines to say in the gospel of John. The first is when they are going back to raise Lazarus. No one knows that's why they're going back. Jesus says, "Let's go back to Judea where they just tried to kill all of us." So Thomas, in his great courageous way says, "Let us go also, that we may die with him." I do appreciate that he was willing to go and die with him, but he wasn't very optimistic. "Alright, let's go die."

Jesus tells him, "I'm going to prepare a place for you! I'm going to get it all ready for you." Thomas: "We don't know how to get there." "I'm the way, Thomas, alright? You haven't figured that out?"

Third line: "I will never believe what you guys believe! This is some kind of weird groupthink going on and I'm not getting swept up into this, guys. I'm sorry. Unless I touch the holes in his hands and his side, I'm not going to believe. I'm not going to jump on this bandwagon. You're not going to get me into your scheme. Whatever this thing is that you guys are all hyping it up into, it's *not* going to happen with me! I'm logical, analytical, clear-headed."

Jesus walks through the wall again. "Thomas." He goes, "Oh, my Lord and my God!" One of the greatest, highest, Christological assertions in the whole gospel of John coming from his lips: "My

Life In His Name - The Triumphant Life

John 20 | Sunday, August 13, 2017 | By Stefan Bomberger



Lord and my God!" Jesus is God in the flesh. "In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, the Word was God." And verse 14: "The Word became flesh." Before his eyes the Word incarnate has come back. He bows down, he falls down, and he acknowledges: "Jesus, you are Lord and you are God and I believe! I believe. You have overcome my doubts. I've stopped doubting. I believe!"

Now, you might be here and you probably think: "Well, that's great for Thomas. But this is 2017 and Jesus hasn't shown up to me or walked through any walls recently." That's fair enough. Yet Jesus still holds out a promise through this narrative for you. For you. Do you hear the blessing he pronounces over us this morning in 2017? He says: "Have you believed (verse 29) because you have seen?" **Here is your blessing: "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believed."**

I wish I could give you more, Doubter, this morning. You say, "Stefan, I want Jesus up on the stage right now. Bring him, right now!" Well, I can't. He's in heaven at the right hand of God the Father right now. But this testimony is true. Thomas saw it. John saw it, who wrote this book. They were eye-witnesses. They gave their life because they saw something they believed. They touched Jesus with their own hands. They heard him. He spent 40 days with them alive! That's why they all died to preach Jesus, not because they all had a death wish -- clearly not with the locked doors. It's because Jesus is alive.

Do you know that almost all the original Christians in India right now trace their ancestry back to Thomas, going 3000 miles in 52 AD, across the ocean, to preach the gospel in India? The Church there is older, way older than the Church in America. Why? Because Thomas saw and he believed: "My Lord and my God." And Thomas died in India because it's true. There are believers in India, for thousands of years going to glory, to the place that Jesus has prepared for them, because Thomas went. **Thomas knew that Jesus is alive. Blessed are you if you don't see this morning, but believe. Jesus wants to overcome your doubt through the resurrection of Jesus.**

You know, there are a lot of ways to overcome doubts as you explore Christianity, and if you're here exploring it, I'm so glad you're here. This is a safe place to take time to wrestle with what you believe. We always call you to faith in Christ and I'm going to do it even today at the end of my sermon. But, it's okay to take time. It's okay to process it. I would challenge you and encourage you: If you want a good place to start, look deeper into the resurrection of Jesus. Because Christianity makes this assertion about itself: If this happened, everything is true and it matters

completely. It's the most important thing in the world. And if this didn't happen, we are to be pitied. Pitied! And we are all wasting our time. None of it matters if this was a fraud.

So I want to encourage you. Let's put it this way: If Jesus rose from the dead, everything he said was true. And Jesus affirms the whole Old Testament. He talks about, "In the beginning," Adam and Eve. He talks about Noah. He talks about all the other things that seem just a tad implausible to the modern mind. But if Jesus rose from the dead and he says that that happened, I'm siding with Jesus. I'm siding with the one who defeated death. Start with the resurrection. It will triumph over your doubt.

Fourth and finally:

IV. Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, our risen Lord triumphs over unbelief.

Verses 30 and 31:

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

This is the greatest sign in this book. Jesus did many other signs. This is kind of a summary statement. He is ending his book. There is one more chapter, kind of an episode when the credits run and then the scene comes back on. But this sort of summarizes, "Hey, I am the author and I am telling you why I wrote this whole thing. I wrote this so that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. I have no hidden agenda. There is no bait and switch. This is why I'm writing the book, because Jesus did some incredible signs." Remember the seven signs of Jesus throughout the book? Let's review them.

- He turned the water into wine in chapter 2.
- He healed the royal official's son in chapter 4.
- He healed the paralytic in chapter 5.
- He fed the 5000 in chapter 6.
- He walked on water at the end of chapter 6.
- He healed the blind man in chapter 9.

Life In His Name - The Triumphant Life

John 20 | Sunday, August 13, 2017 | By Stefan Bomberger



- He raised Lazarus from the dead in chapter 11.

These are the seven great signs of John's gospel, but let me tell you, there's an eighth great sign and it's right here. **The resurrection is *the* sign, the sign that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And the promise of Jesus to every person in this room is that if you believe that, if your unbelief goes to belief, if your doubt goes to faith, the life of Christ, the resurrection life of Christ will spill into your life right now and raise you up with him, and give you life and light in his name.**

So, where we want to finish, the purpose of the book is the purpose of this sermon: **That you might find life in his name.** I want to go to the Lord in prayer. Bow your heads, close your eyes. Jesus is alive.