

John 20:11-31 (Teaching)

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[0 : 00] Good morning. Feels like it's been a little while since I've been up here. Last time I stood up here, we covered the first ten verses of John chapter 20.

And in a real tight condensed nutshell, Mary Magdalene, according to John's account, Mary Magdalene goes to the tomb of Jesus Christ and, of course, finds the tomb empty.

She runs back. Peter and John race their way to the tomb. They find it empty as well. The Bible says that when John entered in, or as John's account says, the other disciple, which is pretty conclusive that that's John, but when he entered in, he saw and believed.

Amen. And we, but we, they left. I mean, verse 10, we see it. Everybody left and went to their own homes. And it's kind of a, for lack of better words, kind of a blah ending to that passage of Scripture. Everybody just kind of went their own ways after all this. You know, Mary's concerned because she thinks that they, whoever they is, have taken away the body of Jesus.

[1 : 21] And so I said the disciples came and found the tomb empty, but everybody returned to their own homes, according to verse 10.

Verse 10 says, then the disciples went away again under their own homes. So all that being said, we'll pick up in verse 11. John chapter 20 says, but Mary stood without at the sepulcher weeping. And as she wept, she stooped down and looked into the sepulcher. Let's go ahead and read verse 12. And see a two angels in white, the one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

So it says everyone returned, or the disciples returned under their own house, houses, their own homes in verse 10. It says, but Mary stood without the sepulcher weeping.

So we don't read anything in this account about John or Peter weeping. We don't read about them really and truly being confused, being confounded, being concerned, really.

[2 : 30] I mean, obviously they were. They raced to the tomb to see what was going on, basically to verify what Mary Magdalene had come and told them.

Yes, but we don't read any real emotion about Peter and John in this account. But it says, but Mary, Mary Magdalene says, but Mary stood without at the sepulcher weeping.

And as she wept, she stooped down and looked into the sepulcher. She'd already seen that the tomb was empty. I mean, that's obvious in the first 10 verses.

It's very apparent in the scriptures. It states that she saw that it was empty. She thought that someone had taken away the body of Jesus Christ. And it says that she stood outside of the sepulcher, outside of the tomb, and she wept.

And she peered into the tomb again, almost as if just to make sure that the body of Jesus Christ wasn't there. To make sure it wasn't some mirage, you know, that she had witnessed.

[3 : 37] She stooped down and she looked inside the tomb. And it says, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

So when she stoops down this time, she didn't see this the first time. But this time, when she's standing outside the sepulcher and she's weeping, she stoops down. Remember, I said these tombs over there, the average opening to these tombs is about four feet tall.

So this would be why she stooped down to look inside. But she stooped down and looked in. And according to John's account, she saw two angels on the inside, one at the head where Jesus would have laid.

And one at the feet where Jesus would have laid. And seeth two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet. Now, there's a lot of talk, and I have no problem with this.

Now, whether it's exactly what is being portrayed here or not or conveyed to us through the scriptures, I'm not ready to settle on that.

[4 : 41] But there's a lot of talk about these angels, one at the head and one at the feet. And between being where Jesus would have lain, being reminiscent or being symbolic, even of the cherubim, where the mercy seat was inside the tabernacle and inside the temple.

This is something that God commanded the Israelites to do. And they built these, they made these angelic figures. And one was on one side of the mercy seat. The other was on the other side of the mercy seat.

And, of course, the mercy seat being where the high priest would enter into one time a year on the Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur, as it's referred to by the Jews.

He would enter in that day and he would sprinkle the blood upon the mercy seat. And a lot of people think this is symbolic of the mercy seat. And it very well could be. I'm not going to deny that.

And it's very reminiscent of that. Is that exactly what's going on here? I'm not ready to tell you yea or nay on that. But it does strike that imagery in the head.

[5 : 49] But it says in verse 13, it says, And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? Well, what's odd about this, in my opinion? There's something very odd about this.

Normally in scripture, when people see angels, the very first words out of an angel's mouth is fear not. Normally. I see nothing about that here.

I don't think Mary Magdalene was really afraid of what she was seeing. I mean, it's obvious here in the scriptures.

It says she looked in. She saw these angels. She didn't take off running. She didn't hide herself. She didn't cover her eyes because of, you know, some kind of glory that is coming off of those angels that were sitting there.

And as in the other gospel accounts, some of them have them as men that were standing there.

And so, you know, they weren't there in the full glory of the heavens or anything like anything along those lines as per the other gospel accounts.

[6 : 57] But they say, Woman, why weepest thou? Nothing about fear or not. Say, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them because they have taken away my Lord. And I know not where they have laid in.

They ask an honest question. But, folks, this was more than just an inquiry that these angels would have been making to Mary.

It wasn't, you know, why are you standing outside this tomb weeping? Because they didn't know. They knew exactly why she was weeping. But the reason Mary was weeping was different than what the angels thought that it should be.

Why are you weeping? Christ is not here. I love Luke's account of the resurrection morning. I love the line. Luke's got my favorite account of all the resurrection.

I love the line where they say, Why seek ye the living among the dead? Christ. And that's what these angels were wondering. Why are you sad? Why are you weeping?

[8 : 04] Why are you standing here outside the tomb? He's risen. Just as He said, He is risen. He's told you all for three plus years that He would be crucified. That He'd be given over into the hands of sinful men.

That He would be mocked. He would be scourged. He'd be handed over to the priests and all these other people. He told you this was going to happen. But He also told you He would rise. And He has done that.

Why are you standing here crying? That's the inquiry that the angels were making. Why are you weeping because of this? He's not here. They say, again in verse 13, They say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou?

She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him. Folks, and we are just as guilty of this as Mary Magdalene was.

When something enters our life, when sadness enters in, when anger enters in, depression enters in, confusion enters in, disillusionment enters in, all these things come into all of our lives, and we will allow that to cloud the greater picture of what God is doing, or in this case, what God has done.

[9 : 16] He has raised His only begotten Son from the dead. And Mary, because of her own sadness, she is not seeing that.

Even though she's heard Jesus say Himself, and all the disciples heard Him say Himself, that He would rise again the third day. Even though, even though they knew this.

Even though Mary knew this. She was still sitting there sad. Verse 14, And when she had thus said, she turned herself back and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

Now folks, this wasn't the same Jesus that she had seen just a few days before hanging upon the cross. It was the same Jesus, but He wasn't in the same state that He was then.

He wasn't a bloody mess. He wasn't a bloody pulp. This was Christ. Now, was there glory coming off of Him? I think that if that had been the case, if He had been shining with the glory of God, that Mary would have recognized Him as soon as she saw Him.

[10:24] But I don't think that that's the case. It says, When she had thus said, When she said, they've taken Him away, and I don't know where they've laid Him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

Folks, Jesus will meet us in our deepest sorrows. He will meet us in our deepest confusion. He will meet us at the times of our deepest needs.

Christ is right there. But so many times, we, like Mary, fail to see it. And we fail to see Him moving in our lives.

We fail to see, as I said before, the big picture of things, of how God is going to use us for His glory and for our good. And there are so many different examples that we could use as far as that goes. Death in families, sickness in families, finances, relationships. I mean, the list could go on and on and on of things that can go negative in our lives, but God's turning them around into a positive.

[11:35] But we fail to see it and we fail to see Christ and we fail to sense His presence and we fail to even recognize that Jesus Christ said, I am with you always, even to the end.

And we're all guilty of it. I've done it. Go for days. Something eating at your mind, something eating at your heart, eating at your emotions. Where the case is.

And then suddenly, suddenly, you're like, have I even prayed about this? Have I prayed earnestly about this? Have I prayed effectually and fervently about this?

Or have I just asked God to do something about it and just wondered where God is for the past two or three days? Folks, I've been guilty of this. I've been guilty about it. Knowing good and well that God does not forsake His own.

Knowing good and well that Christ is right there with me. Knowing good and well that the Spirit is there with me. And yet, we're all guilty of doing what Mary has done here.

[12:35] She knew not that it was Jesus. Verse 15, Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? So Jesus has the same inquiry that these angels had.

Woman, why weepest thou? And just as we spoke about in chapter 19, when Christ is upon the cross and He looks down at His mother and He says, Woman, behold thy son.

This is not a derogatory term that He's using here any more than it was in chapter 19 or any more than it was in chapter 2 when Christ refers to His mother as woman.

And here He's referring to Mary Magdalene, the same, the angels refer to her the same. This is a Greek term called *gunai*. And it's a very endearing term and it's all-encompassing of all women.

Nothing derogatory about it regardless of what some so-called preachers might try to tell you. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?

[13:35] So He asks the same question, Why are you weeping? But He adds something to it that the angels didn't. Who are you seeking? But folks, it's for the same purpose and the same reason that the angels made their inquiry.

Why are you crying? Who are you seeking? Who was she seeking? Who was Mary Magdalene seeking? She was seeking a dead Christ. She had come to the tomb to anoint His body.

She had come to care for the dead body of Jesus Christ. That's who she was seeking. And she was seeking the wrong one in that respect. He was a living Christ and He is a living Christ.

And that's what we're reading about. Right here, Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? She supposing Him to be the gardener, saith unto Him, Sir, if thou hast borne Him hence, hence, tell me where thou hast hid, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away.

So she's still thinking, or she's still seeking a dead Christ. She's still seeking her dead Savior. Now folks, it's commendable. It is extraordinarily commendable that Mary, even after the other disciples had gone to their own homes, as the Scripture says, even though that had happened, Mary stuck around.

[14 : 59] She still wanted to care for the dead body of Jesus Christ that's very commendable to her and toward her.

And I commend her about that. And quite frankly, I think that Christ commended her for it. In fact, so much that He commissioned her to be the first one to announce the resurrection, or announce His resurrection.

But we'll get to that when we get to it. Sir, if thou hast borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away. So she, thinking Him to be the gardener, the one that took care of the tombs, thought that He had moved the body, and He had laid the body of Christ somewhere else.

All she wants to do is care for Jesus. She wants to pay homage and pay respect to the body of her Savior. That's all that is on her mind.

But folks, Christ was and is alive. Verse 16, Jesus saith unto her, Mary. Mary. She turned herself and saith unto Him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master.

[16 : 12] Jesus spoke one word to this woman. He called her by name. And folks, this is a wonderful picture, really, of the gospel.

We've got the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ in the gospel. This is the resurrection that we're reading about here. But folks, it doesn't end right there. Jesus calls us personally.

When Jesus came to me and convicted me of my sin through the way of the Holy Spirit and saved my soul, it was to me personally.

And when He'd done it for you, it was to you personally. This woman had personal grieving that she was dealing with here. She had personal confusion that she was dealing with here.

She had personal matters that she was dealing with and suffering with here. But Christ comes and speaks her name. Let's go back to John chapter 10.

[17 : 14] It says, The porter openeth the door and the shepherd calls his sheep, but he calls them by name. It says, The sheep know the shepherd and the shepherd know the sheep and the shepherd calls them by name.

In Isaiah 43, one of my favorite passages in all the Old Testament, God tells His people, the Israelites, He tells Jacob, He tells Israel, He says, Fear not, for I have redeemed thee.

I have called thee by name. And that's how God redeems us. He comes to us personally, calls us personally by name, and saves us personally, and saves us utterly, and saves us wholly.

Here, He called Mary by name. Mary Magdalene being a disciple of Jesus Christ. She was a follower of Christ. And here she was trying her best to follow all the way up to the point of anointing His dead body.

But He calls her by name. And this is what opened her eyes. Folks, no one seeks after Christ. There is none that seeks righteousness.

[18 : 26] There is none that seeketh after God. It takes God seeking after us. And this was Christ seeking Mary and finding Mary in her state and calling her by name.

And she referred to Him as Rabboni. Which is to say, as the Scripture says, Master or Teacher. She recognized Him. She knew exactly who it was. But it took Him calling her personally to do that. No one can find God on their own. In fact, none of us, from what I can see in the Scriptures and what I can gather from the Scriptures, none of us even want to find God on our own.

It takes God searching for us and seeking us and opening our eyes. Just as Christ here had to open the eyes of Mary. Jesus saith unto her, Mary, she turned herself and said unto Him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master or Teacher.

And He was her Master. And He was her Teacher. Remember, Mary is the one that was there at the feet of Christ learning.

[19 : 33] And I mean, she followed Jesus. Jesus is the very one that delivered her from seven demons. He was her Savior. He was her Deliverer. He was her Master and her Teacher.

She refers to Him as Rabboni. Verse 17, Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father, but go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father and to my God and your God.

So back to the beginning of that verse, Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended unto my Father. Now folks, this has been misconstrued so much.

And I've heard it preached and taught wrongly since I've been saved. I'm sure you have as well. When He says, Touch me not, for I have not yet ascended to my Father. It's not that the touch of Mary would defile Christ. I assure you, there is nothing that can defile my Jesus. There is nothing that can defile Him.

[20 : 38] He is perfectly holy. He is perfect in every way. He is perfectly righteous. And defilement cannot touch Him. So it's not that Mary Magdalene's touch would have defiled Him and kept Him from ascending to the Father to offer His blood and all these other things that I've heard that this means.

So what's she saying? Or what is Christ saying to her, I should say? What is He saying when He says, Touch me not? He's saying, Don't cling to me. Don't latch on to me.

That's what the Greek word that's used here means. It means to attach oneself to. In other words, Don't hang on my feet. I've still got work to do while I'm here.

Don't clasp on to me. Don't grasp on to me. And I promise you that's the very thought that Mary had. She wanted to grab a hold of Jesus and never let go of Him.

But Christ says, I have more things to do here. Don't do that. But He commissions her. He commissions her here. He says, But go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father and to my God and your God.

[21 : 57] This is amazing. This is Mary Magdalene. She saw, as I said before, she saw Christ just a couple days before this hanging upon a cross.

And now she was seeing Christ risen from the dead just as He said. But Mary here is told by Jesus Himself.

She witnessed the crucifixion and now she's witnessing the resurrection. She witnessed the evidence of the resurrection in the first ten verses. Now she's witnessing Christ resurrected Himself. And Christ gives her commandment and commissions her to go and tell the brethren. Therefore, Mary Magdalene becomes the first evangelist to testify of the risen Savior.

What an honor. What an honor. The first person that can say, I saw Him. I saw Him. He was alive. He wasn't bleeding.

[23 : 01] He wasn't suffering. I saw Him. And Mary Magdalene is the first one to give that testimony to the brethren. She's the first one in the world to give that testimony.

And she was commanded and commissioned by Christ to do so. Now folks, something else that's amazing about that is that in this culture and in this time, even to this day in this culture, a woman's testimony was kind of brushed off.

You know, people didn't really pay a whole lot of attention to it. So, for me, this is almost as if God is saying, I don't care about the social norms.

I don't care what's socially accepted. I don't care about any of that. Christ commissions a woman to testify that she has seen Him in the flesh and completely, totally, and utterly alive.

That's amazing. And she went, she told the brethren the very thing. Verse 18, Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord and that He had spoken these things unto her.

[24 : 17] So, not only did she go to the disciples, did she go to the brethren and testify, I've seen the risen Savior. She testified what she had seen and she testified what she had heard.

And folks, really and truly, when we are saved, we're commissioned to do the exact same thing that Christ commissioned Mary here to do. We are to go to the world.

Yes, we're to preach a crucified Savior. Yes, we're to preach that. But folks, what good is it, is a crucified Savior if He did not resurrect? What good is a crucified Savior if He did not rise from the dead?

And if He didn't ascend to the Father and if He isn't making intercession on behalf of all who believe and have repented of their ways, that Savior would do no good. But this is the risen Christ that you and I testify of when we go into the world and preach the gospel to every living creature.

As the scripture says, when we're fulfilling the Great Commission, we must testify of a risen Savior. To testify that Jesus Christ was born of a virgin in a manger in Bethlehem, that's wonderful.

[25 : 30] To testify that He lived a perfect life, that's great. To testify that He died upon the cross and without the shedding of blood, there is no remission, that's wonderful. But folks, if He's still dead, it does us no good.

We testify of a risen Savior. We testify of the same resurrection that Christ commissioned Mary here to testify of. And she went and she testified that she had seen Jesus and she testified of the things she had heard.

Verse 19, Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

So, the same day at evening, the same day of what? The same day that Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples, I have seen Christ.

I have seen Him risen. Where do we find the disciples? We find them locked behind doors for fear of the Jews, fear of their own lives. They knew that Christ had been crucified.

[26 : 40] They knew that this woman had come and testified that she had seen Him. We don't have it here in John's account, but I'm sure they had somewhat of the testimony of Peter and John here as well.

Yeah, sure, we went to the tomb. The grave clothes were there. The napkin was folded, laid to a place by itself. We saw all these things, but we still haven't seen Christ. Mary says she saw them. Like I said, in this culture, a woman's testimony was blown off as basically as no good. But it says, then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were ascended for fear of the Jews, they were afraid they were probably going to be the next ones to be crucified.

That's why they had fear of the Jews. They were going to be the next ones killed. They were going to be arrested, put in prison and probably killed for fear of the Jews. Came Jesus and stood in the midst of them and stood in the midst and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

Folks, regardless of how fearful our hearts might be, regardless of what the situation might be in our lives and regardless of what locked doors we are behind, that does not hinder Christ.

[27 : 55] Their locked doors and their fearful hearts did not hinder Christ. And what did he come and speak to them? I'll just read a few words here. Peace. He spoke peace to them.

And how peaceful would it be for the cross that they knew had just been killed, had just been crucified, just a few days before this, was now standing in the midst of them and saying, Peace be unto you.

And that's what he came to speak to them was peace. Why? Because of their fearful hearts.

Because they didn't know what was going on. Because they didn't know the next thing that was going to happen in their lives.

Folks, you and I don't know the next thing that's going to happen in our lives either. But we have peace with Christ. How do we have peace with Christ? We have peace because we have been reconciled to God through Christ.

Peace was made by the shedding of his blood. Peace was made through his cross. And through his blood we have peace with God. And folks, if we have peace with God as far as reconciliation and redemption goes, what can this world do to us?

[29 : 10] If we have been reconciled to God, yes, they can physically kill us. Yes, they can physically come against us. Yes, they can mock us. Yes, they can do all kinds of evil against these physical bodies.

But folks, they cannot take the peace that we have with God. And Christ came in the midst of these disciples here and spoke to peace. He said, peace be unto you.

And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. He came, stood in the midst of them, spoke peace.

And the very next verse, and when he had so said, he shewed them his hands and his side. He showed them the evidence of whom he was. Folks, I've never seen Christ.

Not physically. I've not seen Christ. I've not seen his hands. I have not seen his side. I haven't seen any of these things. But I tell you what I've heard.

[30 : 12] And this goes along with the end of the chapter here. I'm kind of jumping the gun but that's okay. I tell you what I've heard. I've heard that Jesus came. And I've heard that he was born of a virgin.

I heard that he lived a perfect life. I heard that he died for me. I heard that he was resurrected. And I heard that he is ascended to the Father.

And I heard that that's where he's at now. I've heard that but in all that the main thing is I heard that he died for me. I heard that he came to seek and to save that which was lost.

He didn't come to call the righteous. He came to call sinners to repentance. Folks, that was me. I heard all these things. And because I heard these things because of the testimony of other people, I heard the preaching of the word of God by a man of God that truly believed what he was reading and what he was preaching.

The Holy Spirit was able to work in my life and Jesus Christ was able to meet me where I was in my sin and my darkness and my evil and my blackness and he was able to redeem my soul.

[31 : 14] All because of these things and all because of the testimony of other people. All because they were testifying of Christ and because for 2,000 years, over 2,000 years now people have been preaching this same Christ and this same resurrection.

Jesus spoke peace to them and he showed his hands and he showed his side to them. He says, and then they were glad. They were glad when they realized it was the Lord.

Folks, I was glad when Christ saved my soul. I was glad that he revealed himself to me. I was glad that he called me by name and I was glad when he brought me into his own family.

To know Christ is to know gladness. To know Christ is to know peace. To know Christ is to know joy. And I have all these things. All because of Jesus Christ I have all these things.

Verse 21, Then said Jesus unto them again, Peace be unto you. As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

[32 : 24] Then said Jesus unto them again, Peace be unto you. He's reiterating what he's already said. He said, Peace be unto you. He showed them his hands. He showed them his side.

They were glad when they realized it was the Lord. And he says, Peace be unto you again. Why is he talking so much about peace? He tells them why here. He said, As my Father has sent me, has sent me, even so send I you.

That's why. Because folks, it's not a peaceful world that we go and we testify of Christ to. There's nothing peaceful about this world. If there is anything peaceful about it, it's very temporal.

And it's very much so just on the surface. Even when there's peace between countries and no war, there's still tension brewing underneath the surface.

Even when it seems peaceful in our own lives, we don't know what the next day is going to hold for us. When all that peace may seem shattered to us. But folks, we have peace that passeth all understanding.

[33 : 26] And Jesus Christ, he speaks to them peace and he tells them why. Because as my Father sent me, I am sending you. And you will need this peace to go into the world and to preach the gospel to every living creature.

We've got to read this in the context that it is in. And the context is Christ has appeared to these disciples and he is telling them that they're going to go into the world which is not peaceful.

But he is speaking peace to them. And when he had said thus, he breathed on them and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.

Receive ye the Holy Ghost just by breathing on them. Now, the question is, did the disciples receive the Holy Ghost here? The Holy Ghost really didn't fall and come down on believers until Acts chapter 2.

So, is this the disciples literally receiving the Holy Ghost? Or is this Christ giving them a foretaste of what they're going to have?

[34 : 32] Christ was empowering these disciples here himself. Folks, and quite frankly, it is the Spirit's job to empower us. That's one of the Spirit's jobs is to empower us.

It's the Spirit's job to bring about faith for us. It's the Spirit's job to show us that we are sinners and it's the Spirit's job to show us that Christ is a Savior.

Spirit does all of these things. But Christ here, it says in the Scripture, He breathes upon them and tells them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. He's commanding them to receive the Holy Ghost.

But it does not say anywhere, nor does it indicate anywhere, that the Holy Ghost came out in the breath of Christ. Folks, every time I read about someone breathing in such a manner of this or every time I think about it for that matter, I automatically go to Genesis chapter 2 where God has formed Adam out of the dust of the ground and He breathed the breath of life into him.

Christ here is showing them, again, giving them a foretaste of the Holy Ghost coming. He's commanding them to receive the Holy Ghost. But the Holy Ghost did not come out in the breath of

Christ to them, but nevertheless, Christ was empowering them.

[35 : 45] He was speaking peace unto them. Why? Because they needed that empowerment and they needed that peace to go out and testify of a risen Savior. In other words, to preach the gospel.

Verse 23, Whosoever sins you remit, they are remitted unto them. And whosoever sins you retain, they are retained. Another big question here.

Is Christ giving permission or power for that matter for the disciples themselves to forgive sins?

Absolutely not. What is the context that we're reading here?

Christ speaking peace to them. Why? So that they can go into the world. So that they can preach the gospel. Folks, when the gospel is preached, one of two things will happen. It will either draw, coupled with the work of the Holy Spirit, it will either draw repentance out of a sinner or it will draw rejection out of them.

That's what Christ is saying here. He is not empowering the disciples at all to forgive sins. Read it again. Whosoever sins you remit, they are remitted unto them.

[36 : 56] And whosoever sins you retain, they are retained. And this is all done by the preaching of the gospel. Not by some power that the disciples had. Not by some power that any preacher nowadays has.

Only Christ can forgive sins. He and he alone. If he was empowering the disciples here to forgive sins, folks, it would contradict all the rest of the Bible.

Only God has that kind of power to forgive sins. But in the context of what we're reading, he is sending them out to preach the gospel. And he says, whosoever sins, they are remitted to them. Whosoever sins are retained, they retain them. In other words, when the gospel is preached and people repent of their ways and those sins are remitted, folks, they're remitted because of the preaching of the gospel and because of the work of the Holy Spirit and because Christ has remitted them.

But when people reject, when they hear the gospel and they reject the sins that they have, they retain those sins. They are not washed away in the blood of Jesus Christ.

[38 : 04] That's what's being gotten out here. Not empowerment for us lowly human beings to forgive sin. But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord, but he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails and put my finger into the print of the nails and thrust my hand into his side.

I will not believe. And there's a blue billion people on the face of the planet right now with this exact attitude. I haven't seen evidence of Christ.

I haven't seen evidence of God. If God would just prove himself to me, I would believe. That was my attitude before I believed. God's never shown himself to me.

And folks, the evidence of God is all around us. The evidence of God is everywhere. It's like, I mean, us humans saying there's no evidence of God on the planet is like a fish wanting evidence of water.

[39 : 10] It's all around him or her. Whatever the case is. But I refused to see it and I couldn't see it until Christ called me by name. Just like we talked about earlier.

But, Thomas, being called Didymus, don't get too caught up in this whole also being called Didymus thing. That simply means twin. They debate it out there as to who was his twin.

Folks, who cares? Honestly, who cares? But this one named Thomas, this of course, you know, we all know him as Doubting Thomas because obviously he was doubting.

He said, unless I see the prince and I put my fingers in the prince and I thrust my hand into a sight I will not believe. Verse 26, and after eight days, again, his disciples were within and Thomas with them.

Then came Jesus, the doors being shut and stood in the midst of them and said, Peace be unto you. Folks, Thomas wasn't there the first time Christ came and spoke peace. But now that Thomas is there, folks, this shows the grace of God.

[40 : 15] This is a wonderful picture of the grace of God. God could have said Thomas should have been with them. Thomas should have been with them the first time around, but he wasn't. But this time Thomas is there and Christ comes and he speaks the exact same words.

He speaks peace. He speaks his peace. Not as the world giveth, does Jesus give unto his disciples or gave to Thomas or the rest of the disciples, but it's the peace of God.

It's only peace that Christ can give that he spoke. And he came into this room, the doors being shut again, locked doors don't hinder Jesus Christ. Nothing can hinder Jesus Christ and his work. And he spoke peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, reach hither thy finger and behold my hand, behold my hands and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side and be not faithless, but believing.

Folks, this proves what I said earlier. That when Christ told Mary Magdalene, touch me not, for I have not yet ascended to my father. Here is Christ inviting Thomas to touch him.

[41 : 18] So it's not the touch of a mortal human being that can defile Jesus Christ. Why? He said that to Mary. It was because he didn't want her holding him back from what he still needed to do.

He is inviting Thomas to touch him. And folks, this was even more proof, Thomas, not just the seeing and not just the opportunity to thrust his hand into his side and poke his finger into his hands, but the simple fact that Christ knew Thomas.

The risen, resurrected Christ knew Thomas. He knew the disciples. He knew Mary. Folks, Christ had performed a wonderful miracle here. He had suffered. He had died.

He had resurrected. And he had not forgotten his own in all of that. And he knew what Thomas had said here. That should have been amazing in and of itself, knowing what he said.

But he tells him, he says, and be not faithless, but believing. That's why Christ done this. That's why Christ revealed himself to us. Folks, Christ, I hate the thought. I hate the thought of how many people Christ has revealed himself to over the centuries since the death, the burial, and the resurrection, and they have not believed.

[42 : 38] Christ reveals himself to us that we might believe. He reveals himself to us through his word. He reveals himself to us through his spirit and through the workings of the spirit.

And yet people reject. Yet people reject. And Thomas answered and said unto him, my Lord and my God, my Lord, referring to him as master here, and my God, referring to him as the divine being that he was.

Thomas believed. Doubting Thomas believed. Christ revealed himself to him. Christ spoke peace to him. Christ testified of himself, folks, in the Holy Spirit.

When he comes into a non-believer's life and he's working through the preached word of God, he is revealing Christ to that person.

Christ was revealed here to Thomas. Everything about Christ, about the death, the burial, and the resurrection was revealed to him and Thomas believed. And he referred to him as my Lord and my God.

[43 : 39] Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed. Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed. Folks, that's me. And that's you.

We have not seen the risen Christ with our own eyes. We have not seen him, but we have believed, as I was talking about earlier, we believe the testimony of the scriptures. We believe the testimony of the preached word of God.

We believe the testimony of the Holy Spirit when the Holy Spirit revealed Christ to us, revealed our sinful state to us, and showed us the Savior that we can have in Jesus Christ. We believe these things.

And that's why we're saved now. That and only that is why we are saved now. Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed. Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed.

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name.

[44 : 44] So John here says, Jesus has done a whole bunch of other stuff that I haven't even mentioned within these pages. Jesus, me personally, I think this was the original conclusion of the Gospel of John.

Then John remembers some things from chapter 21. We get a bonus chapter in the Gospel of John. I believe this is where he was wanting to conclude it.

But, the Holy Spirit inspired him otherwise. Anyway, John writes here, and many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book.

But why did he do them? He didn't do it to ooh and ah them. He didn't do it to woo them. And John didn't write these things to ooh and ah us. Folks, the Scripture is not given to us.

I'm not just talking about the Gospel of John either. The Scripture, the Holy Writ that I hold here in my hand is not given unto us to satisfy curiosity. It is given to us that we might believe.

[45 : 42] Just what Christ says here, but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ. Everything that John is saying, everything I've written to you here is written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name.

He's written these things that we might believe, and He tells us if we believe, then we will have life, and it will be eternal life through that glorious name of Jesus Christ.

Christ. We've got five minutes, so I'm going to wrap it up right there at the end of the chapter.

Hallelujah. Anybody got any questions or comments on any of that? Alright.

God bless y'all. I appreciate you.