

That You May Believe – The Gospel of John
Lesson Eleven – John 20-21

Chapter 20:

- I. Jesus' tomb is found empty.
 - A. Early on Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene (MM) discovers that the stone was rolled away from the entrance of the tomb.
 1. The other gospels mention at least three others who came to Jesus' tomb.
 - a. Several women followed Jesus and helped to support his ministry.
 - b. Luke 8:2 says that Jesus had driven seven demons from MM.
 - c. Mary may have come earlier than the others.
 - i. John mentions that she came while it was still dark.
 - ii. The others are said to have arrived just after sunrise.
 - d. John mentions only Mary because she is the one who ran to tell the disciples.
 2. Mary runs off to tell Peter and John (the disciple Jesus loved).
 - a. She is afraid someone has stolen Jesus' body.
 - b. No thought of the resurrection occurred to her yet.
 - B. Peter and John run to investigate.
 1. John, the younger of the two, reaches the tomb first. He sees Jesus burial clothes but does not go into the tomb.
 2. Peter enters the tomb to investigate further and sees the burial clothes neatly folded.
 - a. If grave robbers had taken the body, they would have either taken the burial clothes or scattered them about.
 - b. John records in such detail which shows that he was actually there.
 - c. Scholars continue to debate over whether the "Shroud of Turin" which has a known history dating back to the early 1300's could be the actual grave clothes of Jesus.
 3. Seeing the evidence, both disciples believe that Jesus is resurrected, though they still did not understand that the scripture had foretold it all along.
- II. MM meets the risen Christ
 - A. Mary speaks with two angels inside the empty tomb.
 1. After Peter and John have left Mary stays by the tomb weeping then looks in and sees two angels.
 2. She is so grief stricken that she speaks to the angels just like she would anyone else.
 - B. Mary meets Jesus
 1. Jesus asks Mary why she is crying and who she is looking for.
 - a. At first she did not recognize him, thinking that he was the gardener.
 - i. This also happens when two disciples meet the risen Lord on the way to Emmaus in Luke 24, and with the apostles by the sea in John 21.
 - ii. Perhaps Jesus looked differently after his resurrection.
 - iii. Maybe Jesus withheld his identity at first to see their faith.
 - b. Mary's reply shows her devotion in that she did not consider how she would carry the body or explain why she had it.

2. Jesus calls Mary by name and she recognizes his at last.
 - a. This points back to Jesus' words about the sheep and the shepherd.
 - b. Mary calls Jesus *Rabboni* which is "my teacher".
3. Jesus tells Mary not to hold on to him.
 - a. Jesus had a task for her to do in telling the apostles.
 - b. He did not want her to get too used to his presence.
4. Mary again runs to tell the apostles, but this time with happiness not sorrow.
 - a. It is significant that Jesus appears first to a woman.
 - b. Courts would not accept the testimony of a woman but Jesus did.

III. The resurrected Christ appears to his disciples

A. There were five appearances that Jesus made on the day of his resurrection.

1. Mary
2. The other women.
3. Peter
4. Two disciples on the road to Emmaus
5. To the ten disciples without Thomas

B. Jesus enters the room though the door was locked.

1. The disciples were still fearing for their lives at this point.
2. Nothing is said about how he got in, but the risen Lord is not limited by locked doors.
3. The disciples were probably expecting a rebuke for running away but instead Jesus offers them peace.
4. Jesus gives the apostles four things when he appears to them.
 - a. He gives them assurance but showing them his hands and side.
 - b. He gives them a mission to continue spreading his truth.
 - c. He gives them the Holy Spirit to help them with their mission.
 - i. He does this by breathing on them.
 - ii. This is reminiscent of God breathing the breath of life into Adam.
 - d. He gives them authority as God's spokesmen to forgive sins.

IV. Jesus appears to and convinces Thomas, the skeptical disciple.

A. Thomas was not there when Jesus appeared the first time.

1. There is nothing to indicate why this is. Perhaps he was not as afraid as the others.
2. Thomas did not believe when the apostles told him they had seen Jesus.
 - a. It is not that Thomas did not want to believe, he just needed proof.
 - b. Jesus had already shown the proof to the other disciples.

B. Jesus makes a special appearance just for Thomas' sake.

1. Thomas may have given up, but Jesus was not ready to give up on him.
2. Jesus' proof for Thomas is proof for us. He was not a ghost, but was physically risen from the dead.
3. Thomas confesses Jesus to be both Lord and God and Jesus accepts the titles.

V. John summarizes his purpose in writing his gospel.

A. Jesus' words to Thomas are a natural lead in to John's statement of purpose.

B. John admits that his book is an incomplete account of Jesus' life, written for a purpose.

1. That we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.
2. That by believing we may have life in his name.

Chapter 21:

I. Jesus performs one last miracle.

A. Seven of the disciples were back in Galilee fishing on the sea of Tiberius (the sea of Galilee).

1. John mentions five by name – Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, and the sons of Zebedee (James and John).

a. The two other disciples are most likely Andrew (Peter's brother) and Philip (who was also from Cana).

b. These are all the disciples from Galilee. They had gone home.

2. Why were they back home?

a. Perhaps saying good-bye to their families.

b. Maybe uncertain about what to do next.

3. They had not caught anything all night long.

a. Jesus had given them a commission to be fishers of men, not fish.

b. Their efforts without Jesus were fruitless.

B. Jesus calls to the disciples from the shore and redirects them.

1. At first, just like Mary Magdalene, they do not recognize Jesus.

2. When the disciples follow Jesus' instruction they are successful.

a. Jesus redirecting the nets is a symbol of his changing their whole purpose.

b. We will always be more successful if we will listen to Jesus' direction.

3. The first to recognize Jesus is John.

a. John was there when Jesus performed the first great catch of fish at the very beginning of Jesus ministry (Luke 5)

b. Perhaps he is remembering back to that time now.

4. Where as most people would take off clothes before jumping in and swimming, Peter puts on his clothes and then jumps in – classic Peter.

a. Maybe he thought he could walk on the water.

b. He wanted to be fully clothed to meet Jesus.

C. Jesus shares breakfast with his disciples.

1. Jesus had already started cooking before they arrived.

2. The fact that Jesus ate with them is more evidence that he was not just a ghostly spirit, but real flesh and blood.

3. Peter drags the net full of fish to shore.

a. John points out that the net does not break. Perhaps a symbol that God's kingdom is big enough for everyone.

b. Some have suggested that 153 is the number of kinds of fish in the sea Galilee.

i. They see this as metaphor for people from every nation – a nice idea.

ii. However, 153 is just the number of fish. The detail is there to show that John was an eyewitness.

4. This was the third time that Jesus appeared to a group of his disciples. John points this out to set up the next scene.

II. Jesus restores and commissions Peter.

A. Jesus' question "Do you love me more than these?" refers back to John 13:37 when Peter said that even if everyone else left him, Peter would not.

B. It is interesting to note that Jesus and Peter use different words for love here.

1. The first two times Jesus asks Peter the question, he uses the word agape for love. This means with a deep unconditional spiritual kind of love.

2. Each time Peter replies that he loves Jesus, he uses the word phileo which is the love between brothers, or best friends.

3. Some think Peter's answer was a lesser love than what Jesus was asking for.

4. However, *phileo* is not a lesser love than *agape* but it is a different love. Peter was saying in effect, "I don't just love you because you are my God; I love you because you are my friend."
- C. Peter is hurt because Jesus asks him three times.
 1. This reminder Peter of his three-time denial.
 2. Jesus was giving Peter a chance to reaffirm his love for Jesus after his mistake.
 - D. Jesus' request to "feed my lambs" and "take care of my sheep" is his way of asking Peter to carry on the work after he is gone.
 - E. Jesus predicts the way the Peter will die.
 1. Stretch out your hands was a term that referred to crucifixion.
 2. Peter was indeed crucified for his faith.
 3. Tradition says that he requested to be hung upside down because he was not worthy to die like Jesus did.
- III. The author, John, talks about himself.
- A. Now that Jesus has told Peter that he would die as a martyr, Peter asks if the same will be true of John.
 1. Jesus tells Peter that he need not worry about others but should just follow him.
 2. Because of Jesus words a rumor that John would never die begins.
 - a. This rumor is helped along by the fact that John lived well into his 80's.
 - b. John, an old man now, tells this story in order to put down the rumor.
 - B. John identifies himself as the author of the book and "the disciple whom Jesus loved".
- IV. Finally John concludes the book with two points.
- A. His testimony is reliable and true.
 - B. Jesus' life was so much more than anyone could ever tell.