

Resurrection Q&A

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He has risen. We're going to look at the resurrection this morning as we open God's word through the eyes and through the mind of one of Jesus' disciples, Thomas, and we're going to answer this question, we're going to approach it from this perspective: what should you do with the resurrection? What should you do with the resurrection as a man, a woman, a boy, a girl, a young person? As you hear the resurrection proclaimed, as you see the risen Christ presented to you, what should you do with that? It's not simply a matter of passing notice and that you move on and go on with life unchanged, unaffected, without stopping to think, no, you have to ask yourself: what am I to do with this? A man has come from the grave and what do you do with that? We're going to do two things this morning to help you think through that. We want you to ask the right question and we want you to give the right answer. This is a resurrection Q and A, one question, one answer, that you ask in response to the resurrection: what do you do with the resurrection? You need to ask the right question and then give the right answer. Beloved, eternity hinges on how you respond to what you hear today.

So you asked the right question, first of all, and I want to take you to a familiar passage to begin with, John 14, beginning in verse 1. Remember we're going to look at this, we're going to step into the sandals, as it were, of Thomas and we're going to kind of walk through what he saw and heard and experienced and the way that he responded as that which would give you a pattern for response in your own life. Jesus is teaching in John 14; his disciples are gathered around him. He is preparing them for his soon crucifixion and departure from this world after his resurrection and so he is laying the groundwork for them as he prepares to enter into his particular work of redemption on the cross soon to follow. And in John 14, speaking to his disciples he says, "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also." Jesus here is speaking of something stupendous, something magnificent, something wonderful. He is saying that while he is about to leave and that's going to seem hard for a time for the disciples who are in front of him, he says, "Understand why I'm going. I'm going back to my Father and I'm going back to prepare a place for you so that beyond this earth, beyond this life, I will be able to receive you to myself. It is to your benefit that I go away because I'm going to accomplish something

great and magnificent on your behalf." In other words, think about it this way, Jesus is getting ready to return to his Father and he's saying to his disciples right below the surface, "You're going to go to be with the Father one day too and you will be with me there."

So he tells his disciples that he will be leaving soon. He has comforted them. He has given them an expectation that will sustain them through the difficult days to come. But our tour guide here if you think about Thomas in that sense, the guy that we are following through in this particular narrative, Thomas is uncertain. Jesus has just disclosed magnificent things about his future purposes about going to be with God but Thomas is confused; he does not know exactly and understand what is going on. Look at verses 4 and 5. Jesus says, "you know the way where I am going." But in verse 5, "Thomas said to Him, 'Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?'" In essence, Thomas is saying, "Lord, I don't get it. I am lost here. You've lost me. I do not understand. I don't know where you're going and how am I supposed to know what to do next?"

There is a variation of the way that you could ask and frame the question that Thomas is asking here. A variation of the question would be: how can a man be right with God? How can a man be just, declared just? How can a man be accepted in the presence of a holy God? I don't know the way to that. And you see, the question that Thomas is asking, the doubt, the confusion, the uncertainty is that which you need to make sure has surfaced in your own consciousness and it's something that you have answered for yourself. None of you should walk out of here in a position of saying, "I don't know the way." But if that's going to be the case, if you would walk out of the door today saying, "I know the way. I know where I am going. I know that the promise of Christ to prepare a place is mine as well," you have to ask the right question. You have to understand and that understanding starts with something that far too many people don't want to go there with what I'm about to say. You see, implied in Thomas' question is a recognition that he is lost; that he doesn't know. Implied even deeper, is the sense that he's not right with God. Jesus is going to be with his Father and Thomas is saying, "I don't know that way."

Why are men in that miserable condition? Well, beloved, let's stop talking about Thomas for just a moment and talk about you here this morning. The testimony of Scripture and the testimony of your own conscience is that you are not right with God. Scripture says that apart from Christ you are alienated from God, engaged in evil deeds and hostile in mind, Colossians 1:21. Ephesians 2:1, you are dead in your trespasses and sins and doomed to suffer the wrath of God; that you have fallen short of the glory of God; that you are not righteous; that you are not even seeking God. You see, what Scripture is saying is that you are not fit for the presence of God on your own. And see, it's not just simply that you need a little help from Jesus and that Jesus and you can work together and you contribute your own good to help get you into heaven, it's not that and you can only come to that recognition and come to that understanding if you're asking the right question: how can I be right with God? And beloved, you must understand this question, you must frame this question from the perspective of God himself. You must ask the question from the perspective of God. How does God see it? What does God say about it?

Well, God is perfectly holy. God is a consuming fire. God is one to whom we must do, to whom we must give account. God is one who does not broker in sin and does not let any unforgiven sin come into his life. God knows your innermost thoughts, your secret actions, and he knows that in that secret place of your being you are not righteous; you are not fit for his presence and that's a problem. That's a major problem because a holy God will not allow a sinful man like you into his presence. In fact, Scripture says that he sends them to hell when they die unrepentant, unconverted sinners.

So what does the resurrection do for you here today? It brings you face-to-face with the reality of your sin. It brings you face-to-face with your need for redemption. The reason that Christ was crucified, the reason that he suffered on the cross was to inject himself into the sin situation from which you were suffering in order to redeem you from it. He wasn't simply trying to help you, he was dying to redeem you because you could not save yourself because there was nothing good in you to commend yourself to God. Do you understand that? Have you embraced that at the deepest level? You see, in light of the resurrection, my friends, in light of the resurrection, the right question for you to be asking on this day in particular is: how can I be reconciled to God? How can I be right with God? There must be a sense deep in your soul that recognizes that you are not fit for the presence of God because he is too high, he is too lofty, he is uncreated, he is holy, he is sinless and you are a creature and a sinful depraved one at that. No one comes to heaven until they've walked through that narrow door. You have to disclaim all righteousness of your own. You have to confess that you are an unworthy sinner before God because only then will the response that Jesus makes to Thomas have any meaning to you.

Look at John 14:6. Look at the text with me there. John 14:6, remember Thomas had just asked him, expressing his ignorance, his lostness, he said, "Lord, we don't know the way where You are going. How do we know the way?" Beloved, until you recognize that you are lost, you cannot be found. Until you recognize that you are a sinner, hopeless and helpless, you've never come to Christ in the first instance, and when I say hopeless, I mean utterly without hope; utterly without any righteousness of your own to recommend and commend yourself to God. Have you denied yourself to that final, conclusive, complete extent? Have you denied yourself and said, "There is no good in me at all"? Or is there a hidden part in your heart like there used to be in my heart that said, "I know, I know, I know. I hear all the sin stuff. Yeah, I'm not as good as I should be and I've made some mistakes and all of that." But inside in your heart, in that corner of your heart you cherish a sense, "But I'm not as bad as the next person, or at least I haven't sinned in this way or that way." Beloved, if you have that corner of self-righteousness in your heart, I want you to know plainly, clearly, in undiminished terms, you're not a Christian. You are not saved if that is your attitude toward yourself because you have not come to the end of yourself; you have not denied yourself if that corner of your heart is still there. It's a hard thing to come to Christ like that because of your pride and you are willing to confess up to a point and say, "Yeah, I'm not as good as I should be," which is much different than saying, "I am completely sinful and I deserve the judgment of God." The resurrection brings you to that point. The death of Christ, beloved, the whole significance of the incarnation and Christ going to the cross and suffering as we saw on Friday the wrath of

God like he did on our behalf and going into the tomb and coming out with power and ascending to heaven on high, all of that would be ridiculously overkill if there was actually something good in you that you could contribute to your own salvation. No, no, the great extent, the great length that Christ went to in order to save us is a testimony about how utterly lost you and I are without him. You have no hope if you have not fully repented and turned to him like that.

So the resurrection asks you: do you see that? Do you realize your profound need to be reconciled to God? And I beg you, don't lean on your church attendance, don't lean on your good outward moral life because that currency doesn't pay the way into heaven. It would be like trying to pay your mortgage loan with Monopoly money. That's how valuable your righteousness is. In other words, there is no value to it. It cannot pay anything. It cannot earn anything. In fact, Scripture says it's a filthy, bloody rag. Have you confessed, have you embraced that level of confession in your heart? Beloved, I beg you to deny yourself when we contemplate these things. I beg you to set aside your pride, to set aside your justifications, to set aside your excuses and to say, "There is no excuse for my sin. I am guilty before a holy God." Jesus said, "I did not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." Do you understand that if in your heart you rebel against what's being said here today, do you understand that if you treasure some sense of personal righteousness in your heart that Jesus is saying, "I didn't come for you when you're like that." Do you understand that?

Listen to what he said, look at Luke 5:31. Let's see it for ourselves and not just go on the quotation of the preacher. Luke 5:31, "Jesus answered and said to them, 'It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick.'" Have you ever called the doctor when you were well and everything is perfect? "Hey, doctor, I thought I'd see you. I feel great. Nothing is wrong. Everything is healthy." The doctor would say, "Well, why are you here then?" This is counter to the whole purpose of a physician/patient relationship. "If you're not sick, go away. I've got sick patients to deal with." Do you understand that Christ looks at that and takes that little simply understood parallel and says, "Apply that to your spiritual life. If you think you're righteous, you're saying you don't need a Savior." And therefore the benefit of the death and resurrection of Christ has no meaning to you because in your heart you're saying, "I don't need it." Christ says, "If that's you, I didn't come for you. The Gospel is for those who confess their sins openly, deeply, profoundly and without qualification. There is no room for pride at the cross." So you need to ask yourself: how can I be right with God? That starts with a recognition that you're not right with him to begin with.

Go back to John 14:6 if you will, John 14:6. Jesus answered Thomas' question and said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." Jesus says, "There is only one way to God and it's through me." Islam, Catholicism, Mormonism cannot save anyone, it only confirms them greater in their lostness. Jesus says, "One way and it's through me." He makes an exclusive claim that tolerates no rivals and to us here in this room, we're not Mormons, we're not Muslims, we're not Catholics here in this room, Jesus still speaks with power to our hearts and says, "You cannot get to

the Father through your own righteousness. It is only through me. It is exclusively me alone that can take you to heaven."

Now, let's step back into the sandals of Thomas, if we would. Notice that as you read John 14, Thomas doesn't respond here. Thomas has nothing to say in response to it. The narrative goes on and Philip speaks up in verse 8 and so Thomas has asked this great question, he has expressed this great lack of understanding, he is wrestling, trying to come to grips with what Jesus said but there's nothing said here. If you only read chapter 14, you'd say, "Well, what happened to Thomas? Where did he go?" Do you know what? It's not said in the text but for Thomas to express that level of lostness and Jesus gives him an answer and nothing is said, I think it's obvious, though not explicitly admitted, that Thomas had to consider it. He had to think through that. He didn't respond instantly. He didn't immediately raise his hand and say a sinner's prayer there. He didn't walk an aisle to get closer to Jesus at that moment. There is just a silence there where Thomas obviously had to think, had to consider it, had to contemplate what was being said.

Do you know what? Some of you are in that position, and I say that sympathetically, especially some of you young people that have grown up in a Christian home, you've been in this church for a few years and you've been around, and you're in this position. You're just like Thomas in this sense: you've heard the Gospel, you've heard multiple, multiple times that Christ is the only way to God and only through repentance and faith in him can you be saved, you've heard that, you've seen your parents speak about that in your home and it's all been laid out before you and yet what have you done? For whatever reason, you've held back. You've withheld your heart commitment from Christ. You've heard it, you've kind of let it wash over your ears, maybe you've kind of rolled your eyes at times as once again your parent pleaded with you to come to Christ and you said... Well, beloved, I want you to see that you're still lost like that, and that the resurrection comes to you today and compels you out of your lethargy. It compels you out of your indifference. Do you know what? It compels you out of that dismissive cynicism that you've carried toward the Gospel.

Do you realize what we're celebrating here today? Do you realize what we're remembering? Did you listen as we were singing, "He arose"? Do you know what that means? It means that something supernatural happened, that God displayed supernatural power and brought Christ out of the dead in a way that you and I could never do. I've said this many times, I invite you to go through the motions of this just to let it sink into your heart. This sounds a little weird, granted, don't miss the bigger point I'm making and actually the object lesson of physically doing this, I think, would do your soul good, Christian or non-Christian. Go to a cemetery, stand at a grave, read the name that is on the tombstone, "John Smith," and look at his grave and with all the power and sincerity that you can muster up, say, "John, come out of that grave. Come out." You'll wait a long time. John ain't gonna move in response to your voice. What does that illustrate? It's that you do not have any power over death whatsoever. It illustrates that you have no power over that which produced death in the first place. Death entered into the world because of sin. And so your utter impotence, your total powerlessness is manifested in that simple act and when you see that, when you go through that, let that be a testimony to your heart

that you have no power to save yourself either. There is nothing in you that is worthy of redemption. There is nothing in you that gives you the power to save yourself from death. Nothing. Zero. You're helpless. I can't help you myself. And when that has settled into your mind, then come back to this resurrection and say, "Wow, there is something utterly, completely different from another realm in the resurrection," and realize that the resurrection stops you in your tracks and says, "You must respond to this because this is something different than anything the world has, anything that you can do. This is something from another realm claiming authority on your life and on your conscience and on your will." That's what the resurrection of Christ does to you. It asserts power over you and demands a response. Period. End of paragraph.

So to respond rightly to the resurrection you have to start with the right question: how can I be reconciled to God, meaning I realize that I'm lost and I realize that somewhere in the resurrection, somewhere in the words of Jesus, is the door out of my lostness. Ask the right question. Then what? Well, this is pretty simple and basic, isn't it? You ask a question and what do you get? An answer. You ask the right question and then you give the right answer. You see, the Gospel of John progresses and I realize that sometimes we just cherry pick verses to make a Gospel presentation. That's okay as far as it goes. John 14:6, it's a great Gospel verse but what about Thomas? Understand that that verse was an answer to Thomas' question and we don't see how Thomas responded to that in John 14. You have to keep reading the rest of the Gospel to get to the point.

So the Gospel of John continues on. The narrative goes on for another seven chapters and in a great 30,000 foot view, Christ was crucified at the hands of Roman soldiers and God raised him from the dead and Jesus appeared to the disciples after his resurrection. You know the story, just a broad sweep of it. For now what we want to do is not focus on all of that but simply to narrow our focus down to something that is very simple, clear, basic and that which we can take away today. Today we want to focus on Thomas again as a representative of us all. Now, here's the thing, beloved, and I know that some of you are not in Christ as I preach to you today. You must listen. You must hear this: Thomas is a representative of you as we read this Gospel. There is no question about that. I'll explained that a little bit more in the next several minutes, but you must put yourself in the position of Thomas because you're a skeptic, because you have withheld your heart commitment from Christ; you must put yourself in that perspective and see it through his eyes.

And what will you see? Look at John 20. Thomas here is a representative of you in your refusal to bow the knee before Christ and now that he has shown us the right question to ask, now you're going to see what the right answer is to the question. How do you respond to the resurrected Christ being front and center in the forefront of your consciousness through the testimony of God's inerrant word? How do you respond to that? Well, Thomas shows the way. By the design of the human writer, the Apostle John who wrote this Gospel, under a dual process of authorship in which the Holy Spirit was directing what John wrote to produce exactly what God intended which is why we call this God's word, the Gospel comes back to Thomas and you're supposed to remember

John 14 as you're reading what you see now in John 20. What did Thomas do? He was like you. He was a stubborn critter.

Look at John 20:24, "But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus," which means "the twin," "was not with them when Jesus came." You see, Jesus had already appeared to the disciples and they had seen and believed in his resurrection there, but Thomas wasn't there at that gathering. So in verse 25, the other disciples were saying to him, saying to him repeatedly, "We have seen the Lord! Yes, he was crucified. Yes, he was buried, but we've seen him! He's alive, Thomas!" And in his critterly, can you make that an adverb? I guess I just did. In his creaturely, critterly, stubborn heart, Thomas responds to them in verse 25 and said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails," look at verse 25 with me, "Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." In the original language, it is very emphatic. It is as if Thomas was pounding the table saying, "Unless I see it for myself, unless I put my finger in his hands and in his side, I will not believe!" That's how strong it is in the original language. It is a pounded table kind of response. He is stubbornly refusing to believe. He says, "I'll have none of it." So he was a pessimist. He is often called doubting Thomas. Here he's stubbornly refusing and what happens to him?

You know, I hope that you know that at Truth Community Church we love the Lord Jesus with all our hearts. That's what we want to be known as as a church, known according not to our subjective projections on him and what we want him to be but as he is revealed in the Scriptures as the sovereign Savior, the sovereign seeker of sinners. And here we see in what we're about to read on in verse 26 and following, here we are going to see just a breathtaking display of condescension and grace from Jesus to Thomas; that in his weakness, even in his stubbornness, even like you and the way that you have refused the Gospel over the years, pretending maybe to be something that you're not, Jesus comes to Thomas and meets him in order to bring him saving grace. I love this. That for all of Thomas' ignorance and confusion and unrighteousness and rejection, Christ comes to him anyway. Not because Thomas – look, look, look, look, look – not because Thomas had done something so good that Jesus just had to go and be with him, not because Thomas was wise and insightful, he was a rebel at this point and Jesus comes to him.

Verse 26, look at it with me, "After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them." He was with them this time. Jesus knew that in advance. He knew where to find Thomas just like he knew where to find you. He found you right here in this room today to present his resurrection to you and to call for your response. That's it. That's what this whole thing is about. So verse 26, "After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, 'Peace be with you.'" You know, I can't wait to one day hear the voice of Christ with my own ears in heaven and hear that majestic voice, that majestic sound from his lips. Do you realize we have no idea how magnificent the voice of Christ is? The Gospel writers in Matthew 7:28 and 29 said, "Everyone who heard him was stunned at the authority with which he spoke," and the best of preachers of which I am

not one, the best of preachers when they read the Scriptures, they cannot perfectly replicate what the authority and the sound and the compassion all wrapped into one of the voice of Christ must have been like. For now we have an inerrant word to read and to understand with our minds. One day the experience will go even beyond that. My whole point in that is saying that these men who were there heard Jesus say in a way that must have been absolutely compelling, "Peace be with you." There they are huddled up in the room and their Teacher, their Master, their Lord who had been dead not too long ago, he had been dead in a grave, and he walks in and says, "Peace be with you." Imagine what that's like.

Then he points out Thomas, just like the Spirit of God is pointing out some of you right now and saying, "You're the man. This is for you. Listen up. Hear, this is what I want you to hear. That's why I brought you here today is to hear this exact thing." Jesus said to Thomas, it's pointed, it's direct, it's personal, it's an effective call on an individual heart, he said, "Thomas, reach here with your finger, and see My hands," put it in my side, Thomas, "and be not be unbelieving, but believing." He says, "Thomas, you said you wouldn't believe until you saw. Here it is. Put aside your unbelief." And now we're at a juncture where you can see the right answer to the question: what do I do with the resurrection? How can I be reconciled to God? Look at what Thomas says in verse 28 and commit yourself to enter into the spirit of that exact same response from your own heart. John 20:28, "Thomas answered and said to Him, 'My Lord and my God!'" First of all, notice this, notice the first person singular possessive pronoun, my. It's a personal response. There is a personal appropriation of Christ that says, "I receive you myself." Implied in that is, "I reject my prior unbelief. I reject my prior stubbornness. I reject my sin. I deny myself. You are now mine." He receives him personally. It's a personal confession. "My Lord and my God."

Beloved, here's the hinge of eternity for you and there will be no excuse for you if you walk out here unconverted. There will be no excuse for you if you die in your sins after hearing what Scripture has to say about this. How can you be right with God? I'm going to ask kind of a series of progressive questions here so follow the logic of it with me. It's very simple. It's linear. It's direct. It's point A to point B, that's the way I like to think. It's the way that Scripture teaches us to think, more importantly. How can you be right with God? You must come to Christ. And let's peel that back one more layer: what does it look like to come to Christ? What is God calling on your heart to do? Now that the work of redemption has been done, Christ died on the cross and completed that work of redemption, he is raised from the dead showing that God accepted his sacrifice on behalf of sinners, all of the work is done but it calls for a response from you and Jesus said, "No one comes to the Father but through Me." You must come to Christ. What does it look like for you to come to him? You must repent of your sin and receive Christ personally by faith in utter self-denial, in utter humility that says, "I cannot save myself. There is nothing good about me. I am a wretched sinner deserving the judgment of God and, Jesus, I come humbly to you like that. You said you're the Savior of sinners, save this one too, namely me." You must repent of your sin and receive Christ by faith.

What does that look like? What does that mean? It means that you recognize that the testimony of the resurrection establishes for all time that Jesus Christ is God in human flesh because the resurrection compels that response. Remember the invitation that I made for you to go to a cemetery and call a man out of the grave to show that you don't have the power to do that? You remember that little illustration, I know, because it creeps a lot of people out. But, you see, God is not subject to our limitations. God has control over the grave. Christ came out of the grave and therefore you realize that the resurrection compels you – watch this – compels you to assign a place and a priority and a prerogative to Christ that no one else has. You realize that he has been uniquely set apart to a place where no other men can go. He is unique. The resurrection compels you to acknowledge that. He's not like some of the false Messiahs who claimed that status and then died, some a miserable death, and their graves are with us today. Jesus' grave is empty.

So you recognize him as God in human flesh and what do you do? You hand your guilt to him. You come as a sinner begging for mercy, as a sinner bankrupt in your own righteousness, and you come and you hand your guilt to him and you humbly ask him, "Lord, please save me. Please have mercy on me because I cannot save myself. Please, O Christ, please reconcile me to God." John 14:6, "I come to you to find the Father." John 20:28, "I come to you like Thomas did. My Lord, my God, I lay hold of you. I appropriate you. I cling to you. I flee to you and leave everything else behind. This is the supreme priority of my life. This is the compelling motivation of my heart. Nothing else matters. Unless you save me, I am destined to perish." Beloved, have you come to Christ like that? Have you? That's the only way that you can be saved.

Let's turn our thoughts back to John 20:28 here. Thomas here isn't making an abstract theological confession here. He's not – watch this, watch this – and once again, I'm confronted with the fact that I am utterly dependent on the power of the Holy Spirit to work in your hearts because I cannot compel you to pay attention, to listen, or to respond in a way that would actually save your soul. That power does not belong to me and so with what I'm about to say, I'm entirely speaking in reliance on the Holy Spirit for you to see and to grasp and to understand. Notice that Thomas isn't simply saying, "You are Lord and you are God," as though it were something outside of him, a confession that would be true but that he is separated from by his choice of pronouns. He says, "My Lord and my God." He receives him personally and that's the way that you must respond. That is the right answer to the resurrection. It is for you, preferably literally in one sense, certainly spiritually metaphorically in your heart, you falling down on your knees before Christ and saying, "In light of the resurrection, you are my Lord and my God. Let the world pass away, let the dearest and those closest to me reject me if they will, everything that I once held dear I throw it aside. I cast it aside as mere dung on the heap of human refuse and I say, Christ, you are my Lord and my God. Mine. I receive you myself." You receive him as your personal Lord. You give him your life unreservedly and unconditionally forever. "My Lord. My Master. My God." What does that mean except that Christ is now my authority and the one to whom I exclusively respond with all of my being. Mine. Lord. God. These things are deep and profound expressed in the simplest of small syllables. And why would you do that? Can I just keep it really simple? God is holy

and you are not. Oh beloved, I'm your friend when I say this to you: you are not a good person. That's why you need to be saved. You must have a Savior or you will die in your sins. So beloved, call on Christ like Thomas did. My friend for whom I have prayed, go to Christ like Thomas did and understand that here we are 2,000 years later and Christ anticipating your presence at a place like this now says something that applies directly to you today. There is a promise in verse 29 for someone just like you. Jesus promises to bless you if you would come to him in exactly the way that I have described to you here today.

Look at what it says in verse 29, a personal promise to you. There is no reason to walk out unsaved today. None. There is no reason for you to walk out in darkness and strangled by the devil. None. Jesus invites you in verse 29, he establishes for all time, you see, Thomas saw him resurrected. Jesus isn't present here with us for us to see him physically resurrected and Jesus, recognizing that, says it's no disadvantage. It's no hindrance to you from coming. Jesus says verse 29 to Thomas, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed." Beloved, do you want the blessing of God? Believe on Christ. Receive him as your Lord and your God and he says, "I will bless you." It's not just that he calls you out of sin in a negative way, that's part of it, that's essential, but there's this positive dimension of the promise of the Gospel that God says, "I will bless you if you will only come like this." There is no reason for you to walk out unsaved. There is no excuse for that. And let me just say with as much proper, restrained sense of warning that I can possibly give to you as well: there is no excuse for you to sit in that pew cold, hard, resistant, just waiting for this to get done. There's no excuse for that. God here has brought blessing to you. He has given you everything that is necessary for you to respond and receive his blessing now and for eternity. Despite your guilt, despite your unbelief like Thomas, for you to sit hard and cold and unresponsive is absolutely inexcusable. So Scripture calls you, every one of you, to this salvation.

Look at verse 30 and realize, recognize the sweet grace of God in what it is saying here and realize that it's a personal invitation to you. Verse 30, "Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book." John is saying, "I could have written a lot more but I had limitations here." Verse 31, "but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." The Bible says that if you would confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. There is no lack of power. There is no lack of willingness in Christ. The question is: will you come and receive him as Lord and God like that? Jesus Christ came to save and reconcile sinners just like you. For those of us that are in Christ, all of this reminds us that our salvation is secure. We belong to Christ and not even death can't separate us from him.

Bow with me in prayer.

Oh, my friend, Christ brought you here today to offer the Gospel to you. All your sins can be forgiven today. You can receive eternal life right now, friend. There is no reason to

delay, is there? Will you receive him? Will you receive Christ or will you leave this building condemned? Christ has spoken to you and calls for your response.

Our Father, we pray that you would open unbelieving hearts even as you opened the unbelieving heart of Thomas, and that those who do not know Christ would now respond, "Oh, my Lord and my God, I receive this resurrected Christ as my own, this resurrected Christ as my only hope of being saved. I see that I must be reconciled with God. I see that Christ is the only means of that reconciliation and so, yes, Jesus, I come." Father, may you give that response to every unbelieving heart that is in this room and, Father, for those of us that are Christians, that you have saved at some point in time in the past, we thank you that you saved us from our sins. We thank you that you delivered us from our own unrighteousness and wickedness, our own unbelief and indifference. O God, you have been so merciful and wonderful to us and it's our joy to crown you Lord of all and Lord of us and Lord of me. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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