

For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little and there a little.

Isaiah 28:10

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First Love Ministries, Inc.

PRAYER STUDY # 208

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

CHAPTER 20

7 Words from the Cross

1. **Luke 2:34**- *“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”*
2. **Luke 23:43**- *“Amen, I say unto thee, Today with Me shalt thou be in Paradise.”*
3. **John 19:26**- *“Behold, thy mother.”*
4. **Matthew 27:46 & Mark 15:34**- *“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken Me?”*
5. **John 19:28**- *“I thirst.”*
6. **John 19:30**- *“It is finished.”*
7. **Luke 23:46**- *“Father, into Thy hands, I commend my Spirit.”*

Chapter 20

1. The resurrection
2. Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene.
3. Jesus appears to the disciples (Thomas is absent).
4. Jesus appears again to the disciples (Thomas is present).
5. Purpose of John’s Gospel

Part One-Verses One through Ten

1. The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulcher and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulcher.
2. Then she runneth and cometh to Simon Peter and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid Him.
3. Peter therefore went forth and that other disciple and came to the sepulcher.
4. So they ran both together, and the other disciple did outrun Peter and came first to the sepulcher.
5. And he stooping down and looking in saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.
6. Then cometh Simon Peter following him and went into the sepulcher and seeth the linen clothes lie,

7. And the napkin, that was about His head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.
8. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulcher, and he saw and believed.
9. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that He might rise again from the dead.
10. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

No one loved Jesus any more than Mary Magdalene. Jesus had cast out of her seven demons. There is no scriptural evidence that she was a prostitute but many have labeled her *pre-Christ* condition as such. We do know that she had sinned much, and in her deliverance she loved much. She had the highest honor perhaps of any one person in the Bible, and that honor was being the first to see the risen Christ.

The Jews believed that the spirit of a dead person hung around the dead body for three days. After the third day, the spirit departed because the body had decayed so much that it had become unrecognizable. (That's why Jesus delayed until the fourth day to go to Lazarus' tomb. He wanted the Jews to know that Lazarus was completely dead.) The Jews considered it therefore a duty to visit the gravesite and body for three days after a person had been buried.

The disciples and Mary had a problem, however. Sabbatical law strictly forbidded going to a graveyard or tomb on Saturday, the Sabbath. Thus, it was Sunday when Mary Magdalene came. She came very early in the morning, some time during the fourth watch which was from 3 AM to 6 AM. Not only had a stone been placed at the opening of the tomb, but also the authorities had sealed it, according to the Gospel of Matthew, so that no one would move it for any reason, or that person would face the death penalty. Mary was shocked when she found the stone rolled away.

In spite of his denial of Christ, which had already most likely gone the gossip rounds, Peter was still respected as the undisputable leader of the disciples, and it was to him and John that Mary went. Oddly enough the other disciples did not get excited about the news and remained, probably out of fear, in the place they were staying, probably the upper room. Peter and John, however, instantly ran to the tomb. John, probably being much younger and in better shape than Peter, outran him. John did not go into the tomb, however, but only peered inside. Peter, on the other hand, went into the tomb and

saw the grave clothes and napkin (used to cover the dead's face) lying there.

Seemingly Peter was confused by the scene at the tomb. Luke 24:12 says that Peter "...departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass. But John put two and two together and must have wondered why a grave robber would have robbed a body and yet left expensive grave clothes and not only leave them but leave them exactly as if they would have appeared if a body had been in them. John believed and became thus the first believer of the resurrection.

Part Two-Verses Eleven through Eighteen

11. But Mary stood without at the sepulcher weeping, and as she wept, she stooped down and looked into the sepulcher,

12. 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.

13. And 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.

14. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back and saw Jesus standing and knew not that it was Jesus.

15. Jesus saith unto her, **Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?** She, supposing Him to be the gardener, saith unto Him, Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away.

16. Jesus saith unto her, **Mary.** She turned herself and saith unto Him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master.

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.**

18. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord and that He had spoken these things unto her.

This is one of the most powerful sections of all of scripture as Mary Magdalene becomes the first person to see the risen Christ. She is so continually weeping and so caught up in the tragedy of the missing body that she does not even call Jesus' name to the gardner. She feels the whole world knows about Jesus. She does not recognize Jesus because of her tears blurring her vision, because He was in a glorified body, and because she was so intent in staring at the empty tomb and thus for the most part had her back to the Lord. Jesus said that His sheep would

know His voice(John 10:4), and Mary instantly recognized that voice when he said one single word, “Mary.” Instantly recognizing Him, she responds, “Master.”

There is some confusion about verse 17 where Jesus tells Mary not to touch Him and yet eight days later tells Thomas to touch His hands and side. Did He ascend to the Father between these times? Barclay suggests that the translation from the Aramaic, which Jesus would have been speaking to Mary, to Greek, which was the language John wrote in, is not very good. He says that a better translation might possibly be, “*Don't go on clutching me selfishly to yourself. In a short time I am going back to my Father. I want to meet my disciples as often as possible before then. Go and tell them the good news that none of the time that we and they should have together may be wasted.*” And that is exactly what Mary did, i.e. go and tell the disciples!

J. Vernon McGee disagrees with Barclay. He says, “*The Lord told Mary not to touch Him. The word touch is kaptomai, meaning 'to hold on.' Later, He told the disciples to touch Him. Why this difference? He says to her, 'for I am not yet ascended to my Father.' This is the reason she should not hold on to Him. So apparently He did ascend to His Father before the appearance to the disciples in the house. I believe that the Lord Jesus presented His blood at the throne of God and that His blood turned the judgment seat into the mercy seat which it is today. That blood was shed for your sin and for my sin. I think the blood will be there throughout all eternity as an eternal testimony of the price He paid for us.*”

Part Three-Verses Nineteen through Twenty-three

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.**

20.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.

21.Then said Jesus to them again, **Peace be unto you; as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.**

22.And when He had said this, He breathed on them and saith unto them, **Receive ye the Holy Ghost;**

23.**Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.**

This passage contains the time of the first appearance to His disciples, Thomas being absent. The disciples had locked themselves in because they were afraid. These were not just the original disciples according to Luke 24:33 but others were present. Jesus in His glorified body comes through the solid walls and speaks peace to them. He showed them his hands and side and even later asks for food to show that He is in a real, yet glorified body, and not just a spirit. He commissions the disciples to be sent and He breathes on them the Holy Spirit. This last verse speaks of the Church, not to individuals, I believe. It is the Word of God and the acceptance of Christ that allows sins to be remitted or retained.

Part Four-Verses Twenty-four through Twenty-nine

24. But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

25. 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.

26. And after eight days, again His disciples were inside and Thomas was with them; then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst and said, **Peace be unto you.**

27. Then saith He unto Thomas, **Reach here thy finger and behold My hands; and reach here thy hand and thrust it into My side and be not faithless, but believing.**

28. And Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord and my God.

29. Jesus saith unto him, **Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed.**

We often malign Thomas as “Doubting Thomas.” We forget his courage. If you remember, he was the one who said to the others, “Let us go and die with the Lord to Jerusalem” before Jesus and the disciples went back to Bethany concerning the death of Lazarus. He most likely was not with the disciples when Jesus first came to them, because he was broken-hearted and preferred dealing with his grief alone. We also must admire Thomas for his honesty. He was not one who would try to play the religious game. He expressed his doubts openly and refused to act like he believed something, which he didn’t. The great virtue in people like Thomas is that, once they are convinced, they will stand on their belief no matter what and are all the way Christians.

There is an apocryphal book called the Acts of Thomas which conjure up legend and tradition about Thomas. The Apocrypha is obviously inaccurate and often contradict canonized scripture but do seemingly have a measure of truth. We do believe that Thomas actually ended up in India and took the Gospel there.

Part Five-Verses Thirty through Thirty-One

30.And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book;

31.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.

Many scholars believe that the Gospel of John actually ended with John 20:31. They say that Chapter 21 was added later as an afterthought. I am so glad that we have Chapter 21. It is a great book to end on, which we will do next week.

Each Gospel writer was not out to present a full biography and history of Jesus on the earth. They wrote their Gospels for men and women who were seeking God, not intellectual knowledge. Thus, they had to pick and choose events and happening, and , as we will see next week, John himself admits, *“And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written”* (John 21:25).

Behold the Lamb

Dottie Rambo

Behold the Lamb

Behold the Lamb

Slain from the foundation of the world.

For sinners crucified

O holy sacrifice

Behold the Lamb of God

Behold the Lamb

Crown Him

Crown Him

Worthy is the Lamb

Praise Him

Praise Him

Heaven and earth resound.