***When Doubt Turns to Faith***

**Pentecost #2, John 20:24-31 April 18, 2021**

***Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”  
Then Jesus said to him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed;   
blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”*John 20:28-29**

**A study in doubt: it’s never just about the evidence**

*24 Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!”*

*But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it.”*

John 20:24-25

1) The disciples were doing their jobs; it was Thomas who missed out on fellowship and Jesus!

2) The problem was not in the evidence or his character (11:16; 14:5) but in how he saw the evidence

**Learning to trust**

A week later we were together in a house, and this time Thomas was with us. Again Jesus appeared in our midst, although the doors were closed and securely locked. “Peace be with you,” he said. Turning to Thomas, he said, “Put your finger here where the nails were driven through. Put your hand into my side. Stop doubting and learn to trust.”

Thomas exclaimed, “It is you! My Lord and my God!”

John 20:26-28 (Robert Mounce’s first person account in *The Story of Jesus*)

1) The disciples are already gathering on that first day!

2) Jesus responds directly to Thomas’ “demands”

3) Trust is a heart issue not a head issue

4) Thomas’ confession is both shocking and evidence of a changed heart (see Matthew 27:54-55)

**Who is the “you”?**

*29 Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”*

*30 Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

John 20:21-23

1) This is John’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (along with 13:17, “you will be blessed if you do them”)

2) I am the “you”!

3) Don’t underestimate the ways Jesus gives us to know him today:

**Three lessons**

1) Wounds matter for our theology of the atonement

*8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

*9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him! 10 For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!*

Romans 5:8

2) The content of our confession matters – for fellowship and for eternity

Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he be able to unite with Thomas heartily in this creed, “My Lord and my God.” I do not go in for all the minute distinctions of the Athanasian Creed, but I have no doubt that it was absolutely needful at the time it was written, and that it materially helped to check the evasions and tricks of the Arians. This short creed of Thomas I like much better, for it is brief, pithy, full, sententious, and it avoids those matters of detail which are the quicksands of faith.

Spurgeon, “My Lord and My God”

3) The rest of the New Testament is given so that I don’t miss the assurance and the blessing!

7 *These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, 9 for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*

1 Peter 1:7-9

**Resources for further studies in John’s gospel**

The Bible Project team has great stuff on John at <https://open.life.church/items/179216-john-poster-jpg>

Spurgeon has sermons on this text at [*https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/my-lord-and-my-god/#flipbook/*](https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/my-lord-and-my-god/%23flipbook/) *and* [*http://www.malankaraworld.com/Library/Sermons/Sermons\_new-sunday-Lords-wound-spurgeon.htm*](http://www.malankaraworld.com/Library/Sermons/Sermons_new-sunday-Lords-wound-spurgeon.htm)

J. C. Ryle’s commentary on John at [*http://www.tracts.ukgo.com/ryle\_gospel\_of\_john.htm*](http://www.tracts.ukgo.com/ryle_gospel_of_john.htm)

Deffinbaugh’s sermon at [*https://bible.org/seriespage/46-seeing-and-believing-john-2010-31*](https://bible.org/seriespage/46-seeing-and-believing-john-2010-31)

I have really appreciated D. A. Carson’s commentary in the Pillar New Testament Commentary series (Eerdmans, 1991) and Earl Palmer’s *The Intimate Gospel* (Word Books, 1978)

The two resources on our union with Christ are Johm Murray’s *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Eerdmans, 1955) and Rankin Wilbourne’s *Union with Christ* (David C. Cook, 2016). I also recommend Marcus Peter’s short study at [*https://www.crossway.org/articles/10-things-you-should-know-about-union-with-christ/*](https://www.crossway.org/articles/10-things-you-should-know-about-union-with-christ/)

S. M. Lockridge’s “That’s My King” at [*https://thatsmyking.wordpress.com/words/*](https://thatsmyking.wordpress.com/words/)

Merril Tenney has a helpful paper on the authorship of John’s gospel in a four part *Bibliotheca Sacra* series (1963) at [*faculty.gordon.edu/hu/bi/Ted\_Hildebrandt/NTeSources/NTArticles/BSac-NT/Tenney-LiteraryJohnPt2-BS.pdf*](faculty.gordon.edu/hu/bi/Ted_Hildebrandt/NTeSources/NTArticles/BSac-NT/Tenney-LiteraryJohnPt2-BS.pdf)

Robert Mounce’s *The Story of Jesus* at [*http://media.thestoryofjesus.org/TheStoryOfJesus-download.pdf*](http://media.thestoryofjesus.org/TheStoryOfJesus-download.pdf)

Leon Morris has a short essay on the atonement in John’s gospel at [*http://faculty.gordon.edu/hu/bi/Ted\_Hildebrandt/NTeSources/NTArticles/CTR-NT/Morris-JohnsAtonement-CTR.pdf*](http://faculty.gordon.edu/hu/bi/Ted_Hildebrandt/NTeSources/NTArticles/CTR-NT/Morris-JohnsAtonement-CTR.pdf)

# John Poster (JPG)

# On Seeing and Believing (John 20:10-31) Deffinbaugh at [*https://bible.org/seriespage/46-seeing-and-believing-john-2010-31*](https://bible.org/seriespage/46-seeing-and-believing-john-2010-31)

### Introduction

Last night we attended the wedding of a friend. Jeannette went early to help set things up, and I came later. When I arrived, I parked the car and was walking toward the building where the wedding ceremony was to be held. Another car arrived just moments after I did, parking just a couple of spaces away. The sun had gone down, and the parking lot was only partially illuminated. A woman emerged from the other car and began to walk in the same direction I was going. She said something like, “Hi, there!” and I turned to see who it was. In the light, I could see a woman who looked very familiar. The woman saw that I was looking intently at her and said, “It’s me, Sally Rackets.” I knew it was Sally, but I could not believe it. Sally and her husband Steve attended our church until they left to take a job in California. It was beyond my ability to comprehend that the person speaking to me was really Sally, but of course it was.

There is one more twist to this story. As I was on the way to the wedding, I passed a car that looked very similar to one Steve Rackets used to drive. Seeing this car had reminded me of Steve and Sally, and that he is looking for job, so I prayed for him as I made my way to the wedding, not more than fifteen minutes before I saw his wife, Sally. That’s why I was so taken back to see her—I knew who she was—but I just didn’t believe she was in Dallas, because I assumed she and Steve were both in California.

There is a point to this story: seeing is not necessarily believing. I saw Sally, but I could not believe it was really her. This is the way it was with the disciples of our Lord in our text. On several occasions, Jesus appeared to those who had followed Him, but because they assumed He was dead, they could not believe their eyes. Among those who “**saw**,” but did not believe (immediately), were Mary Magdalene and the seven disciples of our Lord at the Sea of Tiberias (also called the Sea of Galilee—see [John 6:1](javascript:%7b%7d)). The disciples all came to believe that Jesus had been raised from the dead, but it was not because they expected this to happen. Their “believing” came hard, all the more proof that Jesus truly did rise from the dead.

Our text deals with the first three of our Lord’s four post-resurrection appearances in the Gospel of John. The first appearance is to Mary Magdalene, and the next three are to the disciples. Jesus will appear to Mary Magdalene (20:10-18), then to the disciples, minus Thomas (20:19-23), then to the disciples, with Thomas (20:26-29), and finally to the seven disciples, including Thomas, who were fishing on the Sea of Tiberias (21:1ff.). There are some very important lessons to be learned here, so let us listen and learn, looking to the Spirit of God to interpret, apply, and implement these truths in our lives.

### General Observations

It would serve us well to begin with several observations concerning our text and its relationship to the other Gospels.

*We do not really know a great deal about the time between our Lord’s resurrection and His ascension*. When you stop to think about it, a significant portion of each of the Gospels is taken up with the events of the last week of our Lord in Jerusalem. And yet, the 40 days following our Lord’s resurrection gets very little attention in comparison. The material we do have about this period is not meant to satisfy our curiosity about all that happened during this time, but is recorded to prove one important fact: *Jesus Christ rose from the dead and ascended to the right hand of the Father!*

*Of the details we do find regarding our Lord’s ministry after His resurrection, a number of them are recorded only in Acts and 1 Corinthians*. Until now I did not realize how much of my understanding of our Lord’s ministry after His resurrection is based upon New Testament books other than the Gospels. Some of the most important details come from [Acts 1](javascript:%7b%7d) and [1 Corinthians 15](javascript:%7b%7d):

1 I wrote the former account, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach 2 until the day he was taken up to heaven, after he had given orders by the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. 3 After his suffering he had also presented himself alive to these apostles by many convincing proofs. He was seen by them over a forty-day period and spoke about matters concerning the kingdom of God. 4 While he was with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for “what my Father promised, which you heard about from me. 5 For John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” 6 So when they had gathered together, they began to ask him, “Lord, is this the time when you are restoring the kingdom to Israel?” 7 He told them, “You are not permitted to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the farthest parts of the earth.” 9 After he had said this, while they were watching, he was lifted up and a cloud took him away from their sight. 10 As they were staring into the sky while he was going, suddenly two men in white clothing stood near them 11 and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking up into the sky? This same Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will come back in the same way you saw him go into heaven” ([Acts 1:1-11](javascript:%7b%7d)).

3 For I passed on to you as of first importance what I also received—that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, 4 and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6 Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still living, though some have died. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. 8 Last of all, as though to one born at the wrong time, he appeared to me also ([1 Corinthians 15:3-8](javascript:%7b%7d)).

I am not sure why I had concluded that my understanding of the post-resurrection period was dependent solely upon the Gospels. It was probably due, in part, to my assumption that if one Gospel didn’t mention something I knew about this time period, it was because it was recorded in one of the other three Gospels. But this is not necessarily true. If it were not for [Acts 1](javascript:%7b%7d) and [1 Corinthians 15](javascript:%7b%7d), we would not know nearly as much about the Lord’s ministry during the 40 days following His resurrection. From [Acts 1:3](javascript:%7b%7d) we learn that during this time, Jesus taught His disciples about the kingdom of God which was yet to come. While our Lord’s instruction to His disciples to wait for the coming of the Spirit can be found in Luke’s Gospel (24:49), we probably remember this command from [Acts 1:4-5](javascript:%7b%7d). Apart from [1 Corinthians 15:5](javascript:%7b%7d), we would not know that Jesus appeared to over 500 people at one time after His resurrection. It is from Paul ([1 Corinthians 15:5](javascript:%7b%7d)), as well as from Luke (24:34), that we know Jesus made a private appearance to Peter. We would certainly not expect the replacement for Judas to be Saul, to whom our Lord made another (albeit, a later) post-resurrection appearance ([1 Corinthians 15:8](javascript:%7b%7d)). A good part of what little we know of this period in our Lord’s life and ministry comes from outside the Gospels.

*Some of the details about events which occurred in this time period may appear to be contradictory*. For example, in Mark we read that after the women saw and heard the angel at the tomb, “**they went out and ran away from the tomb. They were in a state of trembling and amazement, and *said nothing to anyone*, because they were afraid**” ([Mark 16:8](javascript:%7b%7d), emphasis mine). In Luke’s Gospel we read, “**Then they remembered his words, and when they returned from the tomb *they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest*** ” ([Luke 24:8-9](javascript:%7b%7d), emphasis mine). I believe the solution to this apparent contradiction is found in Matthew’s account: “**So they left the tomb quickly, with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. But *Jesus met them*, saying, ‘Greetings!’ They came to him, held on to his feet and worshiped him. Then *Jesus said to them*, ‘Do not be afraid. *Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee.* They will see me there’**” ([Matthew 28:8-10](javascript:%7b%7d), emphasis mine).

By putting all these details in sequence, we get a pretty good idea of what happened from the time the women left the tomb till they spoke with all the disciples and others. The women saw and heard the angel, who instructed them to go tell the disciples that Jesus was alive and would meet them in Galilee. The women rush off toward the city, but they are in a virtual state of shock. They tell no one they encounter on their way what they have just seen and heard (this conforms with what Mark tells us). Then, as they are still on their way to the city, Jesus Himself appears to them. This is the first time they have actually seen Him. He tells the women to go and tell the others, and indeed they do. Thus, all statements (those of Mark, of Luke, and of Matthew) harmonize when viewed in terms of the entire event. I believe we must assume this to be the case in every instance where an apparent contradiction appears. The details that differ are not an occasion for wringing our hands, they are the opportunity for a fuller grasp of what happened. Let us keep that in mind as we approach our text.

*We find that some of the Gospel accounts are particularly brief at this point.* This is especially true of Matthew and Mark’s accounts. Matthew writes of one appearance of Jesus to the women (28:9-10) and of one appearance of Jesus to His disciples (28:16-20). Mark’s account is terse as well, depending to some degree upon where you think his account really ends. Mark does briefly mention the appearance of Jesus to the two men on the road to Emmaus (16:12-13; compare [Luke 24:13-35](javascript:%7b%7d)). He also tells of the appearance of our Lord to the eleven disciples ([Mark 16:13-18](javascript:%7b%7d)). Mark does not include an account of Jesus appearing to any of the women, but only of the angel speaking to them (16:1-8). Luke and John have the most lengthy accounts of the post-resurrection ministry of our Lord. Luke does not describe an appearance of Jesus to the women; he chooses instead to emphasize the appearance to the two men on the road to Emmaus (24:13-35). He then writes of our Lord’s subsequent appearance to the disciples (24:36-39) and then of His ascension (24:50-53). John focuses on four of the Lord’s post-resurrection appearances: first to Mary Magdalene (20:11-18), then to the disciples minus Thomas (20:19-25), then the disciples with Thomas (20:26-29), and finally to the seven disciples as they are fishing on the Sea of Tiberias (21:1-25).

*Finally, each Gospel has something unique to add to the story*. Matthew informs us that the tomb was secured by a Roman seal and guards, provided at the request of the Jewish religious leaders who recalled Jesus’ promise that He would rise from the dead in three days, and who were afraid His disciples would steal His body. Matthew then follows up with an account of how the guards and the religious leaders fabricated a cover story to explain the missing body of our Lord. Mark’s account is indeed unique, causing much discussion as to where his Gospel should end. Luke provides us with a detailed account of the appearance of our Lord to the two men on the road to Emmaus. John’s account is almost entirely unique. He alone describes the investigation of the tomb by both Peter and John ([Luke 24:12](javascript:%7b%7d) tells us only that Peter went to see the tomb), of the appearance of Jesus to Mary, of three appearances of Jesus to His disciples—more than any other Gospel. His focus on Thomas’ reluctance to believe in our Lord’s resurrection is unique. The appearance of Jesus to the seven disciples at the Sea of Tiberias is also unique, including our Lord’s three-fold question and exhortation to Peter. With this background information in mind, let us take a closer look at the first three post-resurrection appearances of our Lord, as described in [John 20](javascript:%7b%7d).

### Jesus’ First Appearance: Mary Magdalene (20:10-18)

10 So the disciples went back to their homes. 11 But Mary stood outside the tomb and wept. While she was weeping, she bent over and looked into the tomb. 12 She saw two angels in white sitting where Jesus’ body had been lying, one at the head and one at the feet. 13 They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” Mary replied, “They have taken my Lord away, and I do not know where they have put him!” 14 When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. 15 Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?” Because she thought he was the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will take him.” 16 Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned and said to him in Aramaic, “*Rabboni*” (which means Teacher). 17 Jesus replied, “Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father. Go to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” 18 Mary Magdalene came and informed the disciples, “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them what Jesus had said to her.

It was Mary Magdalene who first arrived at the empty tomb in the early hours of the first day of the week. When she saw the stone had been removed, she seems to have jumped to a hasty conclusion—someone had taken the body. We do not know to whom the “**they**” (“***They* have taken the Lord from the tomb …**”—verse 2) refers, and I doubt that Mary did either. I believe it is safe to say that it never occurred to her that any of the disciples took the body. She seems to have assumed it was either the Jews, or the Roman soldiers, or someone like “**the gardener**” (see 20:15). It never occurred to Mary that Jesus had been raised from the dead. She did not hope to see her risen Lord; she simply wished to locate His body and give it a proper burial.

A year or so ago a young woman’s body was stolen from its grave at Restland Cemetery, just a mile or so down the road from our church. It was a terrible thing to do, and the family was most eager to get the body back and see to it that it was buried properly, once for all. Someone had added insult to injury. Not only had this family lost a loved one, they suffered the agony of not knowing what had become of her body. Mary must have felt the same way this young woman’s family felt. She had devoted herself and her livelihood to following Jesus and supporting Him, along with some other women. She had watched helplessly as Jesus was tried, convicted, and crucified. She looked on as His body was laid in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. Now, she believed that the body of her Lord had been taken. It was almost too much to bear.

When Peter and John left the tomb, Mary remained behind. At first she stood outside the tomb, weeping. She stooped sufficiently to be able to see inside the tomb, apparently for the first time. Two angels were inside, clothed in white. An angel was sitting at each end of the place where Jesus’ body had been laid. From Mary’s response to these angels, one can hardly avoid the conclusion that Mary did not recognize these angels as angels. But then why should she? It is true that in Matthew’s account the one angel who sat on the stone had an appearance that was like lightening (28:3), and this fellow was so awesome the guards were terrified (28:4). But John does not tell us that these two angels were as awesome in appearance as the first angel was. And this should come as no surprise. Often in the Bible, angels simply look like men, so that their appearance alone would not reveal their true identity (see [Genesis 18](javascript:%7b%7d) and 19; [Acts 1:10-11](javascript:%7b%7d); [Hebrews 13:2](javascript:%7b%7d)). It would seem that the two angels made no effort to identify themselves as angels, nor even to inform Mary that Jesus was not there. Perhaps it was because our Lord was going to do this personally.

The angels asked Mary, “**Woman, why are you weeping?**” The inference is that her tears were not really called for. They were tears of love, and of sorrow, but they were also ill-founded. In Mary’s mind, this was the darkest moment of her life, and yet her tears were based upon false assumptions: that Jesus was dead; that His body had been stolen; that she would not be able to find His body. If Mary had known the real reason why the tomb was empty, she would not have been crying.

Some have suggested that the angels gave a look of recognition when they saw Jesus behind Mary, outside the tomb. We do not know why, but for some reason Mary turned around to gaze at the risen Lord. She saw Him, but she did not recognize Him, in much the same way that I had seen Sally Rackets in the parking lot this past week, but did not recognize her. Mary’s vision may have been obscured by her tears, and Jesus may not have looked exactly the same as He did before His resurrection. He most certainly looked different from the way she saw Him last, from the horrible sight she could not erase from her mind—a badly beaten, bloody figure, who could hardly be recognized for all the abuse His body had taken: “Just as there were many who were appalled at him—his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness” ([Isaiah 52:15](javascript:%7b%7d), NIV).

Jesus asks Mary the same question the angels had asked her moments earlier: “**Woman, why are you weeping?**”, but He adds a further question, “**Who are you looking for?**”. Jesus knew why she was weeping. He knew that the empty tomb caused her great grief. He knew that she was seeking His body. His words indicate to Mary that He knows something about her dilemma. Mary’s grief still blinds her to the truth, but she nevertheless seems to discern that this “**gardener**” holds the key to her quest for the Lord’s body. She pleads with Him to convey any information He may have to her: “**Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will take him**” (verse 15).[193](https://bible.org/seriespage/46-seeing-and-believing-john-2010-31#P5566_2226991)

Jesus answered with but one word—“**Mary**.” For Mary, seeing was not believing, but hearing was. Would you not love to have heard this one word just the way Mary did? That one word was spoken in the voice she knew so well. It was also spoken in the manner she knew so well. What love, what compassion, what healing was conveyed by this one word—“**Mary**.” I cannot help but recall the words of our Lord, spoken earlier:

1 “I tell you the solemn truth, the one who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs in some other way, is a thief and a robber. 2 The one who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 The doorkeeper opens the door for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought all his own sheep out, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him **because they recognize his voice**. 5 They will never follow a stranger, but will run away from him, because they do not recognize the stranger’s voice” ([John 10:1-5](javascript:%7b%7d), emphasis mine).

Immediately Mary recognized that it was her Lord, and called Him “**Rabboni**” (or teacher). We know from our Lord’s words that Mary has already locked Him in her grasp. It is as though she intended to keep holding on to Him, so that He would never leave her again. And it is because of this that Jesus responds, “**Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God’**” ([John 20:17](javascript:%7b%7d), NAB). I must differ with the NET Bible translation here (“**Do not touch me, …**”) for two reasons. First, it is not that Jesus could not be touched. In but a few verses we will read, “**Then he said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here, and examine my hands. Extend your hand and put it into my side. Do not continue in your unbelief, but believe’**” ([John 20:27](javascript:%7b%7d)). Why would Jesus tell Mary not to touch Him, and instruct Thomas to do so? In [Matthew 28:9](javascript:%7b%7d), Jesus allowed the women to take hold of His feet and worship Him. Second, the tense of the imperative is present, and this grammatical construction often conveys the thought of ceasing to do something.[194](https://bible.org/seriespage/46-seeing-and-believing-john-2010-31#P5570_2229586) Jesus is not trying to prevent Mary from touching Him; He is trying to make it clear to her that He is going to leave this world to return to His Father. She should not suppose that by clinging to Him she can prevent His departure.

John does not include the command which Jesus gave to Mary, though it is clear that He instructed her as to what she was to tell the disciples (20:18). She who was the first to go out to the tomb was the first to see the risen Lord, and apparently the first to be privileged to share the good news of His resurrection with others.

Before we go on to the next appearance of our Lord, I would like to make a comment or two. I would like you to note that our Lord’s first appearance is not to one of the eleven disciples, but to Mary Magdalene. She will never be one of the apostles. She will never write a Gospel. She will never become a great preacher or leader. Nevertheless, our Lord chose to manifest Himself to her first. Why do you think this was? I would call your attention to three important factors. First, she had a great love for her Master, as He did for her. Second, she seemed to be the one with the greatest measure of grief. I am reminded of the words of our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount: “**Blessed are those who mourn, because they will be comforted**” ([Matthew 5:4](javascript:%7b%7d)). In the context of this sermon, Jesus did not promise blessings to those who were the greatest, or the most powerful, but to those in the greatest need, with the greatest desire for spiritual things. There is a third reason: Mary was there first. Jesus revealed Himself first to the one who was there first. Mary came to the tomb early, because of her great love, and her great grief, and Jesus revealed Himself to her, first.

I would also like to point out an important lesson which this text teaches us: When we come to see things as they really are, we will find that many of our tears were unnecessary. To put it in different words, Many of our tears are ill-founded. Both the angels and our Lord questioned Mary as to why she was weeping. The reason she gave was that her Lord’s body had been taken, and she did not know where to find it. The truth of the matter was that Jesus was not dead; He had been resurrected. And beyond this, His body was not missing at all, and no one had taken it. Jesus did not need to be found by Mary; Jesus found Mary.

We know that in heaven there will be no more tears: “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death will not exist any more—or mourning, or crying, or pain; the former things have ceased to exist” ([Revelation 21:4](javascript:%7b%7d)). Why will there be no more tears in heaven? The first answer is because there will no longer be those things which cause us to cry—no more suffering, no more sin, no more injustice, no more death. But the second reason is that we shall then see all of our sorrows in an entirely different light. We shall see them in the context of the perfect work God was achieving through the things which caused us to weep.

When you and I get to heaven, we will see things in a very different light, and when we do, we will discover that many of our tears of sorrow were as groundless as Mary’s tears were. I am not saying that Christians should not cry. What I am saying is that a good deal of our sorrow is the result of our inadequate knowledge of what God is doing in and through our adversities. When Christians get to heaven, they will see the entire picture, and thus they will find that everything that has ever happened to them is for their good and His glory. No wonder there will be no tears in heaven! Our comfort and joy may not come as quickly as Mary’s did, but it will be just as great, just as real, and it is just as certain.

### Jesus’ Second Appearance: The Disciples, Minus Thomas (20:19-23)

19 On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the disciples had gathered together and locked the doors of the place for fear of the Jewish authorities. Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you!” 20 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. 21 So Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you! Just as the Father has sent me, I also send you.” 22 And after he said this, he breathed[195](https://bible.org/seriespage/46-seeing-and-believing-john-2010-31#P5579_2234437) on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone’s sins, they are forgiven; if you retain anyone’s sins, they are retained.”

John very kindly does not tell us what Mark and Luke record in their accounts—that when the disciples were told that Jesus was alive, they refused to believe it without seeing Him:

9 Early on the first day of the week, after he arose, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had driven out seven demons. 10 She went out and told those who were with him, while they were mourning and weeping. 11 And when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe ([Mark 16:9-11](javascript:%7b%7d); see also verses 12-13).

10 Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles. 11 But these words seemed like pure nonsense to them, and they did not believe them ([Luke 24:10-11](javascript:%7b%7d)).

It was on the first day of the week—the same day that Mary saw Jesus—and the disciples were gathered together behind locked doors. They were afraid of the Jews, and rightly so. They were disciples of Jesus, and He had just been crucified for sedition. And now, the story was circulating that they had stolen the body of Jesus ([Matthew 28:11-15](javascript:%7b%7d)). Remember that the tomb was sealed by Rome, and guarded by Roman soldiers. The disciples may have felt in greater danger here than on any previous occasion. They must have been deeply troubled by the reports they had heard that Jesus was alive. What were they to think of all this? What were they to do? They did not know.

And so the disciples met together behind locked doors. We are told that one disciple was missing—Thomas. We are not told why he was absent. There is no particular blame cast on him for his absence. In some miraculous way, Jesus enters the room, even though the door is locked. We do not know what the disciples saw, but John certainly leaves us with the impression that our Lord’s entrance was unusual—one more proof of His resurrection. Our Lord twice repeated the words, “**Peace be with you**” (20:19, 21). This certainly reminds us of what Jesus had said earlier to these men:

25 “I have spoken these things while staying with you. 26 But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and will cause you to remember everything I said to you. 27 “**Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you**; I do not give it to you as the world does. Do not let your hearts be distressed or lacking in courage. 28 You heard me say to you, ‘I am going away and I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I am. 29 I have told you now before it happens, so that when it happens you may believe” ([John 14:24-29](javascript:%7b%7d), emphasis mine).

It would appear that this was our Lord’s first appearance to the disciples after His resurrection. If this is so, it may be the same appearance that Luke describes, providing us with additional details:

30 When he had taken his place at the table with them, he took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. 31 At this point their eyes were opened and they recognized him. Then he vanished out of their sight. 32 They said to each other, “Didn’t our hearts burn within us while he was speaking with us on the road, while he was explaining the scriptures to us?” 33 So they got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem. They found the eleven and those with them gathered together 34 and saying, “The Lord has really risen, and has appeared to Simon!” 35 Then they told what had happened on the road, and how they recognized him when he broke the bread. 36 While they were saying these things, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “**Peace be with you**.” 37 But they were startled and terrified, thinking they saw a spirit. 38 Then he said to them, “Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 Look at my hands and my feet, that it is I myself! Touch me and see; because a spirit does not have flesh and bones like you see that I have.” 40 Then when he had said this, **he showed them his hands and his feet**. 41 And while they still could not believe it for joy and were marveling, he said to them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” 42 So they gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate it in front of them ([Luke 24:30-43](javascript:%7b%7d), emphasis mine).

Jesus would have appeared to Mary and the other women by now, and they have already announced to the disciples that Jesus was alive. But the disciples refused to believe. Then, the two men who talked with Jesus on the road to Emmaus arrived to tell the disciples of their encounter with the risen Lord. Once again, the disciples refused to believe:

12 After this he appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking in the country. 13 They went back and told the rest, **but they did not believe them**. 14 Then he appeared to the eleven themselves, while they were eating, and he rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen him resurrected ([Mark 16:12-14](javascript:%7b%7d), emphasis mine).

John spares us from yet another account of the unbelief of the disciples, and of Jesus rebuking them for their unbelief. While their unbelief deserved rebuke, John moves on to tell us how Jesus convinced His disciples of His resurrection. He shows them His nail-scarred hands and His spear-pierced side. There was no mistaking the fact that His wounds, now healed, were incurred at His crucifixion. It was Jesus, and there was no denying it, incredible as that may be.

The disciples had a job to do, and they were being left behind so that they could accomplish it. This task is summed up in the “Great Commission”:

18 Then Jesus came up and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age” ([Matthew 28:18-20](javascript:%7b%7d)).

To accomplish this task, the disciples are in need of divine enablement. This was promised by our Lord in the Upper Room Discourse ([John 13–16](javascript:%7b%7d)):

15 “If you love me, you will obey my commandments. 16 Then I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you forever— 17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot accept, because it does not see him or know him. But you know him, because he resides with you and will be in you. … 25 I have spoken these things while staying with you. 26 But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and will cause you to remember everything I said to you” ([John 14:15-17](javascript:%7b%7d), 25-26).

26 “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me; 27 and you also will testify, because you have been with me from the beginning” ([John 15:26-27](javascript:%7b%7d)).

7 “But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I am going away. For if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. 8 And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong concerning sin and righteousness and judgment— 9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; 10 concerning righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; 11 and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned. 12 I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. For he will not speak on his own authority, but will speak whatever he hears, and will tell you what is to come. 14 He will glorify me, because he will receive from me what is mine and will tell it to you. 15 Everything that the Father has is mine; that is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what is mine and will tell it to you. 16 In a little while you will see me no longer; again after a little while, you will see me” ([John 16:7-16](javascript:%7b%7d)).

I had never noticed before that in His high priestly prayer in [John 17](javascript:%7b%7d), Jesus does not ask the Father to send the Spirit, which He has promised in chapters 14-16. Indeed, the Holy Spirit is not even mentioned in this prayer! How can this be? I believe that while our Lord prepared His disciples for the coming of the Spirit in the Upper Room Discourse, He did not intend to send the Spirit until after His ascension. In other words, the Holy Spirit would not come until Pentecost. Some suggest that in our text Jesus is temporarily bestowing the Spirit upon His disciples, until Pentecost comes. I don’t agree.

In the first place, John does not report anything out of the ordinary happening as a result of our Lord’s actions. The disciples are not transformed, as they will be at Pentecost. The gospel is not preached. In fact, the next thing to happen in John’s Gospel is that some of the disciples go fishing. I do not believe that the Holy Spirit was immediately bestowed upon the disciples at this moment, as a result of what Jesus says and does. I believe Jesus is symbolically bestowing the Spirit upon His disciples, although it will not actually take place until Pentecost. Jesus will have ascended to the Father then, and so this gesture indicates to the disciples that when the Spirit comes at Pentecost, it will be as a result of what Jesus had promised earlier, and symbolically indicates here.

I wish to be very clear here, both as to what I am saying, and as to what I am not saying. I am saying that our Lord is here symbolically bestowing His Holy Spirit on the church. This symbolic act will literally be fulfilled at Pentecost. Jesus wants it to be clear that it is He who is sending His Spirit to indwell and to empower His church. I am not saying that the Spirit is given at the moment Jesus breathes upon His disciples. I am not saying that this is a temporary bestowal of the Spirit, until the permanent coming of the Spirit at Pentecost.

Specifically, I believe that what Jesus is symbolically bestowing is the coming of the Holy Spirit upon His disciples as those who will act as His apostles. Earlier, Jesus outlined some of the ministries of the Holy Spirit. For example, the Spirit would call Jesus’ teaching to their minds. He would convict the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment. But here, none of these ministries seems to be in view. Here, the Holy Spirit is given to the apostles so that they can either proclaim the forgiveness of sins, or the retention of sins. I do not think this text justifies some priestly hierarchy, who hears confessions and grants absolution from one’s sins. Instead, I believe Jesus is giving the apostles the authority to declare men and women to be cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. I believe we see an example of this in the Book of Acts:

1 Now the apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles too had accepted the word of God. 2 So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers took issue with him, 3 saying, “You went to uncircumcised men and shared a meal with them.” 4 But Peter began and explained it to them point by point, saying, 5 “I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision, an object something like a large sheet descending, being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came to me. 6 As I stared I looked into it and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild animals, reptiles, and birds of the air. 7 I also heard a voice saying to me, ‘Get up, Peter; slaughter and eat!’ 8 But I said, ‘Certainly not, Lord, for nothing defiled or ritually unclean has ever entered my mouth!’ 9 But the voice replied a second time from heaven, ‘What God has made clean, you must not consider ritually unclean.’ 10 This happened three times, and then everything was pulled up to heaven again. 11 At that very moment, three men sent to me from Caesarea approached the house where we were staying. 12 **The Spirit told me** to accompany them without hesitation. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man’s house. 13 He informed us how he had seen an angel standing in his house and saying, ‘Send to Joppa and summon Simon, who is called Peter, 14 who will speak a message to you by which you and your entire household will be saved.’ 15 Then as I began to speak, **the Holy Spirit came on them** just as he did on us at the beginning. 16 And I remembered the word of the Lord, as he used to say, ‘John baptized with water, but **you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit**.’ 17 Therefore if God gave them the same gift as he also gave us after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to hinder God?” 18 When they heard this, they ceased their objections and praised God, saying, “**So then, God has granted the repentance that leads to life even to the Gentiles**” ([Acts 11:1-18](javascript:%7b%7d), emphasis mine).

It takes a monumental work of God to convince the Jews that God has purposed from eternity past to save Gentiles (see [Acts 22:21-23](javascript:%7b%7d)). Our Lord had promised to send the Spirit, which He did at Pentecost. After Pentecost, the Holy Spirit directed Peter to go to the house of a Gentile and to proclaim the gospel to those gathered in his house. The Spirit then came upon all those who had come to faith, thus indicating that the gospel (the forgiveness of sins) was not just for Jews alone, but for all who believe, Jew or Gentile. It is difficult for Gentile believers today to grasp how hard it was for Jews to accept the salvation of the Gentiles. Even the apostles found this difficult. As the Spirit came upon the apostles, this truth was embraced, proclaimed, and defended by them. By means of the Spirit’s guidance and illumination, the truth that the gospel was for Jews and Gentiles was declared by the apostles, and particularly by Paul:

11 Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh—who are called “uncircumcision” by the so-called “circumcision” that is performed in the body by hands—12 that you were at that time without the Messiah, alienated from the citizenship of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who used to be far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For he is our peace, the one who turned both groups into one and who destroyed the middle wall of partition, the hostility, in his flesh, 15 when he nullified the law of commandments in decrees. The purpose of this was to create in himself the two into one new man, thus making peace, 16 and to reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by which the hostility has been killed. 17 And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; 18 so that through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. 19 So then you are no longer foreigners and non-citizens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of God’s household, 20 because you have been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit ([Ephesians 2:11-22](javascript:%7b%7d)).

1 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles— 2 If indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God’s grace that was given to me for you, 3 that by revelation the divine secret was made known to me, as I wrote before briefly. 4 When reading this, you will be able to understand my insight into this secret of Christ. 5 Now this secret was not disclosed to mankind in former generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, 6 namely, that through the gospel the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus. 7 I became a servant of this gospel according to the gift of God’s grace that was given to me by the exercise of his power. 8 To me—less than the least of all the saints—this grace was given, to proclaim to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ 9 and to enlighten everyone about the divine secret’s plan—a secret that has been hidden for ages in the God who has created all things ([Ephesians 3:1-9](javascript:%7b%7d)).

### Jesus’ Third Appearance: The Disciples, Including Thomas (20:24-31)

24 Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 The other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he replied, “Unless I see the wounds from the nails in his hands, and put my finger into the wounds from the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will never believe it!” 26 Eight days later the disciples were again together in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” 27 Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and examine my hands. Extend your hand and put it into my side. Do not continue in your unbelief, but believe.” 28 Thomas replied to him, “My Lord and my God!” 29 Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are the people who have not seen and yet have believed.”

The disciples seem to have been convinced of our Lord’s resurrection, except for Thomas who was not there. He did not see the resurrected Lord, nor did he behold the Savior’s wounded hands and side. And so it was that when Thomas was told that Jesus had appeared to them, he refused to believe. He insisted that in order for him to believe, he would have to see Jesus with his own eyes. He would have to personally inspect the Lord’s nail-pierced hands and His pierced side. Only then would he believe. Before we become too harsh with Thomas, let me remind you that the other disciples did not believe until they saw, either. Thomas is really demanding to see the same things that convinced the others. He is not asking for anything more than what the others saw.

Eight days passed. Apparently Jesus did not appear to any of His disciples during this period of time. The disciples were all together once again, including Thomas. The doors were locked, but in spite of this Jesus arrived and stood in their midst.[196](https://bible.org/seriespage/46-seeing-and-believing-john-2010-31#P5610_2253181) Jesus repeats the greeting He gave at His earlier appearance, “**Peace be with you**” (verse 26; see also verses 19, 21). Immediately, Jesus turns His attention to Thomas. He summons Thomas to come and to put his finger where the nails had pierced His hands, and to feel His side where the spear had pierced it. He challenged Thomas to forsake his unbelief and to believe.

We do not know whether Thomas actually pressed his fingers into our Lord’s nail-pierced hands or not. Since John does not tell us that Thomas actually felt the wounds of our Lord, it may well be that after seeing Jesus alive he no longer required this proof. It may have taken this sight to convince Thomas, but once convinced, Thomas got it right. He does not merely profess a belief that Jesus has risen from the dead. Thomas professes to believe in what the resurrection proved—that Jesus was God, and that He was Lord (verse 28). Thomas now has it right.

Bible translations handle our Lord’s response differently. Some render the first words of verse 29 as a question, “**Have you believed because you have seen Me?**” (as does the NET Bible). Others render it as a statement: “**Because you have seen me, you have believed**” (NIV, KJV, NKJV). The difference is not important. The contrast Jesus seeks to emphasize is between those who must see in order to believe, and those who will believe without seeing. Peter seems to take up this same thought in his first epistle:

8 You have not seen him, but you love him. You do not see him now but you believe in him, and so you rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, 9 because you are attaining the goal of your faith—the salvation of your souls ([1 Peter 1:8-9](javascript:%7b%7d)).

It is not too hard to see what John is leading up to. John is writing this Gospel for those who have never seen the risen Lord. He has selected just a few of the many miraculous signs Jesus performed to demonstrate that Jesus is who He claimed to be, who John proclaims Him to be.

### The Bottom Line: Believing Jesus Is the Christ, the Son of God (20:30-31)

30 Now Jesus performed many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples that are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

If there is one thing I despise, it is deceptive advertising. I hate those phone calls that come from unidentified (“out of the area”) sources, which begin with the assurance that the caller is not “selling” anything. John could not be more open and direct about the purpose of this book. I believe John has two conclusions. The first is found in chapter 20. It is aimed at those who have not yet come to faith in Jesus Christ. The second is aimed at those who have believed, and it is found in chapter 21.

In our text, John informs his unbelieving readers about the “bottom line” of all that he has written. John has one goal for the unbeliever: He wants to demonstrate as clearly and as forcefully as he can that Jesus not only claimed to be the Christ (the Messiah), the Son of God, but that by many miraculous signs He proved it! The last and greatest of these signs was His resurrection from the dead:

38 Then some of the experts in the law along with some Pharisees said to him, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from you.” 39 But he answered them, “An evil and adulterous generation asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet [Jonah. 40](javascript:%7b%7d) For just as Jonah was *in the belly of the huge fish for three days and three nights*, so the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights. 41 The people of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; yet something greater than Jonah is here! 42 The Queen of the South will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; yet something greater than Solomon is here! ([Matthew 12:38-42](javascript:%7b%7d)).

While the resurrection of Jesus from the dead was prophesied in the Old Testament, and by our Lord Himself, John makes it very clear that the disciples were not predisposed to believe it. Only after the most forceful and compelling evidence would the disciples believe Jesus really was alive. And having become convinced of this great truth, the disciples never ceased to proclaim it. The resurrection of Jesus is the final and compelling proof that He is the Son of God and the Savior of the world:

1 From Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God 2 that he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, 3 concerning his Son who was a descendant of David with respect to the flesh, 4 who was appointed the Son-of-God-in-power according to the Holy Spirit by the resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord ([Romans 1:1-4](javascript:%7b%7d)).

Believing in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, is the only way God has provided for the forgiveness of your sins and for the gift of eternal life. By believing in Him, you will be saved:

9 Because if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and thus has a right standing and with the mouth one confesses and thus has salvation. 11 For the scripture says, “***Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame***.” 12 For there is no distinction between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord is Lord of all, who richly blesses all who call on him. 13 For ***everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved*** ([Romans 10:9-13](javascript:%7b%7d)).

11 He came to what was his own, but his own people did not receive him. 12 But to all who have received him—those who believe in his name—he has given the right to become God’s children 13 —children not born by human parents or by human desire or a husband’s decision, but by God ([John 1:11-13](javascript:%7b%7d)).

In many ways, the Gospel of John is not a simple book. But its message to the unsaved is incredibly simple, and John sums it up in these last verses of chapter 20. If you have never come to believe in Jesus as the Christ, the promised Messiah, the Son of God, then John has written this book to you, and for you, to give you all the evidence you need to believe in Him. Have you believed? This is the most important decision you will ever make. It determines your eternal destiny.

193 Some have criticized Mary for being so nave as to assume she will be able to carry away the body of our Lord. They are missing the point. She is not thinking in terms of logistics here. She is simply saying that if this “**gardener**” will tell her where to find the body, she will see to it that it is returned to its proper place. Of course she will get help to accomplish this. For now, she just wants to know where His body has been placed.

194 A. T. Robertson comments, “Present middle imperative in prohibition with genitive case, meaning “cease clinging to me” rather than “Do not touch me.” Jesus allowed the women to take hold of his feet … and worship … as we read in [Mt 28:9](javascript:%7b%7d). The prohibition here reminds Mary that the previous personal fellowship by sight, sound, and touch no longer exists and that the final state of glory was not yet begun. Jesus checks Mary’s impulsive eagerness.” Archibald Thomas Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1931), 6 vols. Vol. V, p. 312.

195 I am reminded that the breath of God is the source of life ([Genesis 2:7](javascript:%7b%7d); [Job 33:4](javascript:%7b%7d); [Psalm 33:6](javascript:%7b%7d); [Ezekiel 37:9](javascript:%7b%7d)), even as it is also the means of divine judgment ([2 Samuel 22:16](javascript:%7b%7d); [Job 4:9](javascript:%7b%7d); [Psalm 18:15](javascript:%7b%7d)). The breath of God is sometimes a symbol for His Spirit ([Job 33:4](javascript:%7b%7d)). In a symbolic way, our Lord is breathing life into His church.

196 Both the NET Bible and the NIV smooth out the translation here. The NIV reads: “A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you!’” ([John 14:26](javascript:%7b%7d)). Both the old and the new King James Versions and the NAS leave the translation a bit rough, in order to convey the unusual word order: “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’” (NAS). “And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, ‘Peace to you!’” (NKJ). The original text seems to be emphasizing the fact that Jesus entered the room, in spite of the fact that the doors were shut and locked.

# My Lord and My God

Spurgeon, April 13, 1884  
at [*https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/my-lord-and-my-god/#flipbook/*](https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/my-lord-and-my-god/%23flipbook/)

##### “And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.”— John xx. 28.

WHEN the apostles met on the first Lord’s-day after Jesus had risen, Thomas was the only disciple absent out of the eleven; on the second Lord’s-day Thomas was there, and he was the only disciple doubting out of the eleven. How much the fact of his doubting was occasioned and helped by the fact of his former absence I cannot say; but still it looks highly probable that had he been there at the first, he would have enjoyed the same experience as the other ten, and would have been able to say as they did, “We have seen the Lord.” Let us not forsake the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is, for we cannot tell what loss we may sustain thereby. Though our Lord may reveal himself to single individuals in solitude as he did to Mary Magdalene, yet he more usually shows himself to two or three, and he delights most of all to come into the assembly of his servants. The Lord seems most at home when, standing in the midst of his people, he says, “Peace be unto you.” Let us not fail to meet with our fellow believers. For my part, the assemblies of God’s people shall ever be dear to me. Where Jesus pays his frequent visits, there would I be found.

“My soul shall pray for Zion still, While life or breath remains;  
There my best friends, my kindred dwell, There God my Saviour reigns.”

I know that full many of you can most heartily say the same. Oh, that we may behold the Lord Jesus in the present assembly!

     On the second occasion Thomas is present, and he is the only one out of the eleven who is vexed with doubts. He cannot think it possible that the Lord Jesus, who was nailed to the cross, and whose side was pierced, could have really risen from the dead. Observe joyfully the Lord’s patience with him. All the others had been doubtful too, and the Lord had gently upbraided them for their unbelief and the hardness of their hearts; but Thomas is not convinced by the tenfold testimony of his brethren, who each one well deserved his implicit confidence. After the plain way in which the Lord had told his disciples that he should be crucified and would rise again from the dead, they ought to have expected the resurrection; and inasmuch as they did not they were to be blamed: what shall we say of him who in addition to all this had heard the witness of his ten comrades who had actually seen the Lord? Yet there he is, the one doubter, the one sturdy questioner who has laid down most stringent requirements as to the only way in which he will be brought to believe. Will not his Lord be provoked by his obstinacy? See how patient Jesus is! If we had been in that case, and had died for those people, and had passed through the grave, and risen again for them, we should have felt very greatly grieved and somewhat angered if they had refused to believe in what we had done; but our Lord shows no such sign; he is tender among them as a nursing father. He rebukes their unbelief: for that was needful for their sakes; but he manifests no vexation of spirit. Especially on this occasion he shows his tenderness toward Thomas, and addresses his first words to him. If Thomas will not be convinced except by what I must call the most gross and materialistic evidence, he will give him such evidence: if he must put his finger into the print of the nails, he shall put his finger there; if he must thrust his hand into his side, he shall be permitted to take that liberty. Oh, see how Jesus condescends to the weaknesses and even to the follies of his people! If we are unbelieving it is not his fault; for he goes out of his way to teach us faith, and sometimes he even gives what we have no right to ask, what we have no reason to expect, what it was even sin in us to have desired. We are so weak, so ignorant, so prone to unbelief that he will do anything to create, sustain, and strengthen our faith in him. He condescends to men of low estate. If through our own folly we are such babes that we cannot eat the meat which is fit food for men, our Lord will not grow weary of giving us milk, but he will even break the bread into morsels, and take away the hard crusts, that we may be able to feed thereon. It is not his will that one of his little ones should perish; and therefore he chases away unbelief, which is their deadliest foe.

     Our Lord had special reasons for turning as he did to Thomas that day, and for taking so much trouble to bring Thomas out of his unbelieving condition. The reason must have been, surely, first, that he desired to make of Thomas a most convincing witness to the reality of his resurrection. Here is a man who is determined not to be deceived; let him come and use the tests of his own choice. If you tell me that the resurrection of our Lord from the dead was witnessed by men who were prepared to believe it, I reply that the statement is totally false. Not one among that company even knew the meaning of the Lord’s prophecy that he would rise again from the dead. It was hard to make any of them catch the idea; it was so foreign to their thought, so far above their expectation. In Thomas we have a man who was specially hard to be convinced, a man who was so obstinate as to give the lie to ten of his friends with whom he had been associated for years. Now, if I had a statement to make which I wished to have well attested, I should like to place in the witness-box a person who was known to be exceedingly cautious and wary. I should be glad if it were known that at the first he had been suspicious and critical, but had at length been overwhelmed by evidence so as to be compelled to believe. I am sure that such a man would give his evidence with the accent of conviction, as indeed Thomas did when he cried, “My Lord and my God.” We cannot have a better witness to the fact that the Lord is risen indeed than that this cool, examining, prudent, critical Thomas arrived at an absolute certainty.

     Further, I conceive that our Lord thus personally dealt with Thomas because he would have us see that he will not lose even one of those whom the Father has given him. The good Shepherd will leave the ninety and nine to seek the one wanderer. If Thomas is the most unbelieving, Thomas shall have the most care. He is only one, but yet he is one, and the Lord Jesus will not lose one whom he has ordained to save. You and I might have said, “Well, if he will not be convinced, we must let him alone; he is only one— we can do without his testimony; we cannot be for ever seeking a solitary individual; let him go.” Thus might we have done; but thus Jesus will not do. Our good Shepherd looks after the units; he is tenderly observant of each separate individual, and this is a ground of comfort to us all. If one sheep be lost, why not the whole flock? If one be thus cared for, all will be cared for.

     This note is also to be heard in reference to this matter:— After all, it is to be feared that the dull, the slow, the questioning, the anxious, the weak in faith, make up a very considerable part of the church: I do not know that they are in the majority, but they are certainly far too numerous. If all Christians were arranged and classified, I fear we could not many of us place ourselves in the front rank; but a large portion would have to go among the Little-faiths. Our Lord here shows us that he has a condescending care for those who lag behind. Thomas is a week behind everybody else, yet his Lord has not lost patience, but waiteth to be gracious. The other ten apostles have all seen the Lord, and been well assured of his resurrection for the last seven days; but that is no reason why the late-comer should be left out in the cold. Our Lord does not leave the rear rank to perish. We know that in the wilderness the Amalekites slew the hindmost of the children of Israel; but when King Jesus heads the army, no Amalekites shall smite even the hindmost of his people, for the glory of the Lord shall bring up the rear. The walls of Zion enclose babes as well as veterans; the ark of our salvation preserves mice as well as bullocks; our Solomon speaks of the hyssop on the wall as well as of the cedar in Lebanon; and the glory of the Lord may be seen in the preservation of the glowworm’s lamp as truly as in the sustenance of the furnace of the sun.

     Now, if there should be any in this assembly who honestly have to put themselves down in the sick list, I beg them to take comfort while I try and set forth the experience of Thomas and what came of it. First, I shall call your attention to the exclamation of Thomas, “My Lord and my God”: secondly, we will consider, how he came to it; and thirdly, how we come to it; for I trust many of us have also cried, “My Lord and my God.”

     I. Let us consider THE EXCLAMATION OF THOMAS, “My Lord and my God.” This is a most plain and hearty confession of the true and proper Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

     It is as much as a man could say if he wished to assert indisputably and dogmatically that Jesus is indeed God and Lord. We find David saying, “O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God,” and in another place (Psalm xxxv. 23) he says, “My God and my Lord,” terms only applicable to Jehovah. Such expressions were known to Thomas, and he as an Israelite would never have applied them to any person whom he did not believe to be God. We are sure therefore that it was the belief of Thomas that the risen Saviour was Lord and God. If this had been a mistake, the Lord Jesus would have rebuked him, for he would not have allowed him to be guilty of worshipping a mere man. No good man among us would permit a person to call him God and Lord; we should feel like Paul and Barnabas when they rent their clothes because the men of Lystra were ready to do sacrifice to them; how much more would the holy Jesus have felt a revolting of spirit against the idea of being worshipped and called “My Lord and my God” if he had not been of such a nature that he “thought it not robbery to be equal with God!” The perfect Jesus accepted divine homage, and therefore we are assured that it was rightly and properly given, and we do here at this moment offer him the like adoration.

     To escape from the force of this confession, some who denied our Lord’s Deity in olden times had the effrontery to charge Thomas with breaking the third commandment by uttering such a cry of surprise as is common among profane talkers. Just as thoughtless persons take the Lord’s name in vain and say, “Good God!” or “O Lord!” when they are much astonished, so certain ancient heretics dared to interpret these words— “My Lord and my God.” It is clear to any thoughtful person that this could not have been the case. For, in the first place, it was not the habit of a Jew to use any such exclamation when surprised or amazed. An irreligious Gentile might have done so, but it was the last thing that would occur to a devout Israelite. If there is one thing about which the Jews in our Lord’s times were particular beyond everything, it was about using the name of God. Why, even in their sacred books they have omitted the word “Jehovah,” and have only written “Adonai,” because of a superstitious reverence for the very letters of the divine name. How can we, then, believe that Thomas would have done what no Jew at that time would have dreamed of? Israel after the Babylonian captivity had many faults, but not that of idolatry or irreverence to the divine name. I do not know what an Israelite might have said under the influence of a great surprise, but I am absolutely certain that he would not have said, “My Lord and my God.” In the next place, it could not have been a mere exclamation of surprise, or an irreverent utterance, because it was not rebuked by our Lord, and we may be sure he would not have suffered such an unhallowed cry to have gone without a reprimand. Observe, too, that it was addressed to the Lord Jesus,— “Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.” It was not a mere outburst of surprise addressed to no one, but it was an answer directed to the Lord who had spoken to him. It was also such a reply that our Lord Jesus Christ accepted it as an evidence of faith, for in the twenty-ninth verse he says, “Thou hast believed, and that confession was the only evidence of his believing which our Lord had received from Thomas. A mere outcry of confused astonishment in irreverent words would never have been received as a satisfactory proof of faith. Sin is not? an evidence of faith. The slander proposed by the Arian must, therefore, be rejected with derision. I am almost ashamed to have mentioned it, but in these days, when every kind of error is rife, it is needful to bring to light and break in pieces many idols which we had rather have left with the moles and bats.

     I regard this cry of Thomas, first, as a devout expression of that holy wonder which came upon him when his heart made the great discovery that Jesus was assuredly his Lord and God. It had flashed upon the mind of Thomas that this august person whom he had regarded as the Messiah was also God. He saw that the man at whose feet he had sat was more than man, and was assuredly God, and this amazed him so that he used broken speech. He does not say, “Thou art my Lord and my God,” as a man would say who is making a doctrinal statement, but he brings it out in fragments, he makes adoration of it, he cries in ecstacy, “My Lord and my God.” He is amazed at the discovery which he has made, and probably also at the fact that he has not seen it long before. Why, he might have known it, and ought to have perceived it years before! Had he not been present when Jesus trod the sea? when he hushed the winds, and bade the waters sleep? Had he not seen him open the blind eyes, and unstop the deaf ears? Why did he not cry, “My Lord and my God,” then? Thomas had been slow to learn, and the Lord might have said to him, as he did to Philip, “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me?” Now on a sudden he does know his Lord— knows him to such a surprising extent that such knowledge is too wonderful for him. He had come to the meeting to prove whether he who appeared to his brethren was the same man who had died on Calvary, but now he seems to have forgotten that original question; it is more than answered, it has ceased to be a question; he is carried far further by the flood of evidence, he is landed in a full belief of the Godhead of Jesus. He spies out within that wounded body the indwelling Godhead, and at a leap he springs beyond the conviction that it is the same man to the firm assurance that Jesus is God; and consequently in broken accents, but with double assurance, he cries, “My Lord and my God.” My brethren, how I wish you would all follow Thomas this morning! I will stop a minute that you may do so. Let us wonder and admire! He that had not where to lay his head, he that suffered scourging and spitting, and died on Calvary, is nevertheless God over all, blessed for ever. He who was laid in the tomb liveth and reigneth, King of kings and Lord of lords. Hallelujah! Behold, he cometh in the glory of the Father to judge the quick and the dead. Let your spirits drink in that truth, and be amazed at it. If the fact that Jesus, the Son of God, suffered and bled, and died for you, never astonishes you, I fear that you do not believe it, or have no intelligent apprehension of the full meaning of it. Angels wonder, should not you? Oh, let us feel a holy surprise to-day, as we realize the truth that he who has redeemed us from our sins by his blood is the Son of the Highest!

     Next, I believe that this was an expression of immeasurable delight; for you observe he does not say, “Lord and God,” but, “My Lord and my God.” He seems to take hold of the Lord Jesus with both hands, by those two blessed “my’s”— “My Lord and my God.” Oh, the joy that flashed from the eyes of Thomas at that moment! How quickly his heart beat! He had never known such joy as at that instant, and though he must have felt deeply humbled, yet in that humiliation there was an excessive sweetness of intense satisfaction as he looked at his divine Lord and gazed on him, from the pierced feet up to the brow so marred with the crown of thorns, and said, “My Lord and my God.” There is in these few words a music akin to the sonnet of the spouse in the Canticles when she sang, My beloved is mine, and I am his.” The enraptured disciple saw the friend of his heart standing before him, shining upon him in love, and knitting his heart to him. I pray you follow Thomas in this joy in Christ. I pause a minute that you may do so. Before you Jesus now stands, visible to your faith. Delight yourselves in him. Be always ravished with his love. He is altogether lovely, and altogether yours. He loves you with all the infinity of his nature. The tenderness of his humanity and the majesty of his Deity blend in his love to you. Oh, love the Lord, ye his saints, for he deserves your hearts! Therefore at this moment say, “My Lord and my God.”

     More than this, I believe that the words of Thomas indicate a complete change of mind— in other words, a most hearty repentance. He has not asked of the Lord Jesus to be permitted to put his finger into the print of the nails. No, all that has gone without debate. If you look at the chapter you will find no statement that he ever did handle the Lord as he had at first proposed. Whether he did put his finger into the print of the nails, and his hand into the side, must for ever be unknown to us until we see Thomas in heaven and ask him the question. If you read the Saviour’s words as commanding him to do so, then we may conclude that he did so; but if you read them as only permitting him to do it, then I think he did not do it. I put the question to a dear companion of mine; I read the passage, and then I asked, “What think you, did Thomas put his hand into Christ’s side?” and the answer from a thoughtful mind and a gentle heart was this— “I do not think he could; after the Master had so spoken to him he would shrink from doing so, and would think it wilful unbelief to attempt it.” This reply coincided exactly with my own convictions. I feel sure that had it been my case I should have felt so ashamed at ever having proposed such a test, and so Overwhelmed to find the Lord yielding to it, that I could not have gone an inch further in the way of seeking tokens and proofs unless I had been absolutely commanded to do so. So, judging Thomas to be like ourselves, and indeed much better than any of us, notwithstanding his imperfection, I gather that he completely turned round, and instead of putting his finger into the print of the nails, he cried, “My Lord and my God.” The Saviour said to him, “Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed.” Now, I lay no stress upon it; but it would seem probable that the Saviour might have said, “Because thou hast touched me thou hast believed,” if Thomas had indeed touched him; but inasmuch as he only speaks of sight, it may be that sight was enough for Thomas. I do not insist upon it, but I think it right to suggest it; I feel it is not unreasonable to conclude that all Thomas did was to look at his Lord. He could do no more; the delicacy of his spirit would not permit him to accept the offered test; his reverence checked him; he saw and believed. In him we see a complete change of feeling; from being the most unbelieving of the eleven, he came to believe more than any of them, and to confess Jesus to be God.

     This exclamation is also a brief confession of faith, “My Lord and my God.” Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he be able to unite with Thomas heartily in this creed, “My Lord and my God.” I do not go in for all the minute distinctions of the Athanasian Creed, but I have no doubt that it was absolutely needful at the time it was written, and that it materially helped to check the evasions and tricks of the Arians. This short creed of Thomas I like much better, for it is brief, pithy, full, sententious, and it avoids those matters of detail which are the quicksands of faith. Such a belief is needful; but no man can truly hold it unless he be taught by the Holy Ghost. He can say the words, but he cannot receive the spiritual truth. No man can call Jesus “Lord” but by the Holy Ghost. It is therefore a most needful and saving creed that we should cry to the Lord Jesus, My Lord and my God.” I ask you to do this now in your hearts. Renew your faith, and confess that he who died for you is your Lord and God. Socinians may call Jesus what they please; to me he is God over all, blessed for ever. I know that you say, “Amen.”

     Further than this, do you not think that these words of Thomas were an enthusiastic profession of his allegiance to Christ? “My Lord and my God.” It was as though he paid him lowliest homage, and dedicated himself there and then in the entirety of his nature to his service. To him whom he had once doubted he now submits himself, for in him he fully believes. He does as good as say, “Henceforth, O Christ, thou art my Lord, and I will serve thee; thou art my God, and I will worship thee.”

     Finally, I regard it as a distinct and direct act of adoration. At the feet of the manifested Saviour, Thomas cries, “My Lord and my God.” It sounds like a rehearsal of the eternal song which ascends before that throne where cherubim and seraphim continually do cry, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth.” It sounds like a stray note from those choral symphonies which day without night circle the throne of the Eternal. Let us in solemn silence now present our souls before the throne, bowing in reverent adoration unto him that was, and is, and is to come, even the Lamb that was slain, who is risen, and who liveth for ever. “My Lord and my God.” O Son of Mary, thou art also Son of the Highest, and unto my heart and spirit thou art my Lord and my God, and I worship thee this day! We have not time or else I would sit down and invite you to spend a few minutes in private, personal worship, following the example of Thomas in adoring our Lord and God.

     II. Our next division is to be headed with the question— How DID HE COME TO THAT EXCLAMATION? Have you ever thought what Thomas’s feelings were when he went to the meeting that evening? His going needed a complicated explanation. Why did he mingle with men  whose solemn assertions he doubted? Could he have fellowship with them, and yet give them the lie? Suppose Jesus Christ to be dead, and not risen, why does Thomas go? Is he going to worship a dead man? Is he about to renounce the faith of the last two years? How can he hold it if Jesus is not alive? Yet how can he give it up? Was Jesus Christ Lord and God to Thomas when he first entered that meeting? I suppose not. He did not, when he entered the room, believe him to be the same person who had died. The other disciples did believe, and Thomas was now the lone doubter, peculiar, positive, obstinate. Has it never happened to other disciples to drift into much the same condition? Thomas was a lot out of catalogue that evening: he was the odd person in the little gathering, and yet before service was over the Lord had completely altered him. “Behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.”

     The first thing, I think, that led Thomas to this confession of his belief in Christ’s Deity was that he had his thoughts revealed. The Saviour came into the room, the doors being shut; without opening the doors he suddenly appeared before them by his own divine power. There and then pointing to Thomas he repeated to him the very words which Thomas had said to his brethren. They had not been reported to the Saviour, but the Saviour had read Thomas’s thoughts at a distance, and he was therefore able to bring before him his exact words. Notice that the Saviour did not say, “Stoop down and put thy finger into the nail-prints in my feet.” Why not? Why, because Thomas had not said anything about his feet, and therefore the Saviour did not mention them. Everything was exact. We in looking at it can see the exactness; but Thomas must have felt it much more. He was overwhelmed. To have his thoughts put in plain words, and to hear his own words repeated by him whom they concerned, this was truly wonderful. “Oh,” saith he, “he who now speaks to me is none other than God, and he shall be my Lord and my God.” This helped him to his assured conviction that one who had read his thoughts must be God.

     He was aided still further, for as soon as he perceived that this was the same Jesus with whom he had conversed before, all the past must have risen before his mind, and he must have remembered the many occasions in which the Lord Jesus had exercised the attributes of Deity. That past intercourse thus revived before him must all have gone to support the conviction that Jesus was none other than Lord and God.

     And then, methinks, the very air, and manner, and presence of the Saviour convinced the trembling disciple. They say there is a divinity that doth hedge a king; that I am not prepared to believe; but I am sure there was a majesty about the look of our Lord, a more than human dignity in his manner and tone, and speech and bearing. Our Lord’s personal presence convinced Thomas: so that he saw and believed.

     But perhaps the most convincing arguments of all were our Lord’s wounds. It seems a long way round to infer the Deity of Christ from his wounds: yet it is good and clear argument. I shall not set it out in order before you, but leave you to think it out for yourselves, yet one little hint I would give you: here is a wound in his side more than sufficient to have caused death; it has gone right to the heart; the soldier with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith flowed there out blood and water, proving that the heart was pierced. The opening was still there, for the Lord invited Thomas to thrust his hand into his side, and yet Jesus lived. Heard ye ever such a story as this?— a man with a death-wound gaping wide inviting another to thrust his hand therein. Had our Lord been living after the way in which we live, by the circulation of the blood, one can hardly see how this could have been possible. Flesh and blood, being subject to corruption, cannot inherit the kingdom of God; but the Saviours risen body came not under that description, as indeed his buried body did not, for he saw no corruption. I invite you to note well the distinction which may be seen in our Lord’s words, concerning his own body; he does not speak of his body as flesh and blood, but he says, “Handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have.” It was a real body and a material body: for he took a piece of a broiled fish and of a honey-comb, and did eat before them; but still his resurrection body, living with an open wound in his side, reaching to the heart, was not after the manner of men. So even in the wounds of Christ, we read that he is man, but not mere man: his wounds in various ways were evidence to Thomas of his Deity. Anyhow, the glorious fact rushed upon Thomas’s astonished mind in a single moment, and therefore he cried out, “My Lord and my God.”

     III. Finally, let us see HOW WE MAY COME TO IT. That is our final point, and the most practical of all. I doubt not that the Spirit of God was at work with Thomas at that time very mightily, and that the true cause of his enlightenment was heavenly illumination. If ever any one of us shall cry in spirit and in truth, “My Lord and my God!” the Holy Spirit must teach us. Blessed art thou who can call Jesus “Lord and God,” for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but the Father from heaven.

     But I will tell you when believers do cry, “My Lord and my God.” I remember the first time it filled my heart. Burdened with guilt, and full of fears, I was as wretched as a man could be outside of hell-gate, when I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.” I did look there and then; I gave a faith-glance to him who suffered in my stead, and in an instant my peace was like a river. My heart leaped from despair to gladness, and I knew my Lord to be divine. If any one had said to me then, “Jesus Christ is not God,” I would have laughed him to scorn. Pie was beyond all question my Lord and my God, for he had wrought a divine work in me.

     It may not be an argument to anybody else, but forgiveness consciously known in the soul is a conclusive argument to the man who has ever felt it. If the Lord Jesus turns your mourning into dancing, brings you up out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clay, and sets your feet upon a rock and establishes your goings, he is sure to be your Lord and God henceforth and for ever. In the teeth of all that deny it, in the teeth of all the devils in hell, the redeemed heart will assert the Godhead of its Saviour. He that hath saved me is indeed God, and beside him there is none else.

     This first avowal has proved to be only the beginning of these confessions. We remember many other acknowledgments of the same fact. We were severely tempted, and yet we did not slip, nor stain our garments. What a wonder that we escaped! He that kept us from falling must be God. I know some moments in my life when I could stand and look back in the morning-light upon the valley through which I had passed in the dark; and when I saw how narrow the pathway was, how a little step to the left or to the right must have been my total destruction, and yet I had never tripped, but had come straight through in perfect safety, I was astounded, and bowing my head I worshipped, saying, “The Lord has been my refuge and my defence. He has kept my soul in life and preserved me from the destroyer, therefore will I sing songs as long as I live.” Oh, yes, dear children of God, when your heads have been covered in the day of battle, you have magnified the Keeper of Israel, saying, “My Lord and my God.” We have felt that we could not doubt again, and have joyfully committed ourselves to his keeping as to the guardian care of a faithful Creator.

     Such, also, has been the case in time of trouble, when you have been comforted and upheld. A very heavy affliction has fallen upon you, and yet to your surprise it has not crushed you as you feared it would have done. Years before you had looked forward to the stroke with agonizing apprehension, and said, “I shall never bear it;” but you did bear it, and at this moment you are thankful that you had it to bear. The thing which you feared came upon you, and when it came it seemed like a feather weight compared with what you expected it to be; you were able to sit down and say, “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” Your friends were surprised at you: you had been a poor, wretchedly nervous creature before, but in the time of trial you displayed a singular strength such as surprised everybody. Most of all you surprised yourself, for you were full of amazement that in weakness you were made so strong. You said, “I was brought low, and he helped me.” You could not doubt his Deity then: anything which would rob him of glory you detested, for your heart said, “Lord, there is none that could have solaced my soul in this fashion save only the Lord God Almighty.” Personally I have had to cry out, “It is the Lord!” when I have seen his wonders in the deep. “O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength.” My soul shall magnify my Lord and my God, for “he sent from above, he took me; he drew me out of many waters. He brought me forth also into a large place: he delivered me, because he delighted in me.”

     There have been other occasions less trying. Bear with me if I mention one or two more. When we have been musing, the fire has burned. While studying the story of our Lord, our faith in his Deity has been intensified. When the Spirit of God has revealed the Lord Jesus to us and in us, then we have cried, “My Lord and my God.” Though not after the flesh, yet in very deed and truth we have seen the Lord. On a day which I had given up to prayer, I sat before the Lord in holy peacefulness, wrapped in solemn contemplation, and though I did not see a vision, nor wish to see one, yet I so realized my Master’s presence that I was borne away from all earthly things, and knew of no man save Jesus only. Then a sense of his Godhead filled me till I would fain have stood up where I was and have proclaimed aloud, as with the voice of a trumpet, that he was my Lord and my God. Such times you also have known.

     Jesus is often known of us in the breaking of bread. At the communion-table many a time we have seen and adored. It was very precious; we were ready to weep and laugh for joy. Oar heart kept beating to the tune of “My Lord and my God.” Perhaps it was not in any outward ordinance that your soul thus adored; but quite away in the country, or by the seaside, as you walked along and communed with your own heart, you were suddenly overpowered with a sense of Jesus’ glorious majesty, so that you could only whisper to yourself as in a still small voice, “My Lord and my God.” Or perhaps it was when you were laid aside with illness that he made all your bed, and then yon knew his power divine. It was a long and weary night to those who watched you, but to you it was all too short, and brimmed with sweetness, for the Lord was there, and he gave you songs in the night. When you awoke you were still with him and felt ready to faint with overwhelming delight because of the brightness of the manifestation. At such a time you could have sung,

“My Christ, he is the Lord of lords,  
He is the King of kings;  
He is the Sun of righteousness,  
With healing in his wings.  
“My Christ, he is the heaven of heavens,  
My Christ, what shall I call?  
My Christ is first, my Christ is last,  
My Christ is All in all.”

     I will tell you yet again when Jesus has been Lord and God both to me and to you, and that is in times when he has blessed our labours, and laid his arm bare in the salvation of men. When our report has been believed by those who rejected it before, and the Lord has sent us a happy season of revival, we have given to him the glory, and rejoiced in his omnipotent love. We prayed for our children, and when to our surprise— it is a shame to say to our surprise, for it ought not to have surprised us— the Lord heard our prayer, and first one and then another came to us and said, “Father, I have found the Lord,” then we knew that the Lord he is God, and our God too. We looked up from our poor prayers with tears in our eyes to think the Lord Jesus could have heard such weak petitions, and we said in the depths of our hearts, “My Lord and my God.” We went out and tried to teach a dozen or two in a cottage— poor, broken words were all that we could utter; but the Lord blessed it, and we heard a poor woman crying for mercy as we came out, and we said inwardly, “My Lord and my God.” If you have been in the Enquiry-room after some brother whom God greatly honours has been proclaiming the word with power, and if you have seen the people falling right and left under the shafts of the divine word, you must have cried, “This is no cunningly devised fable, no fiction, and no fancy,” and your heart must have throbbed with all its life, “My Lord and my God.” Have you not felt as if you would dare to go through the very streets of hell, and tell the grinning fiends that Christ is King and Lord for ever and ever?

     The time is very soon coming with some of us when we shall have our last opportunities in this life to find this true. How comforted and refreshed have I often been when visiting dying saints. Truly the Lord has prepared a table for them in the presence of the last enemy. I can truly say that no scenes that these eyes have ever beheld have so gladdened me as the sight of my dear brethren and sisters when they have been departing out of the world unto the Father. The saddest scene has been the happiest. I have known some of them in life as self-distrusting, trembling, lowly-minded believers; and when they have come into the valley of death-shade they have displayed no fear, no doubt, but all has been full assurance. Placid, calm, beautiful, joyful, and even triumphant have been the last hours of timid believers. As I have heard their charming words I have been certain of the Godhead of him who gives us victory while we die. It is faith in his name that makes men strong in death. When heart and flesh fail us, only the living God can be the strength of our life, and our portion for ever. How sweet to know Jesus as our living God in our dying moments! In him we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, as we say unto him in death, “My Lord and my God.” Come, brothers and sisters, be of good cheer! A little further on we shall come to the narrow stream. This we shall cross in an instant, and then—! It will be but a short, short time; twenty years is soon gone, a hundred years even fly as on eagles’ wings, and then we shall be for ever with the Lord in the glory land. How sweetly will we sing to his eternal praise, “My Lord and my God”! There shall be no doubters in heaven; no sceptics shall worry us there; but this shall be the unanimous voice of all the redeemed— “Jesus is our Lord and God.” The united church, freed from every spot and wrinkle, and gloriously arrayed as the bride of Christ, shall be conducted to his throne, and acknowledged as the Lord’s beloved, and then shall she with full heart exclaim, “My Lord and my God.”

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Delivered by C. H. SPURGEON,  
At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington  
On Lord's-day Evening, December 2nd, 1877.

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Scripture: John 20:18-31

"Then said he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing." - John 20:27.

Among us at this day we have many persons who are like Thomas—dubious, demanding signs and tokens, suspicious, and ofttimes sad. I am not sure that there is not a slight touch of Thomas in most of us. There are times and seasons when the strong man fails, and when the firm believer has to pause a while, and say, "Is it so?" It may be that our meditation upon the text before us may be of service to those who are touched with the malady which afflicted Thomas.

Notice, before we proceed to our subject in full, that Thomas asked of our Lord what he ought not to have asked. He wanted to put our risen Lord to tests which were scarcely reverent to his sacred person. Admire his Master's patience with him. He does not say, "If he does not choose to believe he may continue to suffer for his unbelief." But no; he fixes his eye upon the doubter, and addresses himself specially to him; yet not in words of reproach or anger. Jesus could bear with Thomas, though Thomas had been a long time with him, and had not known him. To put his finger into the print of the nails, and thrust his hand into his side, was much more than any disciple had a right to ask of his divine Master; and yet see the condescension of Jesus! Rather than Thomas should suffer from unbelief, Christ will let him take great liberties. Our Lord does not always act towards us according to his own dignity, but according to our necessity; and if we really are so weak that nothing will do but thrusting a hand into his side, he will let us do it. Nor do I wonder at this: if, for our sakes, he suffered a spear to be thrust there, he may well permit a hand to follow.

Observe that Thomas was at once convinced. He said: "My Lord, and my God." This shows our Master's wisdom, that he indulged him with such familiarity, because he knew that, though the demand was presumptuous, yet the act would work for his good. Our Lord sometimes wisely refuses—saying, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended"; but at other times, he wisely grants, because, though it be too much for us to ask, yet he thinks it wise to give.

The subject for our present meditation is just this: the cure of doubts. Thomas was permitted to put his finger into the print of the nails for the curing of his doubts. Perhaps you and I wish that we could do something like it. Oh, if our Lord Jesus would appear to me for once, and I might thrust my hand into his side; or, if I might for once see him, or speak with him, how confirmed should I be! No doubt that thought has arisen in the minds of many. We shall not have such proofs, my brethren, but we shall have something near akin, to them, which will answer the same purpose.

I. The first head of my discourse shall be this: CRAVE NO SIGNS. If such signs be possible, crave them not. If there be dreams, visions, voices, ask not for them.

Crave not wonders, first, because it is dishonouring to the sacred Word to ask for them. You believe this Bible to be an inspired volume—the Book of God. The apostle Peter calls it "A more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed." Are you not satisfied with that? When a person, in whose veracity you have the utmost confidence, bears testimony to this or that, if you straightway reply, "I would be glad of further evidence," you are slighting your friend, and casting unjust suspicion upon him. Will you cast suspicion upon the Holy Ghost, who, by this word, bears witness unto Christ? Oh, no! let us be content with his witness. Let us not wish to see, but remain satisfied to believe. If there be difficulties in believing, is it not natural there should be, when he that believes is finite, and the things to be believed are, in themselves, infinite? Let us accept the difficulties as being in themselves, in some measure, proofs of the correctness of our position, as inevitable attendants of heavenly mysteries, when they are looked at by such poor minds as ours. Let us believe the Word, and crave no signs.

Crave no signs, because it is unreasonable that we should desire more than we have already. The testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ, contained in the Word, should alone suffice us. Beside that, we have the testimony of saints and martyrs, who have gone before us, dying triumphant in the faith. We have the testimony of many still among us, who tell us that these things are so. In part, we have the testimony of our own conscience, of our own conversion, of our own after-experience, and this is convincing testimony. Let us be satisfied with it. Thomas ought to have been content with the testimony of Mary Magdalene, and the other disciples, but he was not. We ought to trust our brethren's word. Let us not be unreasonable in craving after proofs when already proofs are afforded us without stint.

Crave no signs, because it may be you will be presumptuous in so doing. Who are you, to set God a sign? What is it he is to do before you will believe in him? Suppose he does not choose to do it, are you therefore arrogantly to say, "I refuse to believe unless the Lord will do my bidding"? Do you imagine that any angel would demean himself to pay attention to you, who set yourself up to make demands of the Most High? Assuredly not. It is presumption which dares to ask of God anything more than the testimony of himself which he chooses to grant us in his Word

It is, moreover, damaging to ourselves to crave signs. Jesus says, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Thomas had his sign, and he believed; and so far so good, but he missed a blessing peculiar to those who have not seen, and yet have believed. Do not, therefore, rob yourselves of the special favour which lights on those who, with no evidence but the witness of the Spirit of God, are prepared at once to believe in the Lord Jesus unto eternal life.

Again, crave no signs, for this craving is highly perilous. Translated according to many, and I think translated correctly, our Saviour said, "Reach hither thy finger, and put it into the print of the nails; and become not faithless, but believing," intending to indicate that Thomas, by degrees, would become faithless. His faith had grown to be so little that, if he continued insisting upon this and that, as a sign or evidence, that faith of his would get down to the very lowest; yea, he would have no faith left. "Become not faithless, but believing." Dear friends, if you began to seek signs, and if you were to see them, do you know what would happen? Why, you would want more; and when you had these, you would demand still more. Those who live by their feelings judge of the truth of God by their own condition. When they have happy feelings, then they believe; but if their spirits sink, if the weather happens to be a little damp, or if their constitution happens to be a little disordered, down go their spirits, and, straightway, down goes their faith. He that lives by a faith which does not rest on feeling, but is built upon the Word of the Lord, will remain fixed and steadfast as the mount of God; but he that craves for this thing and that thing, as a token for good at the hand of the Lord, stands in danger of perishing from want of faith. He shall not perish, if he has even a grain of living faith, for God will deliver him from the temptation; but the temptation is a very trying one to faith.

Crave, therefore, no sign. If you read a story of a person who saw a vision, or it you hear another declare that a voice spake to him—believe those things, or not, as you like; but do not desire them for yourself. These wonders may, or may not, be freaks of the imagination. I will not judge; but we must not rely upon them, for we are not to walk by sight, but by faith. Rely not upon anything that can be seen of the eyes, or heard of the ears; but simply trust him whom we know to be the Christ of God, the Rock of our salvation.

II. Secondly, when you want comfort, crave no sign, but TURN TO THE WOUNDS OF OUR LORD. You see what Thomas did. He wanted faith, and he looked for it to Jesus wounded. He says nothing about Christ's head crowned with glory. He does not say that he must see him "gird about the paps with a golden girdle." Thomas, even in his unbelief, is wise; he turns to his Lord's wounds for comfort. Whenever your unbelief prevails, follow in this respect the conduct of Thomas, and turn your eyes straightway to the wounds of Jesus. These are the founts of never-failing consolation, from which, if a man doth once drink, he shall forget his misery, and remember his sorrow no more. Turn to the Lord's wounds; and if you do, what will you see?

First, you will see the tokens of your Master's love. O Lord Jesus, what are those wounds in thy side, and in thy hands? He answers, "These I endured when suffering for thee. How can I forget thee? I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands. How can I ever fail to remember thee? On my very heart the spear has written thy name." Look at Jesus, dead, buried, risen, and then say, "He loved me, and gave himself for me"! There is no restorative for a sinking faith like a sight of the wounded Saviour. Look, soul, and live by the proofs of his death! Come and put thy finger, by faith, into the print of the nails, and these wounds shall heal thee of unbelief. The wounds of our Lord are the tokens of his love.

They are, again, the seals of his death, especially that wound in his side. He must have died; for "one of the soldiers, with a spear, pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare witness." The Son of God did assuredly die. God, who made the heavens and the earth, took to himself our nature, and in one wondrous person he was both God and man; and lo! this wondrous Son of God bore sufferings unutterable, and consummated all by his death. This is our comfort, for if he died in our stead, then we shall not die for our sins; our transgression is put away, and our iniquity is pardoned. If the sacrifice had never been slain we might despair; but since the spear-wound proves that the great Sacrifice really died, despair is slain, hope revives, and confidence rejoices.

The wounds of Jesus, next, are the marks of identity. By these we identify his blessed person after his resurrection. The very Christ that died has risen again. There is no illusion: there could be no mistake. It is not somebody else foisted upon us in his place; but Jesus who died has left the dead, for there are the marks of the crucifixion in his hands and in his feet, and there is the spear-thrust still. It is Jesus: this same Jesus. This is a matter of great comfort to a Christian—this indisputably proven doctrine of the resurrection of our Lord. It is the keystone of the gospel arch. Take that away, or doubt it, and there remains nothing to console you. But because Jesus died and in the selfsame person rose again, and ever lives, therefore does our heart sweetly rest, believing that "them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him"; and also that the whole of the work of Jesus is true, is completed, and is accepted of God.

Again, those wounds, those scars of our Lord, were the memorials of his love to his people. They set forth his love so that his chosen can see the tokens; but they are also memorials to himself. He condescendingly bears these as his reminders. In heaven, at this moment, upon the person of our blessed Lord, there are the scars of his crucifixion. Centuries have gone by, and yet he looks like a Lamb that has been slain. Our first glance will assure us that this is he of whom they said, "Crucify him; crucify him." Steadily look with the eyes of your faith into the glory, and see your Master's wounds, and say within yourself, "He has compassion upon us still: he bears the marks of his passion." Look up, poor sufferer! Jesus knows what physical pain means. Look up, poor depressed one! he knows what a broken heart means. Canst thou not perceive this? Those prints upon his hands, these sacred stigmata, declare that he has not forgotten what he underwent for us, but still has a fellow-feeling for us.

Once again, these wounds may comfort us because in heaven they are, before God and the holy angels, the perpetual ensigns of his finished work. That passion of his can never be repeated, and never needs to be: "After he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, he sat down on the right hand of God." But the memorials are always being presented before the infinite mind of God. Those memorials are, in part, the wounds in our Lord's blessed person. Glorified spirits can never cease to sing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain"; for every time they gaze upon him they perceive his scars. How resplendent shine the nail-prints! No jewels that ever gemmed a king can look one-half so lustrous as these. Though he be God over all blessed for ever, yet to us, at least, his brightest splendour comes from his death.

My hearer, whensoever thy soul is clouded, turn thou to these wounds which shine like a constellation of five bright stars. Look not to thine own wounds, nor to thine own pains, or sins, or prayers, or tears, but remember that "with his stripes we are healed." Gaze, then; intently gaze, upon thy Redeemer's wounds it thou wouldest find comfort.

III. This brings me to my third point, whenever faith is staggered at all, SEEK SUCH HELPS FOR YOUR FAITH AS YOU MAY. Though we cannot literally put our finger into the print of the nails, and may not wish to do so, yet let us use such modes of recognition as we do possess. Let us put these to their utmost use; and we shall no longer desire to put our hand into the Saviour's side. We shall be perfectly satisfied without that. Ye that are troubled with doubts and fears, I give you these recommendations.

First, if you would have your faith made vivid and strong, study much the story of your Saviour's death. Read it: read it: read it: read it. "Tolle: lege," said the voice to Augustine, "Take it: read it." So say I. Take the four evangelists; take the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah; take the twenty-second psalm; take all other parts of Scripture that relate to our suffering Substitute, and read them by day and by night, till you familiarize yourself with the whole story of his griefs and sin-hearing. Keep your mind intently fixed upon it; not sometimes, but continually. Crux lux: the cross is light. Thou shalt see it by its own light. The study of the narrative, if thou pray the Holy Ghost to enlighten thee, will beget faith in thee; and thou wilt, by its means, be very greatly helped, till, at last, thou wilt say, "I cannot doubt. The truth of the atonement is impressed upon my memory, my heart, my understanding. The record has convinced me."

Next, if this suffice not, frequently contemplate the sufferings of Jesus. I mean by that, when you have read the story, sit down, and try and picture it. Let your mind conceive it as passing before you. Put yourself into the position of the apostles who saw him die. No employment will so greatly strengthen faith, and certainly none will be more enjoyable!

"Sweet the moments, rich in blessing,  
which before the cross I spend,  
Life and health and peace possessing  
From the sinner's dying Friend."

An hour would be grandly spent if occupied in turning over each little detail, item, and incident in the marvellous death by which you are redeemed from death and hell. You will be surprised to find how this familiarizing of yourself with it, by the help of the Holy Spirit, will make it as vivid to you as if you saw it; and it will have a better effect upon your mind than the sight of it would have done; for probably the actual sight would have passed away from your mind, and have been forgotten, while the contemplation of the sorrowful scene will sink deep into your soul, and leave eternal lines! You will do well, first, to read and know the narrative, and then to contemplate it carefully and earnestly—I mean, not to think of it for a minute or two at chance times, but to take an hour or two that you can specially set apart on purpose to consider the story of your Saviour's death. I am persuaded, if you do this, it will be more helpful to you than putting his finger into the print of the nails was to Thomas.

What next? why, dear friends, the Lord has a way of giving his people wonderful realizations. I hope I shall not say anything incorrect when I remark that there are times with us when the Lord is present with us, and we are strongly impressed with that fact, and therefore we act under a sense of that presence as if the divine glory were actually visible. Do you know what it is to write a letter to a friend feeling as if the Lord Jesus were looking over your shoulder? I know what it is at times to stand here and preach, and feel my Lord so near me that if I had literally seen him it would not have surprised me. Have you never, in the watches of the night, lain quiet when there was no sound but the ticking of the watch, and thought of your Lord till, though you knew there was no form before you, you were just as certain that he was there as if you could see his sorrowful countenance? In quiet places all alone—you scarcely like to tell the story—in the lone wood, and in the upper chamber—you have said, "If he spake I should not be more certain of his presence; and if he smiled upon me I should not be surer of his love." These realizations have sometimes been so joyfully overwhelming that for years you have been lifted by them beyond all power of doubt. These holy summer days banish the frosts of the soul. Whenever a doubt is suggested to me about the existence of my Lord and Master, I feel that I can laugh the tempter to scorn, for I have seen him, and spoken with him. Not with these eyes, but with the eyes of my inner life, I have beheld my Lord, and communed with him. Wonder not that I am not among the crew of the black, piratical ship of "Modern Thought."

Nor is it merely in seasons of enjoyment that we get these helps, but in times of deep distress. Prostrate with pain, unable to enjoy any comfort, unable even to sleep, I have seen the soul of the believer as happy as if all sounds were marriage peals. Some of us know what it is to be right gleesome, glad, and joyous in hours of fierce trial, because Christ has been so near. In times of losses and bereavements, when the sorrow stung you to the quick, and you thought before it came, that you never could bear it, yet have you been so sustained by a sight of the sacred head once wounded, and by fellowship with him in his sufferings, that you have said, "What are my griefs compared with his?" You have forgotten your sorrows and sung for joy of heart, as those that make merry. If you have been helped in this way, it will have all the effect upon you that ever could have come of putting your finger into the print of the nails. If, perchance, you have been given up to die, and have, mentally, gone through the whole process of dying, expecting soon to stand before the bar of God, and have been happy, and even exultant, then you could not doubt the reality of a religion that bore you up above the surging billows. Now that you are again restored to life for a little longer time, the recollection of your buoyant spirits, in what you thought to be your dying hours, will answer all the purpose to you, I think, of putting your finger into the nail-prints.

Sometimes the strengthening influence may be afforded under the stress of temptation. If ever, young man, you have had a strong temptation hurling itself against you, and your feet have almost gone—ay, let me not say "young man"; but if ever a man or a woman of any age has had to cry out, "God, help me: how shall I escape out of this?" and you have turned your eyes and seen your Lord and beheld his wounds; and if you have felt at that moment that the temptation had lost all power, you have had a seal from the Lord, and your faith has been confirmed. If at the sight of your Lord you have exclaimed, in presence of the temptation, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" after that, you have had the best proof of your Redeemer's power to save. What better or more practical proof could you desire?

In these times, when the foundations of our faith are constantly being undermined, one is sometimes driven to say to himself, "Suppose it is not true." As I stood, the other night, beneath the sky, and watched the stars, I felt my heart going up to the great Maker with all the love that I was capable of. I said to myself, "What made me love God as I know I do? What made me feel an anxiety to be like him in purity? Whatever made me long to obey my God cannot be a lie." I know that it was the love of Jesus for me that changed my heart, and made me, though once careless and indifferent to him, now to pant with strong desires to honour him. What has done this? Not a lie, surely. A truth, then, has done it. I know it by its fruits. If this Bible were to turn out untrue, and if I died and went before my Maker, could I not say to him, "I believed great things of thee, great God; if it be not so, yet did I honour thee by the faith I had concerning thy wondrous goodness, and thy power to forgive"? and I would cast myself upon his mercy without fear. But we do not entertain such doubts; for those dear wounds continually prove the truth of the gospel, and the truth of our salvation by it. Incarnate Deity is a thought that was never invented by poet's mind, nor reasoned out by philosopher's skill. Incarnate Deity, the notion of the God that lived, and bled, and died in human form, instead of guilty man, it is itself its own best witness. The wounds are the infallible witness of the gospel of Christ.

Have you not felt those wounds very powerful to you in the from of assistance in time of duty? You said, "I cannot do it, it is too hard for me." You looked to Jesus wounded, and you could do anything. A sight of the bleeding Christ has often filled us with enthusiasm, and so with power: it has rendered us mighty with the omnipotence of God. Look at the church of Christ in all ages. Kings and princes did not know what to do with her. They vowed that they would destroy her. Their persecuting edicts went forth, and they put to death thousands upon thousands of the followers of Christ. But what happened? The death of Jesus made men willing to die for him. No pain, no torture, could keep back the believing host. They loved Jesus so that though their leaders fell by bloody deaths, another rank came on, and yet another, and another, till despots saw that neither dungeon, nor rack, nor fire could stop the march of the army of Christ. It is so now. Christ's wounds pour life into the church by transfusion: the life-blood of the church of God is from Jesus' wounds. Let us know its power and feel it working within us to will and to do of his good pleasure.

And as for those who do not trust him, what shall I say? The Lord help you to do so at once; for as long as you do not trust him, you are under an awful curse, for it is written, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be Anathema Maranatha"—cursed at the coming of the Lord. May it not be so with you! Amen.