

## TEXT SERMONS

**SEVEN STATEMENTS OF THE RISEN SAVIOR****John 20:10-29**

***“Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.”*** (John 20:1)

The seven sayings of the suffering Savior from the cross were powerful last words of Jesus before His death. His first statements after His resurrection contain messages that give hope and help to all followers of the living Lord Jesus Christ. Let us look at the first seven statements of the risen Christ, as recorded in John’s Gospel and make some applications from His words to our own lives.

We begin at the Garden Tomb in which the body of Jesus had been lovingly placed after His crucifixion three days before. A woman, Mary Magdalene, had come early to the tomb as John records: *“Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.”* (John 20:1)

She then ran back into town and told Peter and John that the body of Jesus had been removed from the tomb. Peter, John and Mary then went back to the tomb and Peter and John entered it and verified that it was indeed empty. They left to tell others but Mary remained outside wondering and weeping.

Then she also went closer and looking into the tomb saw two angels sitting who said to her, *“Woman, why are you weeping?”* She said to them, *“Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.”* (John 20:13)

John continues to report what happened next: *“Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, “Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away.”* (John 20:13-15)

These verses contain the first words spoken by the resurrected Christ. There were several conversations to follow as Jesus appeared at different places and spoke to different persons. Let us take the essence of Jesus’ statements and find comfort and cheer for our hearts in them.

**1. A WORD OF COMPASSION - *“Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?”*** (John 20:15)

The first word of Christ after the Resurrection is to a woman outside the Garden Tomb. I wonder if there is not some symbolism here. It was in the Garden of Eden that a woman was questioned after sin had been committed, as recorded in Genesis chapter 3.

The woman outside the Garden Tomb is weeping. Tears would have never been apart of life had there been no sin. Even Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus and as He sat astride the colt looking at the city of Jerusalem prior to His Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. Here, in this cemetery, Jesus, standing outside the tomb from which He had just exited, asks:

"*Why are you crying?*" He did not take away the tears but He was there as an answer to her tears. She did not immediately recognize Jesus – perhaps it was because her eyes were clouded with tears.

Mary, like the other followers of Jesus, was understandably sad. Not many days before, the sisters of Lazarus had said to Jesus, "He whom you love is sick." Now, it could be said that "He whom the disciples loved was missing." Sadness discolors everything. There is misery in sadness; sadness robs the soul of its song; it deprives the spirit of all its aspiration and produces a mental paralysis.

There are experiences and events in life that fill our hearts with sorrow and our eyes with tears. It is during those times of pain and grief that we need to know that, even though we cannot see Him, He is near. He may not take away all our tears just yet, but He is the answer to the reason for our tears, and one day "*God shall wipe away all tears.*" (Rev. 21:4)

## **2. A WORD OF COMMUNION - "*Mary.*" (John 20:16)**

This is Mary Magdalene – that is, Mary from Magdala, in distinction from the several others named "Mary" in the New Testament. Mark records that "*When He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons.*" (Mark 16:9)

Jesus had freed Mary from a life of bondage and out of great gratitude she followed Jesus. John records that Mary Magdalene was at the cross when Jesus died (John 19:25) and now, she is the first at the tomb. Tearfully she stood outside the empty tomb, confused, wondering why the empty tomb and weeping.

Then, suddenly Jesus was there and spoke to her, speaking only her name, "*Mary.*" She may not have clearly seen Him but she clearly heard Him. She recognized His voice. Speech recognition in His utterance of her name changed Mary from a weeper into a worshipper! Every disciple knows the Savior's voice. "*My sheep hear my voice*". If you do not know when the Lord is speaking to you then you are headed for trouble.

Mary recognized Jesus' voice and she answered Him also with but one word saying, "*Teacher.*" Here was a conversation between two persons that conveyed volumes of information, using but two words. Mary knew Him – He knew Mary. Familiarity requires no lengthy introductions. He but spoke her name and she His; in doing so communion was re-established.

It is comforting to know that the Lord Jesus knows his disciples individually. He called Thomas, who was a doubter at this time, but still a disciple, by name in verse twenty-nine of this same chapter. Jesus knew people after the resurrection and so will we. Moses and Elijah knew Christ and each other on the Mt. of Transfiguration. I believe we will know each other in heaven.

## **3. A WORD TO COMPANIONS - "*go tell my brethren*" (John 20:18)**

Mary was the first post-resurrection evangelist! She hastened to spread the good news of the

resurrection. ” *Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her.*”

We have a living Christ and He gives us a message to tell to the world. The message that sin had been paid for at the cross; the message that we have a Savior; the message that there is hope beyond the grave; the message that Jesus is coming back some day! (I Thess. 4:13 – 18) Are we telling it?

#### **4. A WORD OF CONSOLATION - “Peace be with you” (John 20:19)**

Jesus had appeared to Mary early in the morning and that evening, after Mary had told the disciples that Jesus was alive, He appeared where they had gathered. We read, *“Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, “Peace be with you.”* (John 20:19)

Scared disciples behind closed doors. Something is wrong about that picture. What does that say about the atmosphere and attitude of the disciples? It says that they were disillusioned, disappointed and discouraged. The Jewish and Roman leaders had arrested and killed their Leader. They were now leaderless and clueless as to what to do next.

Then, just when they were about to give up and disband, Jesus suddenly materialized in their presence and pronounced *“Peace be with you.”* Peace – just what they needed! There had been no peace day or night for over a week. Confrontations, accusations, armed soldiers, threats from a mob bent on murder had unnerved them and now they were cowering behind locked doors trying to sort it all out.

Suddenly their Master, Who had died a horrible death by crucifixion three days before, stood before them very much alive. His personal presence instantly changed the atmosphere and His pronouncement, *“Peace be with you,”* instantly comforted their fears. What is “peace”? George H. Morrison gives this definition: “Peace is the possession of adequate resources.” Jesus said, *“My peace I give you....”* (John 14:27) If we have Him, we have His peace and His resources are more than adequate!

This was a new day. Nevermore would things be the same for them or for the whole world for that matter. The peace that Jesus pronounced and provided that evening in Jerusalem is peace that is promised and provided for every disciple of Jesus Christ in every age. We are assured that *“The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”* (Phil. 4:7)

#### **5. A WORD OF COMMISSION - “As my Father has sent me so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’” (John 20:21–22)**

His presence cheered them; His peace comforted them and His commission centered them once again, giving them focus and purpose. This statement contains several different points of emphasis. Consider them as follows:

***The endearment communicated in this statement – “My Father ..... Me ..... you.”***

The relationship between the Father, the Savior and the disciples is enunciated in these words. Here is what has been called the “divine-human cooperative.” This triangle of Father, Son and disciples is a precious picture.

***The enlistment conveyed in this statement*** - “As ..... Me ..... so you.”

The mission upon which the Father sent the Son to earth was now fulfilled; the perpetuation of that ministry is now entrusted to the Son’s followers. Here is the essential commission given to the disciples. In Matthew chapter 28, we have the expanded commission. We too, are a sent people. We are sent into the world but we are not of the world. We need to have a sense of divine Ambassadorship if we are to fulfill God’s purpose for our being left in the world after our salvation.

***The empowerment conferred in this statement*** – “He breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’” When God created Adam, He breathed into him the breath of life. (Gen. 2:7) Now that Christ was alive, He breathes upon them to prove to them that He was not an apparition, but that He was truly living and breathing, and, since the disciples were fearful and lifeless, He re-ignited their zeal by breathing on them a new breath of life.

Furthermore, The “*breathing upon them*” was “a symbol, pledge, and confirmation, of what they were to receive on the day of Pentecost.” (Gill) “An earnest of what you shall further receive not many days hence.” (Matthew Henry) “A symbolical conveyance to them of the Spirit. An earnest and first-fruits of the more copious Pentecostal effusion.” (JFB)

Charles Ryrie also comments, “This was a filling with the Spirit for power until the regularized relationship of the Spirit began at Pentecost.” On the Day of Pentecost, “*there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind.*” (Acts 2:2) “*And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.*” (Acts 2:4)

To send out powerless disciples to represent and replicate the ministry of Christ would have been a useless expenditure of human energy. “*The flesh profits nothing.*” (John 6:63) Here “*He breathed on them*”; later the Spirit came to indwell them (Acts 2) in fulfillment of Jesus promise “*you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*” (Acts 1:8)

This is the commission that is incumbent upon all followers of the Lord Jesus Christ in every age. The Holy Spirit Who is resident in every child of God, is our power for witnessing today just as in the days of the disciples.

**6. A WORD OF CORRECTION - “Do not be unbelieving, but believing.”** - v.. 27

This was a word initially to unbelieving Thomas who was absent when Jesus met with the disciples the first time after His resurrection. Then eight days later Thomas was present when Jesus met with the disciples the second time. This is how the official record reads:

*“Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, “We have seen the Lord.” So he said to them, “Unless I*

see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.” 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!” Then He said to Thomas, “Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.” (John 20:24-29)

Some persons need more convincing than others. Thomas did not believe the testimony of the other disciples that Jesus was alive. That one who was dead should come back to life was too much to ask Thomas to believe, sight unseen. Not only did he demand proof by seeing for himself the risen Jesus, he set forth a second requirement for his believing such a miracle which was touching the nail-pierced hands of the Savior. But that is not all. Thomas set forth a third test: “*and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.*”

Thomas appears to be a hard case. He refused to believe the testimony of ten trusted fellow-disciples and requires three additional proofs that Christ was alive before he would believe. It is no wonder that he has been known ever since as “Doubting Thomas.” However, that designation falls short of his real problem. It was not doubt but unbelief that characterized him.

Then Jesus appeared where the disciples were gathered again, this time Thomas with them. Jesus rebuked Thomas saying, “*Do not be unbelieving, but believing.*” When Thomas saw, he believed and uttered one of the finest declarations of faith in the New Testament saying, “*My Lord and my God!*”

Thomas is called “the twin” – “*Now Thomas, called the Twin....*” (John 20:24) What was the name of his twin? Was the twin also a disciple of the Lord Jesus? If so, was the twin also an unbelieving believer? Could it be that Thomas has twins alive today in church circles?

### **7. A WORD OF COMMENDATION - “*blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.*” - Vs. 29**

This commendation is for all who have believed since Jesus ascended from the earth and went back to heaven. He is speaking of us. We are unseeing believers! He has pronounced a blessing on us.

“*Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*” (Romans 10:17 - nkjv) Or, “*Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.*” (nasb) We have heard the Gospel message. We have not seen the risen Christ; we have not put our finger into the nail prints; we have not thrust our hand into the spear wound in Jesus’ side. We have believed the testimony of credible witnesses whose testimony is recorded in the Word of God. We have heard the Word and believed the Word and are therefore among the “*blessed .... who have not seen and yet have believed.*”

## **CONCLUSION**

We have reviewed in a very general manner, these first words of the risen Christ. They are

full of meaning and encouragement for us. These statements, that we have taken in their broadest sense, communicate several salient facts:

- (1) Jesus Christ arose from the dead!
- (2) He appeared to various persons, women and men.
- (3) He imparted His peace to troubled souls.
- (4) He gave instructions for the announcing of the Good News worldwide.
- (5) He provided power for service in the Person of the Holy Spirit.
- (6) He verbally chastened unbelief in one of His disciples.
- (7) He pronounced a blessing upon all who would deposit their faith in Him, sight unseen!

John Masefield was an English poet and writer, and Poet Laureate of the United Kingdom from 1930 until his death in 1967. He lived from 1868 to 1967. He wrote a drama titled, "The Trial of Jesus." In it there is a passage in which the Roman centurion in command of the soldiers of the cross comes back to Pilate to hand in his report of the day's work.

After the report is given, Pilate's wife beckons to the centurion and begs him to tell how the prisoner died. When the story had been told, she quietly asks, "Do you think He is dead?" The centurion replied, "No, lady, I don't." Pilate's wife then asks, "Then where is He?" The Roman soldier replies, "He is let loose in the world, lady, where no one can stop His truth."

The cynics, skeptics and critics continue to denounce and deny the resurrection. However, every Christian, every Christian church, every Christian sermon, every Christian school and every Christian book are witnesses to Jesus' resurrection. No one can stop Him! He's alive! His truth goes marching on!

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*The truth of the resurrection of  
Jesus Christ is an indisputable  
fact, an irresistible force, the basis*

*for an indispensable faith,  
indestructible family and  
indescribable future!*

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