

## THE RESURRECTED JESUS

John 20:1-31  
Key verse 20:17b

"Go instead to my brothers and tell them,  
'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' "

Through the last lesson from John 19, we learned that Jesus' death on the cross was not a tragedy, but God's accomplished work of redemption, done according to the Scriptures. Jesus' death on the cross is the victory over Satan and over the power of sin through which Satan enslaves so many people. In Jesus' death for our redemption, we can find hope and confidence for our lives and for the lives of others. Let us thank God from the bottom of our hearts for His grace of our redemption and proclaim the good news of Jesus' victory at all universities in Germany and Europe and wherever God leads us.

In today's text, the author John shows us several clear proofs of Jesus' resurrection. He first shows us that Jesus' tomb was empty. John then tells us how the risen Jesus first appeared to Mary, who was weeping endlessly out of grief. Then he appeared to his fearful disciples and helped them until they believed the spiritual reality that Jesus had really risen from the dead, and could receive the Holy Spirit from him. When they met the risen Saviour, all their sorrow, fear and doubt were transformed into heavenly joy and confidence of victory. When they met the risen Christ, they were changed into the courageous and righteous workers of the gospel who preached the gospel of Jesus and taught others what Jesus had commanded them. May God also help each of us to receive the risen Jesus afresh into our hearts, so that we too, filled with the Holy Spirit, may be used as courageous and righteous workers of the gospel in our generation.

### 1. The Empty Tomb (1-18)

Let's look at verse 1: "Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance." It was

Sunday morning, the first day of the week. While it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb. While the other Gospels tell us that two other women namely Mary, Jesus' mother, and Salome went to the tomb with Mary Magdalene (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1; Luke 24:10), John in his Gospel confines himself to reporting the event from the point of view of Mary Magdalene, who was the first to meet the risen Jesus. Thus John emphasized the clear proof that Jesus' tomb was empty.

What kind of woman had Mary Magdalene been? Mary had been possessed by seven evil spirits (Luke 8:2). The Bible does not specifically report which evil spirits these were. Perhaps she had the yelling spirit, the spitting spirit, the beating and kicking spirit and the lusting spirit. In any case, she suffered a lot from her evil spirits. The 7 evil spirits had once certainly made her a person disregarded and rejected by the other people in her village. So she had become a lonely and desperate woman. But Jesus saw her with the eyes of God's love. He took care of her, delivered her from all 7 evil spirits and gave her a new, blessed life for the joy and glory of God. Since then she was one of the most faithful followers of Jesus, following Jesus to Golgotha and witnessing all the events of Jesus' crucifixion. After she had also closely observed the burial of Jesus' body (Luke 23:55), she went home after the burial full of pain and sorrow and wept endlessly.

On the first day of the week, while it was still dark, she then went to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body with fragrant oil to express her gratitude for Jesus and his grace in her life. She was the first to come to Jesus' tomb. But she did not know how to move the big stone. She did not know how to get past the Roman guard who guarded the tomb. But she was determined to anoint her Lord's body with fragrant oil at all

costs. Mary loved Jesus very much. Although the disciples had run away, she shared Jesus' suffering to the end. God made such a faithful woman the first witness of Jesus' resurrection.

When she came to Jesus' tomb, she saw something unexpected: the stone had already been rolled away from the entrance. Mary was so shocked by this sight that she did not even look inside the tomb, but immediately ran away. She did not even think that Jesus could have risen, but thought that grave robbers had stolen Jesus' body. She was too sad and overwhelmed by the power of death to understand the good news of the empty tomb. Let us look at verse 2: "So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!'" The other disciple whom Jesus loved was John.

As soon as Peter and John heard that Jesus' body was gone, they immediately ran to the tomb. Let's look at verses 3 and 4: "So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first." Peter, who always wanted to be first, had lost the race this time. But John was too afraid, so he just looked in instead of going in. Let's look at verses 6 and 7: "Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen." What kind of grave robbers would have unwrapped the body first before taking it away? If Jesus' body had really been stolen, the robbers would surely have left a mess in the tomb, as in a quick, stealthy robbery. The neatly wrapped sweat cloth is a clear testimony that Jesus was not stolen by robbers, but that he rose from death and that he had folded the cloth himself.

Let us now look at verse 8: "Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed." Peter and John went and saw that Jesus' tomb was empty. They did believe, as Mary had said, in the fact that the body was no longer in the tomb, but they did not believe that Jesus had actually risen from the dead. Although they had seen the evidence of Jesus' resurrection, their spiritual eyes remained closed because they did not remember Jesus' words about his death and resurrection, which Jesus had told the disciples several times before his capture and crucifixion.

Verses 9 and 10 say, "They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead. Then the disciples went back to their homes," Their problem was that they did not believe the Scriptures, but held on to their own ideas of life and had a different expectation of Jesus. If they had believed in the words of Jesus about the way of the suffering, death and resurrection of the Christ, then they would certainly have realized what the empty tomb and also Jesus' death on the cross meant to them. But because they did not believe in the words of Jesus, their spiritual eyes remained blind, although they had the best evidence before them. This incident teaches us that if we believe in Jesus' word and hold it in our hearts, we can understand the spiritual reality of Jesus' resurrection and experience heavenly resurrection joy.

The empty tomb is not only the proof that Jesus has risen bodily, but also a testimony of our perfect redemption. The empty tomb means that God graciously accepted Jesus' sacrificial death for our sin and accomplished his long-awaited work of redemption. The empty tomb means that human death is not the end, but that we will all rise with Jesus and go to his glorious kingdom. The empty tomb is the most joyful message for us humans and testifies to Jesus' victory over the power of sin and over the power of death. In Revelation 1:17,18 the author writes the following about the resurrected Jesus: "When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades." Let us believe in the risen Jesus on the basis of the Scriptures.

Let us now look at verse 11: "but Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb" Mary had probably come back to the tomb with the disciples. But she could not just leave like the disciples, but stayed outside the tomb and wept. Although Jesus had long since risen and she saw the empty tomb, she continued to weep. When she bent forward to look once more into the tomb, she saw two angels in white robes sitting where Jesus' body had been, one at the head end and one at the foot end (12). They were two angels who accompanied the gloriously risen Christ. As Jesus had repeatedly announced to his disciples, he had now indeed risen from the dead. But Mary Magdalene only wept. Her grief and

her fixed thoughts really made her completely blind to the wonderful spiritual reality that her Lord and Savior had risen from the dead.

That is why the angels asked Mary, "Woman, why are you crying?" She said, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." Then she turned around and saw Jesus standing there. But she did not recognize Jesus because she was crying too much and was completely fixated on the dead Jesus (13.14). The risen Christ asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking it was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." (15) In this way the risen Christ revealed himself first to Mary, who loved him so faithfully and sought him. Although she loved Jesus so much that, despite the desperate situation early on Sunday morning, she was the first to come to his tomb and seek Jesus' body, she too did not remember Jesus' word about his death and resurrection. She was still living under the power of death. Then Jesus said to her, "Mary!" Then she turned to him and said in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" which means "Teacher!" (16) Mary did not recognize Jesus until he addressed her by her name. When she recognized the voice of her shepherd, the scales fell from her eyes and she realized that she was not talking to the gardener but to the Lord. Jesus was her good shepherd, calling his sheep by name and leading them out of their darkness to his wonderful light.

After meeting the gloriously risen Jesus, Mary was so happy that she wanted to embrace Jesus for joy and hold him forever. How did Jesus react? Let us look at verse 17: "Jesus said, 'Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' " The risen Jesus did not simply comfort them humanly, nor did he address their exuberant feelings. He rebuked her that she should establish a new relationship with the risen Christ. Mary did not realize that the risen Christ was no longer just a shepherd or a teacher to her, but the King of kings and Lord of lords and Judge of the living and the dead. She still wanted to cling to him as before, to stay with him and spend as much time as possible with him. But Jesus knew that Mary needed a clear mission, otherwise she would only weep fatalistically all her life. So Jesus said to her, "Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your

Father, to my God and your God.' " The risen Christ gave Mary the sacred mission to serve the saving work of God wholeheartedly as a witness to the death and resurrection of Jesus. The risen Christ helped Mary overcome her grief and fulfil God's mission. Mary Magdalene, meeting the glorious risen Christ, went to the disciples and joyfully testified to Jesus' resurrection: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

## **2. The Risen Jesus Sends His Disciples (19-31)**

Every time Mary proclaimed the good news, the disciples opened their eyes and shook their heads in disbelief. They were too indolent and proud of heart that they had neither processed Jesus' death on the cross nor accepted the good news of the witnesses of Jesus' resurrection. Even though they had heard so much love and numerous living words of God in the past three and a half years, they held on to their limited thoughts and wrong goal in life, rejecting God's way of death on the cross and resurrection for the promised Messiah.

Let us look at verse 19: "On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you!'" What did the disciples do when the risen Christ visited them? Fearing that the Jews would now also search for them, arrest them and kill them, they gathered secretly behind closed doors. Because they had no resurrection faith, the disciples were caught up in the situation. The original quality of men is bravery, to give themselves for the truth and mission of God.

As they sat there gripped by fear, the Risen Lord came through the locked doors and stood in the midst of them and said to them, "Peace be with you!" The locked doors could not be an obstacle for the risen Christ to go to the desperate, fearful disciples. The risen Christ gave the peace of God to his disciples who were so fearful. He also gives us the peace of God. People who are filled with fears in this world through Satan's lies and temptations long for true peace. Many people suffer from depression at this time because they are dominated by various fears. Fear is the most widespread sin disease that makes people useless and disoriented. Fear is not a psychological phenomenon, but the spirit that Satan plants in us. Apostle Paul wrote in 2

Timothy 1:7: "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline." Many psychiatrists try to help people who are paralyzed because of fear by giving them medication or good advice. But in this way people cannot get their fear problem solved. Because they are possessed by the evil spirits that make them slaves to fear (Romans 8:15), they need to meet the risen Christ. He can heal them of their fear.

What happened when the disciples encountered the risen Christ? A miracle happened when the disciples heard the voice of the risen Christ: "Peter, peace be with you! John, peace be with you! Andrew, peace be with you!" The power of death disappeared and the peace of God flooded their hearts. At that moment, the spiritual reality of perfect salvation and eternal life filled their hearts. The risen Christ is God who gives true peace and blessedness to human beings.

Let us look at verse 20: "After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord." When Jesus showed his disciples his hands and his side, they became glad that they saw their risen Lord standing before them bodily. The risen Jesus drove away all fear and worry from their hearts and filled them with great joy and confidence of victory. Here we learn that true joy and peace do not come from good conditions or through human fellowship, but from the encounter with the risen Christ. Faith alone in the historical fact of Jesus' resurrection casts out all fear and worry from our hearts and helps us to boldly serve the work of God with joy and with confidence of victory.

Let us look at verse 21: "Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.'" Having cast out fear from His disciples and blessed them with His peace, the risen Christ empowered them as His apostles and sent them into the world as God had sent Jesus into the world. Jesus' mission was to lay down his life on the cross as a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of mankind for the salvation of the world and to defeat the power of Satan forever. Jesus' mission was to raise up disciples of Jesus and to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God to all peoples of all nations. Jesus' mission was to teach God's truth to people in sin and to heal the sick and possessed. The mission of Jesus' disciples is to lay down their lives as living witnesses of Jesus' death and resurrection for the salvation of peo-

ple who are sick in sin and to lead them to faith in Jesus. The mission of the disciples of Jesus is to serve the disciple-making ministry and to proclaim the good news of eternal salvation to all peoples of all nations. The mission of Jesus' disciples is to encourage people in sin through Bible study, that they may receive God's Word and be healed of their sin sickness and obsession through faith in Jesus and live as God's people.

But how could the disciples go into the world when they were still so fearful? Let's look at verse 22: "And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" Because the risen Jesus knew that they could not overcome the world with their own strength, let alone change the world, he gave them the Holy Spirit. Because the risen Christ knew that they had been slaves to fear since his capture and crucifixion, he filled them with the Holy Spirit by blowing on them. Then the Holy Spirit filled their hearts and changed the fearful disciples into the courageous, devoted gospel workers. The disciples' real problem was not the Jewish rulers or the testy hostile environment, but the fear of death in their hearts. But when the risen Jesus gave them the Holy Spirit, they got the courage and the confidence of victory to go out and preach God's word of truth to the people.

Let's look at verse 23, what Jesus went on to say to them, "If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." The main point of this verse is that Jesus gave his disciples the authority and mission to proclaim to all people the good news of the forgiveness of their sins through faith in Jesus Christ. The forgiveness of sins is one of the greatest blessings of Jesus and the essence of the New Covenant. Because sin is the devil's poison that leads people to death and eternal damnation, the gospel, namely the forgiveness of sins, must be preached with the highest priority among all peoples (Mark 13:10). The goal of the Christian mission is the forgiveness of sins, namely to save people from eternal damnation and bring them back into the kingdom of God. Those who reject this mission of God for their lives reject God's fundamental work of salvation and live past the original goal of life. This mission made the lives of Jesus' disciples glorious. This mission is God's great blessing for fallen people in sins and the content and purpose of our lives.

Let us look at verses 24 and 25: "Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 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." Doubt is also one of the devil's most powerful weapons. Although the disciples gave a clear testimony of Jesus' resurrection, Thomas did not believe them. He was very stubborn. Thomas was a man of doubt and a rationalist who desperately needed proof to believe. He thought he was smart and felt like a scientist. But in fact, he was a fatalist who lived a downcast life of faith. We can see this when we look at some of his statements, e.g. "Let us also go, that we may die with him." in John 11:16 or "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" in John 14:5. Thomas had great difficulty in receiving spiritual reality and believing in eternal life. Because his hope in Jesus was earthly and not for the kingdom of God, he was often disoriented as to which way to go. He followed Jesus with a doubting and fatalistic heart. Thomas' spiritual problem was that he respected his own reason, thoughts and feelings more than the words of Jesus and the testimonies of others about Jesus.

How did Jesus help Thomas? Jesus had a burning shepherd's heart for Thomas. Let's look at verse 26: "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!" Although Thomas stubbornly doubted, Jesus accepted him as he was and visited his disciples again especially for him, to bring him into his glorious kingdom. The risen Christ appeared to him once more and showed him his wound marks. Jesus bore all Thomas' doubts and stubborn unbelief and forgave him. Let us look at verse 27: "Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." The moment Thomas, representing all doubters of all generations, put his hands into Jesus' wound marks and felt them, he believed that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead. When Thomas experienced the risen Jesus, he was able to receive the spiritual reality of Jesus' resurrection and the good news of complete redemption through Jesus' death on the cross and his resurrection. Thomas repented that until then he had lived with a worldly hope for his

own glory and joy and had rebelled against the reign of God. Let us look at verse 28. This was his confession of faith: "Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" This is the wonderful example of even the most stubborn doubter finding faith in the risen Jesus through an encounter with Him.

Let us look at verse 29: "Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." Jesus is teaching us here that those who come to believe in Jesus because of the Word of God and because of the preaching of the Gospel are blessed. Instead of always looking for visible evidence or signs like Thomas, rather we are to live by faith in the Word of God and build our new life on the Word of God. But Satan sometimes uses our reason to make us doubt Jesus or God and His Word. Only faith based on the Word of God is truly blessed by God or Jesus.

Let us look at verses 30 and 31 in conclusion: "Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 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, the author of this Gospel and disciple of Jesus, who was one of the three closest disciples of Jesus, accurately reported numerous signs and wonders of Jesus in his Gospel so that the readers would believe in Jesus as the Christ already promised in the Old Testament and as the Son of God, and through their faith have eternal life.

In today's text, the author John has given us some evidence that underlines that Jesus rose from the dead. We learned that the risen Jesus frees us from all powers of death, such as grief, fear or doubt, and gives us not only complete redemption from the dominion of Satan, but also heavenly joy and true peace with God. This risen Jesus is our Saviour and our God. May the risen Jesus help us to give our new lives for God's work of salvation among the youth and students. The risen Jesus, the almighty God, is with us. He wants to lead sad, fearful and doubting people among the students to new life in Jesus through us. Amen.