

Easter In the Valley 2024

“The Power of the Resurrection”

John 20:19-31

Today we have the great joy of celebrating the single greatest event in human history. History records a host of notable victories on the battlefields, in the courtrooms, on Capital steps, and on sports fields all over the world. While each of these victories has a clearly defined winner, there is no greater victory than the victory won by Jesus when He died on the cross for the sins of the world and rose again from the grave. On that Resurrection morning, Jesus rose again, conquering sin, death, Satan, and even hell itself. We could study all the pages of history and never find a greater victory that has such power and impact on our lives today.

When we think of power, we think of many different things. Some think that power is found in wealth, so they give their life wholeheartedly to pursue it, but the vast majority find quickly that wealth is fleeting. ****ILL:** Mike Tyson, Evander Holyfield, Scotty Pippen, Lenny Dykstra, John Daly, etc. These are famous athletes who lost everything. Some think that power is about position and influence, but we can quickly look at the lives of famous presidents and quickly conclude that position and influence are also fleeting. While many still admire them, they no longer have the power or influence they had just a few short years ago. When thinking of power, some think of control and domination. People like Napoleon and Hitler have made every effort to dominate the whole world, but they, like every other, were futile in their attempts. Jesus asked the probing question in **Matthew 16:26a**, “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?” His question was exaggerated because no person can actually gain the whole world, yet so often we sadly believe the lie that if we have enough money, influence, fame, popularity, education and knowledge, social acceptance, and control, then we will truly have power. The truth is that there is no power apart from God, and there is no greater power that He has revealed than the power demonstrated through the resurrection of Jesus. While the world looks to all these other things for power, the truth is that these things cannot do for you what only the resurrection of Jesus can do for all who believe in Him. All these things can impact your life, but they cannot set you free from your sin, transform you from the inside out, reveal your purpose in life, or assure you of eternal life, but all these things and more are available to us today through the power of the resurrection. It not only impacts how we live our lives today, but it determines where we will spend eternity in the life to come.

There is nothing in your life today that can't be changed by the power of the resurrection of Jesus. Because He died on the cross for the sins of the world and rose again from the grave, His resurrection assures us of hope, peace, joy, love, and even eternal life. Maybe you hear that and think to yourself, “Pastor, that's too good to be true. You don't know how broken I am. You don't know how deep my pain is. You don't know how long I've struggled with this sin or addiction. You don't know where my marriage is. You don't know how lost I really am.” Friend, I may not personally know all these things about you, but I assure you that God does. He sees you and knows everything about you, yet in His love and grace, today He offers you the opportunity to be changed by the power of the resurrection. There are countless illustrations of this fact throughout God's Word, but one of my favorites is found in the illustration of one of Jesus' own disciples. He had

given up everything to follow Jesus. For over three years he had listened closely to Jesus' teachings and had witnessed many miracles. He had great hopes and aspirations of soon ruling and reigning with Jesus, but it appears that with Jesus' death so, too, did all of his own hopes and dreams. While some people are optimists and others are pessimists, he was a realist. When we look at him throughout the Scriptures we find that he was a skeptic, one who was not easily moved by opinions or emotions. Only the cold hard facts would convince him of the truth. So, when Jesus was crucified, this disciple knew everything was over. Little did he know that the power of the resurrection of Jesus was about to change everything, including him. The man that I'm speaking of today is the disciple Thomas. As we read the account in John 20, I pray that we come to experience the power of the resurrection in our own lives today.

Show Text

It is important for us to understand the background that leads up to this moment. We must remember that Jesus knew exactly why He had come from heaven to earth. He said emphatically, "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost," **Luke 19:10**. He also explained clearly, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many," **Mark 10:45**. In other words, Jesus knew that He had come here to save those who were lost by laying down His life as a ransom in our place. During His earthly life, Jesus repeatedly pointed to the fact that He is the Savior of the world who had come to rescue mankind from our sins, but the religious leaders of the day would not accept that. They reasoned that He must be a blasphemer who opposed the things of God and even accused Him of being possessed by a demon. The religious leaders of the day stirred up the crowd to crucify Jesus, even though He had never sinned or committed any wrong. Though He'd done nothing worthy of death, the Roman governor sentenced Jesus to death by crucifixion to appease the Jewish leaders. The Jewish leaders, however, had greatly miscalculated. They assumed that crucifying Jesus would put an end to His life, His name, His movement, and to any hopes of His future. To add a little insurance, they even went to the governor and reminded him that Jesus claimed that He would rise again from the grave. Assuming that Jesus did not have the power to do what He claimed, they determined that the disciples might steal the body of Jesus from the tomb and then start a conspiracy about Jesus. So, they convinced Pilate, the governor, to place a Roman seal over the tomb and station guards to watch around the clock. This was a strong-handed move to indicate that whoever would tamper with the grave would be punished by the Romans. No one would desire this, especially after the public crucifixion of Jesus. They all thought they were so clever, powerful, and effective, but there was nothing that man could do to prevent what God did next. Just as Jesus declared, on the third morning, that Easter morning, suddenly there was an earthquake, an angel descended from heaven, the stone was rolled away, Jesus had risen again, and the angel sat upon the stone waiting to share the news with all who would hear. Just as Jesus had foretold, He laid down His life on the cross and on the third day rose again from the grave. Today, I want us to see that the same power that raised Jesus from the grave is still working in our lives today.

Our world today has no shortage of conspiracy theories, and Jesus' world was certainly the same, but what follows in our text today is part of the historical record of real-life events and experiences that took place after Jesus rose again from the grave. Historically, we know that Jesus lived. Historically, we know that Jesus died. And historically, we see emphatically that Jesus rose again from the grave. This passage and many others like it give us first-hand eyewitness accounts of

what transpired, and as we look today by faith, perhaps we will find similar accounts in our own lives. As we study, we observe four realities of the power of the resurrection:

I. The Resurrection Brings Peace to Those Who Experience It (vs. 19-23)

As the scene unfolds, it is the evening of the first Easter. There in Jerusalem, ten of Jesus' disciples had gathered with others as they were trying to figure out what to do next. Their Lord had been crucified and they were uncertain of what was to come. The doors of the house were "shut," which is an indication that they were locked and fastened securely. The group was likely terrified of what was to come. If the religious leaders hated Jesus so much that they would crucify Him, then surely there is a strong chance that they would be next. And, if that weren't enough, the news was swirling around town that the tomb was suddenly empty, and Matthew 28 tells us that the same religious leaders had given a large sum of money to the Roman guards in exchange that they start the rumor that the disciples had stolen Jesus' body. In other words, as the disciples were gathered in this house, they were afraid that the religious mob would soon come against them. They were at a point where they had no peace. There was grief, pain, anxiety, uncertainty, and fear. Have you ever been there? Have you ever been in a place where you didn't know what to do, a place where it seemed like there was no way out of a predicament? That's where the disciples were. Part of this was due to the circumstance of Jesus' death, but part of this was also due to their own lack of faith. Notice it is already the *evening* of the first Easter. Throughout the day many wonderful things have happened, but these things had largely been dismissed by the disciples.

On that first Easter morning, a group of ladies made their way to the tomb in hopes of properly anointing Jesus' body. Much to their surprise, they did not find Jesus, but they did see the stone rolled away and saw an angel who told them, "He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said... Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going ahead of you into Galilee, there you will see Him; behold, I have told you," **Matthew 28:6a, 7**. From this point forward we discover several first-hand eyewitness accounts of people walking and talking with Jesus. We see in **John 20:18a** that Mary Magdalene was the first to experience the resurrected Christ. "Mary Magdalene came, announcing to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord.' " What an incredible peace these women must have had immediately, seeing the angel and receiving the message about Jesus' resurrection. They ran back to the disciples to tell them the amazing news, but **Luke 24:11** records, "But these words appeared to them as nonsense, and they would not believe them." Later that afternoon there were two largely unknown followers of Jesus walking on the road to Emmaus, when Jesus began to walk with them. They did not at first recognize who Jesus was, but they enjoyed His company and invited Him to stay for a meal. Immediately upon breaking the bread, their eyes were opened and they realized that they had been walking, talking, and spending time with Jesus. Their hearts were suddenly filled with joy and with peace. They had been hopeless at the thought of Jesus' death, but now because of His resurrection, they knew that He was indeed the Savior. As Jesus departed, they immediately rushed to Jerusalem to find the disciples to tell them the amazing news that Jesus had risen from the grave. But **Mark 16:13** says, "They went away and reported it to the others, but they did not believe them either."

A. Jesus Came to Them

The disciples are gathered in the house when Mary Magdalene tells them about the resurrection, and now these two believers from Emmaus come to tell them, when all of a

sudden something amazing happens – Jesus suddenly appears in the room with them. The Scripture says that Jesus first came to them and stood in their midst. They didn't know where He was and had not yet fully trusted that He had risen, but Jesus knew exactly where they were at this moment. He knew where they were physically, but He also knew where they were mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. He knew the struggles of their flesh and the battles in their mind. When they couldn't come to Jesus, Jesus came to them.

B. Jesus Comforted Them

I love what Jesus did next. They were in this room hiding because they were afraid, but think about the last time they had seen Jesus. When Jesus was taken into custody, most of them had fled in fear. Peter followed from a distance in the courtyard, but he became so fearful that he denied Christ three times. It appears that only John made it to the actual cross where Jesus was crucified. In other words, most of these guys had abandoned Jesus in His greatest point of need. What would you do in that moment? If you were Jesus, what would you say to those who had turned their back on you? Suppose you had invested your life into someone for three years by caring for them, teaching them, feeding them, rescuing them, and literally laying down your life for them. In my flesh, I confess that I would probably be saying something like, “Thanks a lot, guys! Way to stand up for me! Way to be there for me in my time of need! I called you a ‘friend’ and that’s how you treat me?” Jesus made no effort to bring up the issues of their past, He instead spoke immediately into the present, “Peace be with you.” It is true that this statement was a common greeting in that culture, but in this moment this common expression was a powerful message of what Jesus had come to proclaim. The Bible tells us that Jesus is the Prince of Peace who has come to make a way for us to have peace with God. The reason that He can say “Peace be with you” is because it is through His death on the cross and victorious resurrection that peace with God is made available. This is why Jesus then shows them His hands and His side. He is showing the permanent price that He paid for them to be at peace with God.

Immediately upon seeing that this was truly Jesus, their fear and shame were now replaced with great rejoicing. Think of it for a moment – the full weight of the Roman law, the full weight of the sins of the world, and the full weight of the wrath of God poured out on man's sins had all been placed upon Jesus. When He breathed His last and His body was buried in the tomb, it appeared that the weight was too great. But now in this moment of resurrection, it is clear that He bore the weight of it all, and He conquered it. No wonder Paul would declare in **Ephesians 2:13-14a**, “But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace.”

C. Jesus Commissioned Them

As the disciples now rejoice and celebrate Jesus' resurrection, He then immediately commissions them. He reminds them of what He had already told them before His death – that He would soon be sending the Holy Spirit and that just as He had been sent from the Father with a purpose and a mission, Jesus was now sending them to take the Good News of His resurrection all throughout the world. There was an amazing change happening in that room as Jesus looked at the very ones who were hiding in fear and commanded them to boldly take

the news of His resurrection where they would go, and this glorious change was all because of the power of the resurrection that they experienced in their own lives.

II. The Resurrection Reveals Problems for Those Who Miss It (vs. 24-25)

We are sadly reminded that not everyone experiences the peace that comes through the resurrection of Christ. This three-letter word “but” has such devastating consequences. Many people experienced Jesus and, as a result, were greatly rejoicing, but there was clearly someone who missed it. There are, in fact, many who miss it, as was the case with Thomas. It would be easy to sympathize with Thomas. Nobody likes to be left out. ****ILL:** I remember as a child having a sleepover birthday party. I was encouraged to invite anyone that I wanted to invite. I made a list of people to invite but in my immaturity, I only invited the people that I liked. I only picked those who liked all the same things as me, which largely meant that I picked all the Alabama fans who also liked football like me. I had no interest in inviting all the Star Wars fans, Lego lovers, and of course there were no Auburn fans allowed. My mother saw my list and immediately picked up on it. When all was said and done, she basically invited every “friend” I had from school and church, and I’m pretty sure there were also some kids included that I didn’t even know. My list of 10 somehow multiplied to a list of about 30 boys sleeping in sleeping bags on the living room floor. My mom made sure that everyone was included, after all, “Nobody likes to be left out.” 😊 But, it is important for us to understand in this moment that Jesus did not leave Thomas out. Every indication is that Thomas excluded himself. Thomas was intentionally staying away. The resurrection of Jesus and Thomas’ response to the news reveals three major problems:

A. He Was Defeated

It would be easy to see why Thomas was so discouraged. In his nature, Thomas was a very analytical person. He was the type who would ask questions, seek understanding and clarity, and then, once convinced, would be extremely committed and loyal. Like the others, Thomas had every hope that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. He had seen and heard countless pieces of evidence, but there were several things that he had misunderstood. The disciples did not fully understand that Jesus would truly die and rise again from the grave. Perhaps they thought He was speaking in metaphors as He described the laying down of His life. Thomas was devastated when Jesus died. “How could this be? If Jesus was the Savior, why would He die? No one comes back to life after they die.” The logical, analytical Thomas could not grasp even the possibility of Jesus’ resurrection. His discouragement gave way to depression as he realized that this “Friend” who sticks closer than a brother was now gone. Thomas grieved over His loss, but also over his own loss of time. Think of all the investment that Thomas had made to follow Jesus, and now it all seems lost. Thomas’ hope and future were all wrapped up in Jesus, and now Jesus was gone. Thomas was missing from the group that night because he was defeated. I’m not saying that he had completely thrown in the towel, but he is certainly not sure that he wants to spend another moment or another day with this band of followers. It seemed so pointless. Look at all that it had cost him, all the pain he was experiencing at the moment. He is wondering if it is even worth it, and maybe you can relate today. He continues...

B. He Was Doubting

Jesus told the disciples that as He was sent, He was now sending them. Of course, the Holy Spirit would come later, and they would then be witnesses in all the world, but if they are going to share the Good News then an obvious first place to start is with the man who wasn't in the room when Jesus came to them. **Verse 25** says, "The disciples were saying to him, 'We have seen the Lord!'" Now that the majority of disciples have experienced Jesus, they no longer have fear. They rushed out of that house and made every effort to find Thomas. When they found him, they all began to explain with excitement that Jesus was indeed alive. The Greek action is continuous, meaning that the disciples were continually saying to him, "We have seen Jesus." We would think that this would soften Thomas' heart, stir up his mind, and strengthen his heart, but Thomas was in way too low of a place for that to happen. Because he only believed the worst, he could only respond with doubt, "Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." In other words, Thomas began to give personal demands of what must happen in order for him to believe because his heart and mind were filled with such doubt. There's a part of me that feels sorry for Thomas. From the biblical text, this is really the only time he expresses doubt, yet he is forever known as doubting Thomas. ****ILL:** How would you like that to be you? Have you ever struck out in baseball? How would you like to be known as "Strikeout Sam"? Have you ever failed a test? How would you like to be known as "Failure Fred"? Have you ever lost a game? How would you like to be known as "Loser Lou"? None of us would like to be known or remembered for our worst moments, but these words give us a glimpse into how dark of a place Thomas was in. He doubted Jesus, doubted the Lord's resurrection, doubted the benefit of it all, and even doubted the witness of his closest friends. Have you ever been there before? Is that where you are at today – doubting the Lord, what He has done, what He can do, that He even cares about you? Thomas' doubt was so deep it led him to a third problem.

C. He Was Defiant

Thomas says it plainly, "Unless I see the imprint of the nails and put my finger into the very place, then I will not believe." Even in English, this phrase seems strong, but in the original Greek, it is even stronger. In Greek, this is a double negative which dramatically emphasizes the statement being made. Thomas is saying, "I absolutely will not believe what you're saying. There is nothing *you* can do to change where I stand." Without question, he is showing that no matter what they said or did, he would not believe it. These are the words of a hurt and hardened heart. Thomas, one of the first followers of Jesus, is so cold at this moment that he absolutely refuses to believe. While it may be hard for many of us to grasp, the truth is that any of us can be in that place. When we get hurt we tend to build up walls that we think are for our protection, but the truth is that it only isolates us from others and leads us to the same hardened heart that we see in Thomas. When we put our hope in someone or something that lets us down, then we begin to harden our hearts to resist trusting in others. Sadly, this is where many are today. They've been hurt and lost hope, and now their hearts have become hardened to the truth. Thomas thought he was merely defying the words of the disciples, but in reality, he was actually dismissing the truth of the resurrection. Thomas was in a bad place, and he was so bound by his problems that he was missing the truth that was right in front of him.

III. The Resurrection Provides Proof for All Who Seek It (vs. 26-28)

The Bible gives us no indication of what took place over the next week. However, what is clear is that when the group gathered the following Sunday, guess who was now back with them? Thomas. The Bible doesn't tell us exactly why he was there, but it certainly appears that he was there in hopes that he, too, might experience what they had experienced. What if their testimony was true? After all, Thomas could look at the evidence and see that they had been transformed from fear to great rejoicing. Perhaps throughout the week Thomas had asked others about their own experience with Jesus. Perhaps the ladies that had gone to the tomb told him about the appearance of the angel and what he said. Perhaps he talked to Mary Magdalene who clearly had talked with Jesus. Perhaps he interviewed the two disciples who were on the road to Emmaus to hear about all the conversation they shared over the walk. Thomas has likely heard all of the accounts, but this was still so hard to take in. He is seeking to discover for himself if Jesus has truly risen from the grave. It is always a good thing to seek the Lord. Remember the word that God spoke to the Jewish exiles in **Jeremiah 29:13**, "You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart." God reveals Himself to those who seek Him, which is what I believe we see Thomas doing.

Where do we see Thomas in **verse 26**? He is right there with the remainder of the disciples just a week after Jesus had appeared to the others. Why? Because he is seeking and hoping that he, too, might experience Jesus. Jesus could certainly meet him anywhere he was, but because Thomas is seeking the truth about Jesus, he is now positioning himself in a place to discover Jesus. Thomas was no fool. He understood that if he was going to experience the blessing of God in this way, he needed to position himself in a place to receive it. ****ILL:** Not too long ago I was speaking to a student who was lamenting that they were not finding a job. They told me they had been praying about it and they had been searching online for various opportunities and had filled out several forms online, but nothing had opened up for them. I know that I'm a little old school, but I then asked the obvious question, "Have you gone to any of these places? Have you spoken with anyone face to face? Have you volunteered to work in a certain area to prove your work ethic?" He looked at me like I was crazy, but then I explained that if he was truly seeking this type of opportunity he needed to put himself in a better position so that he could see and proceed when the Lord opens the door of opportunity. I can't help but wonder how many times we've missed the blessings of the Lord because we simply weren't where we should have been. Maybe we've missed God's answer because instead of spending time with Him we were sleeping in, again. Maybe we've missed the message intended for us because we were on the ball field instead. Maybe we've missed God's purpose because we had some greater priority in our life than Him. Thomas had missed his first opportunity, but as he is now seeking to discover the truth he puts himself in a place to encounter the Lord, and notice what Jesus does.

As Thomas and the others are gathered, just as He'd done the previous week, Jesus suddenly appears with the same message, "Peace be with you." Without wasting another second, Jesus looks directly at Thomas. Immediately everyone else in the room fades into the background as Jesus speaks directly to Thomas. Everyone in that room was important, but what was most important in that moment was the personal encounter that Jesus was giving to Thomas as He said to him, "Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing." Please understand that Jesus was not only giving an invitation to Thomas, He was also demonstrating something very important. Jesus spoke about the exact thing that Thomas had stated a week prior. Remember, Thomas had said, "Unless I see the nail prints in His hands and put my fingers into the place of His hands and side, I will not believe."

Jesus now directly invites Thomas to do the very thing he had stated. It's as if Jesus is saying to him, "Thomas, I see you. I know your struggles, your hurts, your fears, your doubts, and insecurities. I know you feel you're at a dead end and you don't know how you can go forward, but Thomas, it's Me. I'm alive. I'm here right now, and because of My victory, there is victory for you." Jesus spoke to Thomas to reveal that He cared for him and knew right where he was.

Not only did Jesus speak to Thomas, but He emphatically showed him the nail prints in His hands. He invited Thomas to put his hands into His side. We must be careful though to recognize that the point of Jesus' invitation was not merely to prove the fact that He had risen again. Thomas already had all the facts he really needed. The problem was not a lack of facts but a lack of faith. So often someone will say, "Well, how can you fully know that Jesus lived, died, and rose again from the grave?" The truth is that there is more than enough evidence to prove all of these things. The issue is not a lack of facts but a lack of faith. This is why Jesus instructs him, "Do not be unbelieving, but believing." **John Phillips** said it well, "The outcome of the battle between doubt and faith always hinges on the will. We doubt, not because we *cannot* believe, but because *we will* not believe." Do you hear what Jesus is saying? "Do not be unbelieving, but believing." In essence, Jesus is saying, "Thomas, don't keep on doubting. Just look to Me and believe. I know you don't understand it all. I know you have a lot of questions. I know this doesn't all make sense to you, but Thomas, I am who I said I am. I am the way, the truth, and the life. I laid down My life on the cross for the sins of all the world, and I raised it back again so that all mankind can have new life and eternal life through Me." As soon as Jesus called Thomas to believe, Thomas immediately responded. It is interesting to note that when he was unwilling to believe, Thomas demanded that he see the nail prints and reach his fingers into the side of Jesus that had been pierced by the soldier's spear, but having heard the words of Jesus there is no indication that he actually reached his hand at all towards the body of Jesus. Having encountered Jesus, Thomas understood what was most important in this moment was not his reaching for Jesus but the clear fact that Jesus was reaching for him. Jesus came to him in his point of need, in his dark place of doubt and despair, in the midst of his hurt and hardened heart, in his deep brokenness, and Jesus called him to believe. Thomas responded immediately, "My Lord and my God!" In one simple statement, Thomas is adamantly declaring his faith in Jesus and devotion to Him. By declaring "my Lord" he was placing Jesus on the throne of his heart, and by declaring "my God" he was trusting that Jesus is ruler over everything. This is a statement of total trust and surrender to the Lord, and this is what the Lord desires of us today. Until Jesus is our Lord and our God, we cannot fully experience the joy of His presence in life. Until Jesus is our Lord and our God, we won't fully know the power of the resurrection. Even as He did with Thomas, Jesus is calling and pleading with us, "Don't be unbelieving, but believing." Are you sensing that stirring in your heart today? Does it feel that the Lord is knocking on the door of your heart? Are you ready to put your trust in Him today? You have all the proof you need to trust and surrender to Him, but like Thomas, we must each personally declare Jesus as "my Lord and my God." This statement of faith and devotion to Jesus was so sincere that it radically impacted the rest of Thomas' life, and it does the same in our lives today.

IV. The Resurrection Declares Promise for All Who Believe It (vs. 29-31)

It's easy to look at this passage and conclude that if Thomas had encountered Jesus earlier than this moment his life would have been so much better, but the Bible shows us clearly that the issue was not so much his lack of encounter but his lack of faith. For a week he lived in misery and uncertainty, without a sense of clarity or direction because he had been unwilling to believe, yet

he truly had everything he needed. He had the many testimonies of truth and had heard the powerful evidence of what God had done. The truth is that all of us are in a similar place today. Like Thomas, we have not seen Jesus with our physical eyes or been visited by Him in some miraculous way, but frankly, we don't have to have these things to believe. We simply have to have faith to believe in Jesus. And where does this faith come from? It is not from seeing, but from hearing. **Romans 10:17** says, "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." We need only to hear the Word of God and receive it by faith. The issue is not a question of whether it is true, the question is whether or not you will personally trust God and His Word. God's Word is true. He did factually, live, die, and raise again, the issue is whether or not we will fully believe in Him. Jesus says it plainly, "Blessed are they who did not see Me, and yet believed." Friends, this is why God has given us His Word. John tells us plainly, "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written," **John 21:25**. There is more than enough proof of who Jesus is and what He did. He came to this fallen world to give His life for fallen man, so that through His death and resurrection, He could raise us up to know Him and be with Him. And, when we believe in the resurrected Christ, He changes everything. Remember Mary Magdalene weeping at the tomb, she was transformed from grief to rejoicing because she believed. Remember the two unknown followers on the road to Emmaus, they went from hopelessness to having a living hope because they believed. Remember the fearful disciples hiding in the house, they were transformed from fear to courage because they believed. Remember skeptical Thomas, he was transformed from doubt to devotion because he believed in Jesus. In fact, he spent the rest of his life going throughout the world proclaiming the Good News of Jesus. Church tradition tells us that Thomas took the Good News eastward to Babylon, then across the Euphrates to Parthia, and then on to India, where he eventually died as a martyr for preaching the same Good News he once doubted. Friends, this is the power of the resurrection. There is no doubt, though, that the greatest personal promise of the resurrection is found in **verse 31** of our text, "These have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name." The greatest power of the resurrection is that through faith we are transformed from being dead in our sins to being made alive in Jesus. **Romans 10:9, 13** says it well, "That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved...for 'Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.'" There is nobody that Jesus can't change. Everyone who believed in the resurrected Christ was radically changed. This is the power of the resurrection. Jesus is calling and pleading, don't be unbelieving, but believe in Him today and you, too, will experience the power of the resurrection!