

The Disciple Who Wanted Proof

John 20:24-29

Why do you believe in Jesus? You know, there are a lot of people in the world today. They have grappled with that question. And in terms of their belief, they have wondered whether or not Jesus was really who he claimed to be. Is there anything wrong with desiring evidence? That is. Would it be wrong for us to want to have rock solid evidence that Jesus is who he claimed to be?

You know, there are a lot of people, as I said a minute ago, that question. Jesus. Now, there are many people that, from a historical vantage point, they would no doubt say that there was indeed a man by the name of Jesus who lived some 2000 years ago, but they haven't yet come to the conclusion that Jesus was who he claimed to be.

Well, who was that? The Son of God. So in our lesson today, I want to invite you to turn with me to the book of John in chapter 20. And I want to talk for a moment or two about the disciple who wanted proof. In John chapter 20, we have an account of the Lord's appearances to his disciples on Resurrection Sunday.

And then eight days later, we have an account of the Lord Jesus appearing again the first day of the week. Eight days later, he appears to the disciples. So let's just talk for a moment or two about the disciple who wanted proof. In the 20th chapter of the book of John, John records for us the fact that the Lord Jesus appeared to the disciples on Resurrection Sunday.

Really, in the evening hours. Now Mark tells us in Mark chapter 16 that Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven demons. She went and told those who had been with the Lord as they mourned and wept. And the Bible says that when they heard that the Lord had been seen alive by her, they did not believe.

And then the Bible tells us that the Lord Jesus appeared in another form to the two disciples as they were on the road to Emmaus. You remember, Mark tells us that he appeared in another form till those two as they walked and went into the country. And the Bible tells us that as the Lord talked of them, their hearts burned within them, as he opened the scriptures and talked about those great prophecies that had been penned about him.

Well, the Bible tells us that those two disciples went back and told the other disciples or apostles, we've seen the Lord. But here's what Mark's account tells us. They did not believe them either. And so now we come to John, chapter 20, and Jesus appears to the apostles. That is, the Lord Jesus appears to the ten Judas Iscariot.

He's gone. He's been hanged, as we have read in Scripture time and again. Thomas, however, was not present on this occasion, but the Lord Jesus appears to the disciples. The doors are shut for fear of the Jews. And the Bible tells us that Jesus said to those apostles, peace be with you. Now in John's account, he sets forth what we would typically call the Great Commission, but then drop down, if you would, and note what the text says.

The Bible says that Thomas, called Didymus, was not with them when the Lord appeared on that occasion. And so they said to Thomas, we have seen the Lord. But here's what Thomas said. Thomas said, unless I see in his hand the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, he said, I will not believe.

So really, what Thomas wanted was empirical evidence. He wanted to know proof positive that Jesus had indeed been raised from the dead. Now you remember, if you go back and look at Mark 16, in Mark's account, the Bible tells us that when Jesus initially appeared to the apostles, that is, to the ten, that he rebuked them or upbraided them because of their unbelief and hardness of heart.

The reason being that they did not believe those who had seen him and told them about his resurrection. That is, they were unbelievers. Now, we've often talked about Thomas, and typically his name is synonymous with doubting. We often hear people call Thomas Doubting Thomas. Well, I think in many ways Thomas receives a bad rap because when you go back and you look at the inspired record, all of the apostles grappled with this idea of believing in the resurrected Lord.

Now the Lord Jesus, time and again throughout his ministry, had pointed to the fact that he would be raised from the dead. You remember in John chapter two, Jesus said, destroy this temple in three days. I'll raise them up. They thought, he's talking about the temple in Jerusalem. But John tells us he was talking about the temple of his body.

So eight days later, that is the following Sunday after Resurrection Sunday. The Bible says the apostles are gathered together again and Thomas is with them. The Lord Jesus appears in their midst. And again he says to them, peace to you. And then here's what Jesus said to Thomas. He said, Thomas, reach your finger here and put it into my hand, and take your hand and put it into my side, and be not unbelieving, but believing.

Thomas then said to the Lord Jesus, my Lord and my God. Jesus, then, based upon what Thomas said, had this to say. Blessed are you, Thomas, because you've seen and believed. Yet blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. So what then can we draw from this great text? Well, I think number one, to maybe talk for a moment or two about the manifestation of Jesus.

Now, in this context, we're talking about the resurrected Christ. But Jesus manifested himself in bodily form to Thomas and the other disciples in Luke chapter 24. You remember Jesus showed the apostles his hands and his feet, and he said, it is I myself. He went on to say, A spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see that I have.

And then again, Luke said that he showed him his hands and his feet. So they had rock solid evidence that Jesus had indeed been raised from the dead. So when we talk about the manifestation of Jesus to the apostles, let's just talk for a moment or two about the fact that there was a manifestation of Jesus. There was a confirmation of Jesus, and then there was a declaration about Jesus, the manifestation.

The Lord Jesus appeared in their presence. And then the confirmation. Thomas had the opportunity, as did the other apostles. They had the opportunity to see firsthand the resurrected Christ. And then, of course, the declaration that he was and he is Lord and God. Now that being said, I think it's incumbent on all of us to step back for a moment or two and think about what the Bible has to say about the manifestation of Jesus.

Now, again, I know there are a lot of people in the world today. If you were to ask them, what do you think about Jesus? Who was he? Well, there are no doubt many people that would say, you know, I've read a lot about Jesus, and I think that he was a man of deep, deep love, that he was an individual who was genuinely interested in the plight of people, particularly those that had been disenfranchised and others that were facing some type of physical malady.

There was a sense in which he demonstrated compassion toward those people, and then no doubt some would say, well, you know, he was very merciful and kind. Well, there are a lot of things that we could say about Jesus. And listen, he was all those things, but more importantly, he was the divine Son of God. Now when we look back at the record and we think about the historical Jesus, there's no doubt that there was a man named Jesus who lived in this world some 2000 years ago.

But now when we talk about the fact that he was a good man and he was interested in the plight of people and interested in those who were disenfranchized and so on. There's a vast difference in making those statements about Christ and saying he is the divine Son of God. Now the Bible tells us back in Isaiah the prophet you remember foretold of the coming of the Christ, that he would be born of a virgin.

But in Isaiah chapter nine, verse six, Isaiah said, he shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. So when we talk about Jesus to understand that he was fully God and fully man, God, whether God was his father, God the Father, and Mary was his mother. So in John chapter one, you remember John said, in the beginning was the word.

The word was with God. And the word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. So here's the question. When you read the various accounts of the life of Jesus, that is Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John the biographical sketches of the life of Jesus. What's your conclusion? What do you have to say about the one who is called Jesus?

Now John chapter one and verse 14, John said, and the word became flesh, and he said, we beheld his glory, glory. So the only begotten of the father, full of grace and truth. The apostles and those who lived in the first century, they had the opportunity to visibly examine the glory of Jesus. Now can you imagine the second member of the Godhead leaving the glory of heaven coming to earth to live among mankind, and ultimately to die on a cross?

Well, such was the fate of Jesus. Paul said in Philippians chapter two, have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, counted not being on an equality with God, a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man.

He humbled himself and became obedient unto death. Yes, even the death of the cross. The Hebrew writer tells us in Hebrews chapter two in verse nine that Jesus tasted death for every man. So that being said, when I think about the manifestation of Jesus here on planet earth, what was his purpose for coming to the world in which we live today?

Well, the Lord Jesus said, you remember in John chapter 14, Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, the life. No man comes unto the father, but by me, pointing out that access to the father would ultimately be through him. Now Luke 19:10, Jesus said concerning his earthly ministry, his mission. He said, The Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost.

So when I think about Jesus, would it be incumbent on me to conclude that he is a divine Son of God? Well, listen to what John records in John chapter eight. In John eight, Jesus is talking to the Jews of his day. And the Lord Jesus said, except you believe that I am. He said, you'll die in your sins.

And really, what he was saying was, unless you come to conclude that I am the Divine Son of God, he said, you'll die in your sins. And if you die in your sins, where I am, there, you cannot be. So Jesus himself, pointing to the fact that the Lord that he is exclusively our hope that if we don't put our faith and trust in him, if we don't conclude that he is the

Son of God, we're going to die in sin.

And if that happens, he said, where he is, we cannot come. Now what about what about the confirmation? Would it be possible for me to conclude, without a shadow of a doubt, that Jesus is who he claimed to be? Well, I think the answer is yes. Don't you think it's interesting in John that in verses 30 and 31, in close proximity to Thomas and his evaluation of Jesus, that John said, truly many of the signs did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book.

But he said, these are written by John, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God, and that believing you might have life in his name. Now, John recorded seven very specific signs or miracles performed by Jesus, beginning with turning grape juice into wine or water, rather into wine. In John chapter two.

And that was a manifestation of his glory, and the disciples believed in him. But you can go back and you can begin sifting through those various signs or miracles. Those signs and miracles really authenticated his claims of deity. You remember in John chapter five, Jesus said, the very works that I do bear witness of me that the father has sent me.

When you began to look at all the great miracles that Jesus performed in the first century, whether it be giving sight to the blind, restoring the hearing of those who were deaf, cleansing those who were lepers. I mean, you could go on and on and on the raising of Lazarus from the dead. All of those signs said in a very loud way that this is the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God, the great power that he demonstrated.

Now, look, I didn't have the first. I didn't have the opportunity, as they did in the first century, to see first hand Jesus turn water into grape juice or wine. I didn't have the opportunity to see Jesus do a lot of miracles I didn't see. I didn't see any miracle performed by Jesus on planet Earth. But through the eyes of faith, I can see those miracles, and I can conclude that the divine record is true and right and accurate.

So, number one, you think about those miracles. And John said that those miracles were all recorded for a purpose. Well, what was the purpose? To come to the conviction that Jesus was who he claimed to be? Well, who was that? The Son of God. In John chapter 11, you have what I believe to be the pinnacle of all miracles the raising of the dead, raising Lazarus.

Now, had you been present in the first century and seen that you think that would have had a profound impact on your life? Well, again, I can't I can't examine from an empirical standpoint those miracles performed as they were in the first century. I didn't have that luxury. But again, I can take the scriptures, the word of the living God.

And by the way, this book is not just a book. It is the book of all books. It is the inspired Word of God. There are earmarks of inspiration. But in Second Timothy chapter three, Paul said, All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness, that the man of God might be complete, thoroughly equipped under every good work.

Now Peter said that holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Peter went on to say that God has given us all things pertaining to life and godliness. So everything that I need to develop faith in my life and to demonstrate and obedient faith has been given in what? In the scriptures. So number one, I think about the miracles.

And then number two, that incomparable message of Jesus. Go back and look at Matthew chapters five through seven. Typically we talk about the sermon on the Mount, and that was

in many ways a masterpiece of a lesson. You remember Jesus would say on several occasions, you've heard it's been said by them of all time. But I say to you, inserting divine authority.

So in Matthew chapter seven, at the conclusion of that great sermon, the Bible says that those who are present on that occasion, they were astonished at his teaching. Why? Because he taught them as one having authority and not as one of the scribes. So there was something different about his message. We might say it was unparalleled. Nothing comparable to that message in John chapter seven at verse 46, it was said of Jesus, no man ever spoke like this man.

Back in John chapter six. You remember Jesus had identified himself as that living bread that came down from heaven. And he pointed out that he was indeed the bread of life. One of the seven I am statements recorded by John in his gospel narrative. But the Bible says that those who were present on that occasion, they had difficulty accepting this truth.

They said, this is a hard saying, a difficult saying. Who can understand it? And so John said, from that time many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him. Jesus then turned to the 12, and he asked this question, Will you also go away? And you remember what Peter said? Peter said, Lord, to whom shall we go?

For you have the words of life eternal. Now know the next verse. John said that Peter went on to say, and we have come to believe, and to know that you are the Christ, the son of the living God. Well, how did they conclude that? How did they decide? Well, so the apostles, how the hell had they come to the conclusion that Jesus was the Christ, the son of the living God?

Well, number one, they saw the miracles. Number two, they heard that incomparable message. And so the conclusion was irresistible. Yes. This is the Son of God. Back in Matthew 16, when Jesus is in the. You remember, he's in the coast of Sisera, Philip II. He asked the disciples who the men say that I, the Son of Man, am.

And they said, some say you're John the Baptist, some Elijah, others Jeremiah, one of the prophets. Then Jesus asked this question, but whom do you say that I am? And again Peter spoke up, and Peter said, you are the Christ, the son of the living God. Well, Jesus then said, blessed are you some in Barcelona. Flesh and blood does not reveal this to you, but my father, which is in heaven.

So the apostles had come to conclude that he was exactly who he claim to be. Well, we come back to John 20. The resurrection of Jesus. Is it necessary for me to understand that Jesus was raised from the dead? Can I believe that? Well, of course I can. In first Corinthians chapter 15, Paul makes the case for the resurrected Christ.

He identifies those who are witnesses. That is the testimony the human observation that Jesus had been raised from the dead. Now Luke said in acts chapter one, verse three that Jesus showed himself alive over the space of for two days, being seen by them. And the text says by many infallible, unmistakable proofs. So for a period of 40 days, there were people that saw firsthand the resurrected Christ.

They saw him in bodily form. Now Paul said in Romans chapter one, verse four, that Jesus was declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. Paul went on to say in Romans chapter four and about verse 25, that Jesus was delivered for our offenses, but raised for our justification.

So when we talk about the resurrected Christ, and you go back and you look at the account given by John, and to hear Thomas in the long ago evaluating the empirical evidence he had, the opportunity to see Jesus in the flesh. And his conclusion was, my Lord and my God. Well, today we have to draw the same conclusion.

If we want to go to heaven, if we want to be saved. We've got to come to believe that Jesus is the Christ. Now in Romans chapter ten, verse nine, Paul talked about those who confess with their tongue the Lord Jesus, and believe in their heart that God raised him from the dead. He said with the heart, man believes unto righteousness with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

So when I come to the conclusion that Jesus is who he claimed to be, and I realize that sin has separated me from God. You remember Paul said, there's none righteous? No. Not one. All have sinned. All come short of the glory of God. Romans chapter three John said that sin is the transgression of the law. Verse John three, verse four.

Isaiah said, sin separates us from God. Well, the only way that I can remedy the problem of sin in my life is to turn my life over to Jesus, to acknowledge him as Thomas did, as my Lord and my God. What does it mean to make the Lord, or rather, to make Jesus the Lord of our life, means to allow him to rule, to reign.

Paul said, he's the King of kings and Lord of lords. So King Jesus wants to rule my life when I obey the gospel, I become a part of the kingdom over which Jesus serves as king. King Jesus regulates my life through what means all through the pages of Scripture. So how then, would I enjoy our relationship with the Lord and have my sins washed away?

As the Bible talks about. Paul said in Ephesians one verse seven. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace. Well, number one, I've got to conclude. Number one, as I said earlier, that Jesus is who claimed to be the Son of God. Again Jesus said, except you believe that I am, you'll die in your sins.

Paul said, Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. One of the reasons why we have the scriptures, the scriptures will verify for us the evidence that Jesus is who he claimed to be the Son of God. I can sift through the scriptures, and I can come to the conclusion that he is who he claimed to be.

Then I have to repent. Paul said that God demands all men everywhere to repent. Acts chapter 17 at verse 30. And then to confess with my mouth what I believe in my heart, that is, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. But we're not done. No, the Bible says, but I need to be baptized into Christ.

On Pentecost day, when Peter and the apostles preached the gospel for the very first time, and all of its fullness. You remember the people on that occasion were cut to the heart. They were pricked, and they wanted to know men and brethren, what shall we do? Well, here's what Peter said. We have a record of what Peter said in verse 38.

He said to repent, that is, you need to change your thinking. The change of thinking is followed by a change in actions. We don't continue to live as we once did. We had been in sin. What we give that way of life up, we repent. We turn again and then Peter said, we're to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

For what reason? For the remission of sins or so that my sense might be forgiven. Jesus said in a parallel passage in March 16th, and giving the Great Commission, he that believeth and

is baptized shall be saved. He that believeth not shall be condemned. So I'm baptized into Christ to be saved. I'm baptized into Christ so that my sins can be washed away.

Acts 22, verse 16 I'm baptized into Christ so that I can enjoy forgiveness of sins. So what then? Is it that washes away my sins? Not the water. Some blood of Christ. You see, I've got the contact, the blood. And the only way that I can do that is to go where it was shed. Now, John said, in John 19:33 and 34, Jesus shed his blood in death.

When I'm baptized into Christ, I then contact that blood. Romans six Paul would say in verse three, no, you not that all we who are baptized were baptized into his death. So when we're about tossed into Christ, we contact the blood of Christ, and we are added to the body of Christ. And we have made Jesus the Lord of our lives.

We have said he's going to rule and reign in our heart, and we're going to be faithful to him until death. Because the promise is that if we're faithful to the Lord, we will receive on that great and final day the victor's crown, the stephanos, the crown of life. I want to ask you in closing today. What do you think about Jesus?

Do you believe he's a son of God? If you believe he's the Son of God, have you obeyed the gospel? Why not do what they did 2000 years ago? Make Jesus the Lord of your life and live for him every day, so that one day you can live with him. Thank you and God bless.

All right. Let me change real fast this time out. I'll be ready to go.