

# ***“The Masterpiece”***

John 20:21-29

November 9, 2014

**REVIEW:** John’s Gospel laid out...

A. ***Preparatory*** Ministry – ch.1

1. Verses 1-18: **Theology**

- *“In the beginning...”*
- *“...the Word was with God...”*
- *“...the Word was God.”*

2. Verses 19-51: **Missiology**

- *“What do you want?”*
- *“Come and see.”*
- *“Follow Me.”*

B. ***Public*** Ministry – ch.2-12

C. ***Private*** Ministry – ch.13-17

D. ***Passion*** Ministry - ch.18-19

E. ***Proving*** Ministry – ch.20-21

Last week: ***“Are You Building To Code?”***

- See **Galatians 2:20** as an umbrella summary
- See **Matthew 7** (building on the *Rock or Sand*)

**T/S:** For those of you who realized that you were not “building to code” last week... I have good news! Literally. God’s Word (and John’s Gospel in particular) were given to us by God to help us realize when our life’s song is “out of tune.”

Even better... John’s Gospel is/has been a consistent “tuning fork” for those of us who want our love & lives to be “getting in tune” with Christ & Christ-likeness more and more everyday...

What a gift God’s Word is to us...

**VIDEO:** (The Who – *“Getting In Tune”*)

**CONTEXT:**

(Note: remember Mary M. the *“unlikely witness”*)

(Note: remember the *“Road to Emmaus”* disciples)

## PREVIEW:

1. The Miraculous
2. The Mission
3. The Means
4. The Mess (a.k.a. the "Meat-head")
5. The Ministers
6. The Missionary
7. The Messiah
8. The Message

## The MIRACULOUS:

<sup>19</sup> So when it was evening on that day, the first *day* of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and \*said to them,  
"Peace *be* with you."

<sup>20</sup> And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

# The MISSION:

<sup>21</sup> So Jesus said to them again, "Peace *be* with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

BE a seeker of "Persons-of-Peace"

BE "salt & light"

BE one who reveals God to lost humanity

BE humble

BE obedient (unto death on a cross)

BE a servant

BE a truth-teller

BE a fisher-of-men

BE an example for others to follow

BE a "divider" AND a "unifier"

**Matthew 10:34-35**

*"Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn "a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law-- Your enemies will be right in your own household!"*

BE one who sacrifices

BE a preacher/proclaimer

BE a "Do-er" (1 John 3:18... James 2)

BE a demonstration of God's love

BE a WITNESS (Gk. = "martyr") – see Acts 1:8

**THE MEANS:**

<sup>22</sup> And when He had said this, He breathed on them and \*said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

v.22 = "He breathed on them... they received the Spirit..."

A. True in OT way... On vs. In

B. Elsewhere told to wait until... (Acts 1:8)

**Note:** With the disciples at last convinced that He had risen from the dead, the Lord proceeded to give them instructions and promise them empowerment. In a preview of the Great Commission He would give them later in Galilee ([Matt. 28:19-20](#)), Jesus charged the disciples, "**as the Father has sent Me, I also send you**" (cf. [17:18](#)). Having formally *commissioned* the disciples, Christ ceremonially *empowered* them as a pledge of the power they were actually to receive on Pentecost forty days later ([Acts 2:1-4](#)). Signifying that coming reality, **He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."** This was a purely symbolic and prophetic act, reminiscent of the vivid object lessons frequently employed by Old Testament prophets to illustrate their messages (cf. [Jer. 13:1-9](#); [19:1-11](#); [Ezek. 4:1-4](#)). In other words, Christ did not through this puff of breath actually and literally impart the Spirit in His fullness to them; rather, He declared in a visible figure what would happen to them at Pentecost.

Ten of the original Twelve were present. Judas was already dead by his own treacherous hand ([Matt. 27:5](#)). Thomas was the only other member of the original Twelve not present here. These disciples, of course, were already regenerate men ([John 15:3](#)). So the fact that they still were waiting to **receive the Holy Spirit** indicates that the Spirit's relationship to individual believers in the new covenant era is profoundly different from His Old Testament ministry. Under the new covenant, every believer is permanently indwelt ([1 Cor. 6:19](#)), empowered ([Acts 1:8](#)), and gifted ([1 Cor. 12:4-11](#)) by the Holy Spirit. Under the old covenant, the Holy Spirit's ministry to individual saints was not so universally personal and prominent. Jesus' actions here indicated the outpouring of

the Holy Spirit that was about to occur, completing the transition between the two covenants.

The Gospels are clear that heretofore "the Spirit was not yet given" (cf. [John 7:39](#))—meaning that the new era had not yet been inaugurated. It is likewise clear that the Holy Spirit's new covenant work did not actually commence until Pentecost. All of Scripture affirms the chronology. Jesus Himself expressly said the Spirit would not be given until after His ascension ([John 16:17](#)). But "when He ascended on high... He gave gifts to men" ([Eph. 4:8](#); cf. [Ps. 68:18](#)). The Spirit was "poured out upon us from on high" ([Isa. 32:15](#)). In fact, on the very day of His ascension, Jesus told the apostles to *wait* for the Spirit to come upon them ([Acts 1:8](#)). When they finally did **receive the Holy Spirit**, the result was an immediate, public, and dramatic outpouring of miraculous power ([Acts 2:33](#)).

When Jesus **breathed on them** at this point, however, it was a powerful illustration, rich with meaning—because the Holy Spirit is pictured in [Ezekiel 37:9-14](#) as God's breath. So the gesture was an emphatic affirmation of Christ's deity, making His own breath emblematic of the breath of God. It was also reminiscent of the way God first "breathed into [Adam's] nostrils the breath of life" ([Gen. 2:7](#))—thus picturing the impartation of new life through regeneration (the second birth), which under the new covenant is always accompanied by the impartation of the Spirit ([Ezek. 36:26-27](#)). The simple act of breathing on the disciples was thus a meaningful emblem on multiple levels. Since then, every Christian has received the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation ([Rom. 8:9](#)).

- MacArthur New Testament Commentary

<sup>23</sup> "If you forgive the sins of any, *their sins* have been forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they have been retained."

- A. See MacArthur (below) for deeper expounding
- B. **Point = authority of God's Word**
- C. Preach & teach the Word
- D. **Key = be bold in truth telling**

As part of their witness to Him, the disciples would have His authority delegated to them. **"If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them,"** Jesus told them, but **"if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained."** This verse has been misinterpreted by Roman Catholics to mean that the Roman Catholic Church has had the apostles' authority to forgive sins passed down to it. But Scripture teaches that God alone can forgive sins ([Mark 2:7](#); cf. [Dan. 9:9](#)). Nor does the New Testament record any instances of the apostles (or anyone else) absolving people of their sins. Further, this promise was not made to the apostles alone, since others were also present ([Luke 24:33](#)). What Christ was actually saying is that any Christian can declare that those who genuinely repent and believe the gospel will have their sins forgiven by God. On the other hand, they can warn that those who reject Jesus Christ will die in their sins ([8:24](#); [Heb. 10:26-27](#)).

This was not new information to the disciples, since the Lord had spoken very similar words long before in Caesarea Philippi: "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven" ([Matt. 16:19](#)).

Here Jesus spoke of the delegated authority of believers. He told Peter, the Twelve, and by extension all believers, that they had the authority to declare who is bound in sin and who is loosed from sin. He said believers have the "keys of the kingdom," the realm of salvation, because they have the gospel truth that saves ([Rom. 1:16](#); [1 Cor. 1:18-25](#)). Christians can declare that a sinner is forgiven or unforgiven based on how that sinner responds to the gospel of salvation.



The church's authority to tell someone that he is forgiven or that he is still in sin comes directly from the Word of God. In [Matthew 18:15-20](#), the Lord taught His disciples (and by extension all believers) that if a professing believer refuses to turn from his or her sin, even after being privately confronted ([vv. 15-16](#)) and publicly rebuked ([v. 17](#)), then the church is commanded to treat that individual as an unbeliever. Those within the church have both the authority and the obligation to call the sinning brother back to repentance ([vv. 18-20](#)), and to let him know that because of his blatant disregard for the Word of God, he has subsequently forfeited fellowship with the people of God. The reality is that he may not be a child of God at all ([John 8:42](#); [14:15](#); [2 Cor. 13:5](#); [1 John 2:3-6](#)).

Believers have the authority to do this because God has given them His Word as the supreme standard by which to judge. Their authority does not come from anything within them; it is not founded on their own personal righteousness, spiritual giftedness, or ecclesiastical position. Instead it comes from the authoritative Word of God.

**That which the Scriptures affirm, Christians can dogmatically and unhesitatingly affirm; that which the Scriptures denounce, Christians can authoritatively and unapologetically denounce. Believers do not decide what is right or wrong, but they are to declare with boldness that which God has clearly revealed in His Word. Because the Scriptures present sin as an affront to God, His people must be faithful to confront it. Insofar as their judgment corresponds to the Scriptures, they can be certain that it harmonizes with God's judgment in heaven.**

**When people reject the saving message of the gospel, denying the person and work of Jesus Christ, the church has divine authority, based on the revealed Word of God, to tell them that they will perish in hell unless they repent ([Luke 13:1-5](#); cf. [John 3:18](#); [1 Cor. 16:22](#)). Conversely, when people profess faith in Christ as their Savior and**

**Lord, the church can affirm that profession, if it is genuine, with equal confidence—based on passages like [Romans 10:9](#), "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."**

The church's authority comes from the Scriptures. Because Christ is the head of the church ([Eph. 1:22](#); [5:23](#)), the Word of Christ ([Col. 3:16](#)) is the supreme authority within the church. When believers act and speak in accord with His Word, they can do so knowing that He stands in agreement with them.

**- MacArthur New Testament Commentary**

***CRITICAL Key:*** vv.24-29 illustrate, expand & explain v.23!

## **The MESS / MEAT-HEAD:**

(see the “me” in “Meat-head”)

<sup>24</sup> But/n<sup>o</sup>w Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

## "But/now Thomas..."

### A. "One of the 12"

- Note: like Judas, it's about faith (not familiarity)... No amount of religious proximity can make up for a lack of relational purity!
- **Note:** both Tom & Judas had attended the finest "seminary" & were apart of the best led "Church," & had been "fed" the finest teaching & preaching... from the eternal standard-setting Teacher & Preacher, GOD HIMSELF - and STILL... they did NOT have faith.
- What does this reveal?
  - Role of the Spirit
  - Power of the Spirit
  - Role of sin
  - Power of the sin
- Note: church @ Ephesus:
  - **Planted** by Paul ("best")
  - **Pastored** by Timothy
  - **Poured-into** by John
  - **Preached to** by Jesus
  - **Purged of the faith today!**

### B. ".. was not with them when Jesus came"

- Sometimes The Lord will isolate us to test our faith...

- See God's sovereign grace in Tom's test (for him & us)
- Note: see God's pre-ordained providence (using Thomas as a living illustration of his point in v.23) here...

## The MINISTERS:

<sup>25</sup> So the other disciples were saying to him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "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."

***"so the other disciples told him"***

- That's what "disciples DO"
- Ministers are Missionaries!
- God's faithful = gap-fillers!
- Note: they didn't "just" act or live differently... They TOLD the truth! (\*\*\*) see Dr. Lawless' definition of Evangelism\*\*\*)

## **Evangelism Defined:**

*“Evangelism is being, doing, and telling the good news of Jesus Christ, and depending upon the triune God to draw His own unto Himself and His Church... That is, evangelism is never less than the telling of the good news, but assumed is a lifestyle that supports the message.”*

- **Dr. Chuck Lawless**

### ***"...we have seen The Lord"***

- The content, veracity, & passion inherent to what you "tell" others is critically, even eternally important.
- Note the power of a PERSONAL witness (as opposed to a mere dissemination of information).

NOTE: The “informed & inspired” are also called to “inspect”

NOTE: Today’s parallels:

- “I didn’t hear that...”
- “I don’t care what the Bible says...”
- “Unless \_\_\_\_\_ I will NOT BELIEVE!”

NOTE: ALL in the context of “religion/church” (so sad)

**CORE Question:**

What has God authorized or revealed in His Word, that one or some of His appointed & anointed under-shepherds have shared with you... that you, like Thomas, are refusing to believe (for reasons that can only be explained through your self righteous refusal of biblical submission?)

Biblical under-pinning to support the confrontational question:

**Hebrews 13:16-18**

*16 And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.*

*17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.*

*18 Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a good conscience, desiring to conduct ourselves honorably in all things.*

# THE MISSIONARY:

<sup>26</sup> After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus \*came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace *be* with you."

<sup>27</sup> Then He \*said to Thomas, "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."

- A. NOTE: Key parallels to Christ's first "risen" visit...
- Christ initiates (again – Amen!)
  - Christ comes personally to persons! - JDP
  - Miraculous entry...
  - "Peace be with you"

- B. NOTE: "As the Father has SENT Me..." - we GO!
- Matthew 28:18-20
  - Acts 1:8

**VIDEO:** (The Who – "*Love Reign O'er Me*")

## **THE MESSIAH:**

<sup>28</sup> Thomas answered and said to Him,  
***"My Lord and my God!"***

One of the crowning jewels of John's Gospel...

Don't miss the ongoing irony & inspiration of the gospel...

**Meat-head proclaims the Message of the Messiah!**

How about YOU?

## **THE MESSAGE: (mMm)**

<sup>29</sup> Jesus \*said to him, "Because you have  
seen Me, have you believed?"

***Blessed are they who did not see,  
and yet believed."***



## Eternal Questions:

### *Has HE given you eyes to see yet?*

- Are you a “before or after” Thomas?
- Do you believe with just your:
  - Head
  - Heart
  - Hands
- Are you an “all-3” biblical believer?
  - 2 Corinthians 13:5
  - To believe is to abide... (John 15)

***“If you love Me,  
you WILL obey My commands.”***

- Jesus, the Christ  
(John 14:15)

Let's Pray!