

Small Group Bible Study Questions

- A) It would seem that all of John 20 is provided to answer the scandal of what happened to the body of Jesus Christ after He died on the cross. Why do you think, based on our study of John 20 from this past Sunday, this chapter would have been important for the early church?
- B) One of the most difficult portions of the Bible to defend is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul, the author of most of the writings in the New Testament, even referred to this doctrine as the “essential” issue of Christianity (1st Corinthians 15:1-19). How can John 20 give us the encouragement and confidence to have faith in Jesus Christ’s resurrection?
- C) The answer for many of the early disciples of Christ as to the question of Jesus’ resurrection was, “the proof is in the body of Christ. If I can touch Him, feel Him, see Him alive, etc., then I will believe.” The same is true for us today! The greatest ‘proof’ that Jesus lives is still in the body of Christ! When the body of Christ is living as it should, the world sees ‘Christ alive,’ instead of ‘Christ crucified.’ How can you, personally, involve yourself in this ‘proof’ of Christ for the world?
- D) Jesus Christ comments that seeing and believing is great, but that not seeing and still having faith (believing, trusting in Jesus) is the true mark of one who is a follower (John 20:29; cf. 1st Peter 1:8-9; Romans 10:17). Faith in Christ, though, is not supposed to be something which is dangerous or ignorantly foolish. Rather, the Bible encourages us to “count the cost” of following Him (Luke 14:25-33). Share with your group the areas of your own life where ‘counting the cost’ for faith in Christ is the most difficult and where you personally need the most prayer.

Do You Ever Have Doubts About Jesus?

Long Beach Alliance Church • October 16th, 2005 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**JESUS *SAID TO HIM,
“BECAUSE YOU HAVE SEEN
ME, HAVE YOU BELIEVED?
BLESSED ARE THEY WHO DID
NOT SEE, AND YET BELIEVED.”
~ JOHN 20:29 (NASB)**

1) The Scandal Of An Empty Tomb

- A) Mary Magdalene (a disciple of Jesus who had been delivered from seven demons earlier in Christ’s ministry -- Luke 8:2) goes to Jesus’ tomb (with two other women not mentioned in John -- Mark 16:1-2) early in the morning to apply spices to Jesus’ body and finds the covering stone rolled away from the front of the tomb (John 20:1).
- B) The women run back to tell the Peter and John (which they were told to do by an angel -- Matthew 28:1-8; John 20:2), who arrive on the scene to find the same problem. The stone is rolled away, and there is no body (John 20:3-10).
- C) Mary & the disciples “believe” that Jesus’ body has been stolen (20:2, 15), they do not understand that he has risen

from the dead (20:9). Despite all of Christ's teaching, they witnessed Him die a horrible death and they witnessed His burial. They had no idea that Christ had risen!

2) Jesus' First Appearance To Mary

- A) Mary, in her grief, remains at the tomb when she is confronted by someone she thinks is a gardener. Believing that the gardener has stolen the body, she demands that he return it to her (20:11-15).

- B) Jesus calls out Mary's name, and at once Mary recognizes His voice (cf. John 10:27-28). She cries out and throws herself to Him, clinging to Him in stunned amazement (20:16-17).

- C) Jesus essentially says to Mary, "You don't need to hang on to Me, I'm not leaving yet! But I will be leaving, so go tell the disciples what you have seen" (20:17-18).

3) Jesus' Second Appearance To His Disciples

- A) Jesus' disciples are hiding in a locked room for fear of their lives (20:19). Suddenly, Jesus appears in the midst of the room, greeting His disciples with "Peace to you..." (cf. John 14:27, 16:33).

- B) You can imagine the fear the disciples must have experienced at that moment. They thought Christ was a ghost (Luke 24:39-43), so Jesus shows them His crucifixion wounds, confirming that He is truly Jesus (20:19-20).

- C) Once again, Jesus calms His disciples with "Peace to you..." Jesus, in a symbolic act of what would happen to them at Pentecost, commissions the disciples for ministry (20:21-23).

- D) Commissioning the disciples is a critical component of Jesus' temporary return to His followers before He returns to Heaven (cf. Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:14-16; Luke 24:45-49; John 20:30-31).

4) Jesus' Third Appearance To Thomas

- A) Thomas, one of the original apostles (Matthew 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:13-16 & Acts 1:13), did not witness Christ appearing to the other disciples (20:24), and doesn't believe that Christ has truly returned (20:25).

- B) Thomas wants physical proof of Jesus' resurrection by placing his fingers into Christ's wounds (20:25). Despite the misnomer (cf. John 11:16), this is the source of the phrase "doubting Thomas."

- C) Jesus appears to the disciples (once again, locked away in hiding), but this time He has come to answer Thomas' questions. Christ, showing His knowledge of Thomas' questions despite not being there, asks Thomas to place his fingers in Christ's crucifixion wounds (20:26-27).

- D) Thomas responds with one of the great confessions of Christ in all of Scripture, and one of the high points of John's gospel (John 20:28).