

# Because He Lives...

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**John 20:14-16; 26-29; 21:15-17\***

**Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!**

As a young boy, whenever I watched a movie, I would wait for the moment when the bad guys would lose and the good guys would win. On Good Fridays, it bothered me to think that Jesus did not do some miraculous act on the day of his crucifixion to show those who crucified him or mocked him that he had the power to defeat death. No, Jesus was crucified. He died in agony and pain. They even mocked him saying: **“He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him.**

(Matthew 27:42 ESV)

**No, he did not come down from the cross. Yet today, on Sunday, he rose from the grave.** The cross, the instrument of punishment became a symbol of victory over death. Death was defeated. There is no Resurrection Sunday without Good Friday.

I will look back to that event this morning and find three persons who encountered Jesus after his resurrection: **Mary Magdalene, Thomas, and Peter.**

## **1. Because He lives, we have comfort.**

**Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him**

**away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned and said to him in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher). (John 20:14-16 ESV)**

The first sentence recorded from the mouth of the Risen Lord after his resurrection is: **“Woman, why are you weeping?”**

Mary Magdalene was devastated. Not only she, but also the mother of Jesus, the disciples, and many more followers. The women came in the morning to do their rituals out of respect for a dead person. The stone was rolled, the tomb was empty. There were angels telling them not to look for Jesus in the tomb. I mean, what would you expect if you were there? Confusion and pain of the loss of a very dear person.

I do not know why she did not recognize Jesus. It could be the tears in her eyes. It could be the sun in her face. I don't know. But one thing I see in this event, Jesus is asking Mary, **“Why are you weeping?”**

This morning some of you may have tears in your eyes or hearts. Tears of loss, tears of discomfort or tears of confusion.

The answer is in the risen Lord. He says: “Mary”, “.....” Put your name. The risen Lord Jesus is calling you by name. He knows you by name. He calls you by name. He loves you personally. He too has been through suffering.

Mary found her comfort **only** when she turned around and saw the face of Jesus. Mary's response is great: My teacher, *Rabbouni*.

You will find your comfort only when you turn around and look at the face of Jesus. Remember the words of Jesus: **“Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted.”** (Matthew 5:4).

## **2. Because He lives, we have faith.**

That same night Jesus appeared to the disciples. It seems Thomas was not there. Then they told him about Jesus and he had difficulty in believing. Thomas said he would not believe, unless he touched Jesus. (John 20)

We don't know why he was not with the disciples on the day Jesus stood among them the first time. Maybe he was extremely disappointed. Doubt can visit any of us and can isolate us from others. Thomas was isolated. Maybe he was praying or just wanted to be alone.

**Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."**  
(John 20:26-29 ESV)

-After eight days he joined the group. I think that it was a wise decision. We all can go through tough times. Doubt can come and visit us. What are you going to do when you face doubt?

If you want to stay alone, I understand. Take some advice: do not stay alone too long.

-Thomas came back to his family. Being in the community helps. We struggle together; we ask questions together; we cry together; we laugh together.

Jesus appears in the middle of this group. An amazing way to appear....

First, he says: **“Peace be with you,”** knowing how much they needed that. Then I assume he looks towards Thomas and asks him:

**“Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.”**

Wow! Jesus asked Thomas to do three things: *Put your finger, see my hands, and place your finger on my side.* Thomas wanted to do those three things in order to believe. Jesus provided three things for Thomas to have faith. **Jesus helped Thomas to believe.**

The gospel writer does not say if Thomas did touch Jesus. I think Thomas was so astonished that he did not touch him. Thomas turned towards Jesus and probably fell on his knees exclaiming:

**“My Lord and My God!”**

Thomas made an unexpected proclamation about the Lord. He gave to Jesus the title **“Lord”**, (*Adoni*) which is *I AM* in the Old Testament for the personal name of **YHWH, God**. The most doubtful person made an incredible statement. Jesus’ scars touched him. Thomas had an incredible transformation in his life. Only the Spirit of God can do this, not us, not Thomas himself.

I believe Thomas did not touch Jesus. I think Jesus touched Thomas.

-Maybe some of you can relate with Thomas. Some of you have serious questions about God. Is He real? Is this real?

-Some of you used to believe years ago, but now you have doubts. Your faith is past tense. Now, what faith?

This morning many of you came to the worship service. I am not sure all of your questions will be answered this morning. Yet, you are here. It is Easter morning. My hope is Jesus will touch your heart and reignite your faith that died many years ago. My hope is that you will hear the voice of Jesus calling on to you "Come and touch me." Jesus did not condemn Thomas, like some of us do when we find people lacking faith. Jesus came to Thomas providing solutions for his doubt. Jesus helps us whoever we are and wherever we are in our journey.

**"Do not disbelieve, but believe."**

### **3. Because He Lives, we have a Purpose, a Mission**

**Jesus and Peter** When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. (John 21:15-17 ESV)

Peter, our dear brother, is thinking, “This is it!” First, he denies him, he regrets, and then he hears the rooster crowing and weeps with his whole heart. A couple of days later, we find him running on Resurrection morning to see the empty tomb.

Peter, my dear brother Peter, I can identify with him. Peter makes the most dramatic claims! Peter who did not want Jesus to wash his feet, and then he agreed to be completely washed (John 13). Peter made most the memorable statements: **“You are the Messiah”**(Mark 8:29ESV). Peter is the one who said **“Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.”** (John 13:37ESV). When he was fishing and he faced Jesus telling him where to fish, he said: **“Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”** (Luke 5:8 ESV).

Peter is confused now. Peter has lost his focus. He saw the risen Lord, yet, what is next? He went fishing. Back to his old life. Jesus appears to the disciples, yet he approached to Peter with a special question:

**“Peter, Do you love me?”**

Three times Jesus asks the same question: “Do you love me?”

Why three times? Perhaps because Peter denied Jesus three times? Perhaps Jesus wanted to hear Peter’s affirmation for three times. It could be... because this scene happened around charcoal fire. Does that bring the picture to our mind? Peter denied Jesus when he was near the charcoal fire heating his cold body. (John 21:9)

Jesus’ answer: **“Feed my sheep. Have a mission, have a purpose in your life. Dear Peter, my resurrection is not just for you. The message of this important event should go out. Go and love the sheep. Go and**

**care for them. Go and preach the gospel. Go and baptize them in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Go Peter...Go..."**

Because He lives, I can face tomorrow.

Because He lives, He comforts me.

Because He lives, He gives me faith. My doubt can be replaced by faith.

Because He lives, I have a mission, we have a mission, we have a purpose glorify Him with whatever was entrusted to us.

\*The outline of this sermon was taken from Paul Taylor, *The Words of Resurrection*, April 8, 2012