

Jesus Appears

John 20 v 19-31

Context:

We are in the Easter season, celebrating the glorious resurrection of Jesus from the dead on the third day after his cruel and unjust crucifixion. Some of Jesus' friends received a series of stunning shocks when they walked to the tomb early that first Easter morning, the biggest of which was the incredible news, delivered by an angel, that Jesus had risen from the dead, just as he foretold. That evening some of his disciples had gathered in Jerusalem and they too received an unexpected surprise. Let's join them and see what unfolds.

Observation:

1. Why had the disciples locked the doors of the room where they were meeting according to v 19?
2. Who appeared and what did he say (v 19)?
3. What did he show them according to v 20 and what was the initial reaction of the disciples?
4. What did Jesus then tell them in v 21?
5. What did he do and say in v 22?
6. What would be the outcome or consequence of this in v 23?
7. Who was missing that evening according to v 24?
8. What did the other disciples tell him in v 25 and what was his response?
9. When did the next episode take place according to v 26, who was present this time and what happened according to the rest of v 26?
10. What did Jesus say directly to Thomas in v 27?
11. What was his response in v 28?
12. What was Jesus' further response in v 29?
13. What does John say was his purpose in writing his Gospel according to v 30-31?

Meaning:

1. Why do you think the disciples were afraid of the Jews (possibly meaning the Jewish leaders) in v 19? What were they afraid of?
2. What do you think was the significance of Jesus' greeting at the end of v 19?
3. Why do you think Jesus showed them his hands and side and why do you think the disciples reacted as they did (v 20)?
4. What mission does Jesus give to the disciples (v 21) and what is the nature of that mission (v 23)? What is the connection between the mission and what Jesus does and says in v 22?
5. If Jesus gives the disciples the Holy Spirit here on Easter Sunday evening, how does this connect with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (see Acts 2)?
6. The phrase at the end of v 25: 'I will not believe.' literally translates as: 'Not not will I believe', where the double negative reinforces the strength of the statement. So,

what do you think of Thomas' words in v 25? Can you sympathise with his doubt and strong demand for evidence?

7. A week later Thomas was with the disciples when they gathered again (v 26). Why do you think he was there, despite his strong declaration of doubt?
8. This is the second time Jesus appeared among them despite the doors being securely locked (v 19 & v 26). What does this tell us about the nature of Jesus' resurrection body?
9. Jesus offers Thomas the exact evidence he had earlier demanded (v 27) – what does the fact that Jesus knew Thomas' exact words, even though he hadn't been physically present when Thomas said it, tell us about Jesus' identity?
10. Jesus' strong command at the end of v 27 literally translate as: 'Don't be unbelieving, but believing!'. How do Jesus' actions and words in v 27 demonstrate both his grace and his discipline?
11. Thomas' declaration in v 28 is a full-blooded confession of faith in the divinity of Jesus! Why do you think knowing Jesus had truly risen from the dead was enough to convince Thomas that Jesus truly God?
12. How is v 29 an encouragement to us?
13. John calls Jesus' miracles 'signs' in v 30 (and elsewhere in his Gospel). What is the significance of calling them 'signs' – why does he use that word?
14. How do the signs of Jesus as recorded by John in his Gospel serve to fulfil his stated aim and purpose in writing this book as described in v 30-31?

Application:

1. How should Jesus' words in v 21-23 shape and direct the mission of the church today?
2. Do you meet people who express similar 'doubts' to those of Thomas? What might you say to them to address their struggle to believe?

Pray:

- For God to breathe the Holy Spirit on us that we might fulfil his mission today.
- For those known to us who are not yet believers.
- For God to allay our own doubts and struggles with faith.