

**CCF Study Notes**  
**Tuesday 7 AM Study**  
**23 May 2006**  
**John Chapter 20**

Before beginning to read from John Chapter 20 let's spend time in prayer, considering the mocking, condemnation, torture, crucifixion, death and burial of Jesus our Lord. Let's ask God that we might:

1. **Reach** right conclusions about Jesus, His death and resurrection;
2. **Believe** that Jesus died and rose again for us – and live for Him;
3. **Come** to our senses and bear witness to the risen Christ;
4. **Know** the Peace of Christ, offering His mercy to all men;
5. **Gather** faithfully with God's people and take hold of the Apostles' doctrine;
6. **Live** for Jesus having come to believe that He is risen, and
7. **Have life** by believing in Jesus Christ, the Son of God!

This chapter records the resurrection of Christ as it was revealed to the women and to the eleven apostles. Chapter 21 is somewhat of a postscript or epilogue to the gospel, so chapter 20 marks in some sense the end of the gospel. Verse 30 and 31 of chapter 20 are the basis for these statements, being concluding remarks that explain the form of John's gospel. The call to believe comes in its strongest form in Chapter 20. John's gospel is a call to believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and a call to receive eternal life in Christ.

Mary Magdalene loved Jesus very much. She saw Him die on the cross. She came to the tomb, being unable to let go of Him, unable to get Jesus out of her mind. She came while it was still dark. She saw the tomb was open and empty, but arrived at the wrong conclusion. The reality of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the love it showed should be the remedy for our lukewarm love and failure to act on our faith. (2 Cor 5:14-15) But Mary told the others what she had found. Love isn't enough sometimes. We need to know the truth about Jesus.

Peter and John were also very close to Jesus. They ran to the tomb and entered into it. John came to the right conclusion – Jesus had risen. John was the first to know and believe that Jesus had risen. Those who most love Jesus or most know His love are often the first to believe. Had John understood the scriptures and the teachings of Jesus he might have expected and believed without seeing the evidence in the tomb. This explains the importance of the scriptures to us today – they are to us the very word of God.

Mary stayed. Mary wept. Mary stooped down. Mary looked in. Mary's love was rewarded, first by the angels' word, then by the first encounter with the risen Christ. Mary's tears of love and mourning also revealed a basic misunderstanding of the situation. First the angels, then Jesus himself asked, "Woman, why are you weeping?" Often our discouragement and depression comes from misunderstanding the situation we are in. We insist on thinking the living Christ is among the dead and insist on living that way. Notice the other question, "Whom are you seeking?" is the same question Jesus asked in Gethsemane. Finally Jesus had to simply call Mary to her senses. Mary embraced the living Christ, would scarcely let go, yet went and told the disciples what she had seen and heard. What else do we **know** about Mary Magdalene from the Bible?

Peace is something rare in these fast-paced and violent days. But that is what Jesus came to offer his disciples. Not only did the disciples see and believe, but they were filled with joy. Notice the awesome commission given to the disciples: They are sent to represent Jesus as Jesus represented His Father in this world. Wow! How could they ever hope to do that? How can we ever hope to do that? The answer follows immediately as Jesus gives them the Holy Spirit to enable them. They are specifically enabled to offer forgiveness of sins in Christ. We must remember that we are sent to bring God's mercy – not some new kind of legalism.

Now John closes the teaching about believing. Is your faith weak? Thomas was one of the eleven, yet he doubted. Jesus knows our faith is weak. We need to be careful not to forsake the gathering of ourselves together. Consider what Thomas suffered for his failure to be with the disciples! Rather, we come together to build each other up in our mutual faith in Christ Jesus. So we need to be doing that!

Jesus graciously provided Thomas with the evidence needed to for him to believe. There was a simple rebuke: "Do not be unbelieving, but believing." We often need this reminder as we forget the benefits we have in Christ. Remember that definition of what it means to be of the world: it is life, thought of and lived apart from God. But look at Thomas' expression of faith: "My Lord and my God!" Nothing and nobody else must rule our lives but Jesus Christ alone. He is our Lord. We must not worship or look for salvation in any other. He is our God. If we believe that Jesus died and was raised for us, we must live for Him and not for ourselves.

John's gospel is written to those who haven't seen, yet will believe. His choice of material is based on three purposes: that we would believe Jesus is the Messiah; that we would believe Jesus is God's Son; that we should find life in Christ. Have you found eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ, God's Son?

P.S. MP3 recordings of these studies in John and copies of these notes are currently unavailable. A new website will be created shortly.