SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

John 20

My Lord and My God — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-10 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

The tomb is empty and the Lord is alive, and He comes to grieving, frightened and stubborn people with their names, His peace, His wounds and His Spirit. John wrote it all down so that I, who have not seen, may believe and have life in His name.

00 The Text

JOHN 20 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone already taken away from the tomb.

2 So she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him."

3 So Peter and the other disciple went forth, and they were going to the tomb.

4 The two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead faster than Peter and came to the tomb first;

5 and stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings lying there; but he did not go in.

6 And so Simon Peter also came, following him, and entered the tomb; and he saw the linen wrappings lying there,

7 and the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself.

8 So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb then also entered, and he saw and believed.

9 For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.

10 So the disciples went away again to their own homes.

11 But Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping; and so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb;

12 and she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying.

13 And they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him."

14 When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus.

15 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."

16 Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" (which means, Teacher).

17 Jesus said to her, "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.'"

18 Mary Magdalene came, announcing to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and that He had said these things to her.

19 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."

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

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

22 And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

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

24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

25 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."

26 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."

27 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."

28 Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

29 Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed."

30 Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;

31 but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

Marked in the text

- **v1** "while it was still dark" — Time / place / contrast
- **v1** "the stone already taken away from the tomb" — Time / place / contrast
- **v2** "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb" — Sin / warning
- **v7** "rolled up in a place by itself" — Time / place / contrast
- **v8** "he saw and believed" — Promise / blessing
- **v9** "He must rise again from the dead" — God — His character & actions
- **v15** "Whom are you seeking?" — Command / instruction
- **v16** "Mary!" — God — His character & actions
- **v16** "Rabboni!" — Time / place / contrast
- **v16** "Rabboni" — Time / place / contrast
- **v17** "Stop clinging to Me" — Command / instruction
- **v17** "I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God" — Promise / blessing
- **v18** "I have seen the Lord" — Promise / blessing
- **v19** "the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews" — Sin / warning
- **v20** "He showed them both His hands and His side" — God — His character & actions
- **v20** "The disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord" — Promise / blessing
- **v21** "as the Father has sent Me, I also send you" — Command / instruction
- **v22** "He breathed on them" — God — His character & actions
- **v22** "Receive the Holy Spirit" — Promise / blessing
- **v23** "If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them" — Command / instruction
- **v25** "I will not believe" — Sin / warning
- **v27** "do not be unbelieving, but believing" — Command / instruction
- **v28** "My Lord and my God!" — God — His character & actions
- **v28** "My Lord and my God" — God — His character & actions
- **v29** "Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed" — Promise / blessing
- **v31** "these have been written so that you may believe" — Command / instruction

- **v31** “believing you may have life in His name” — Promise / blessing
- **v1** “tomb” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v19** “Peace be with you” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

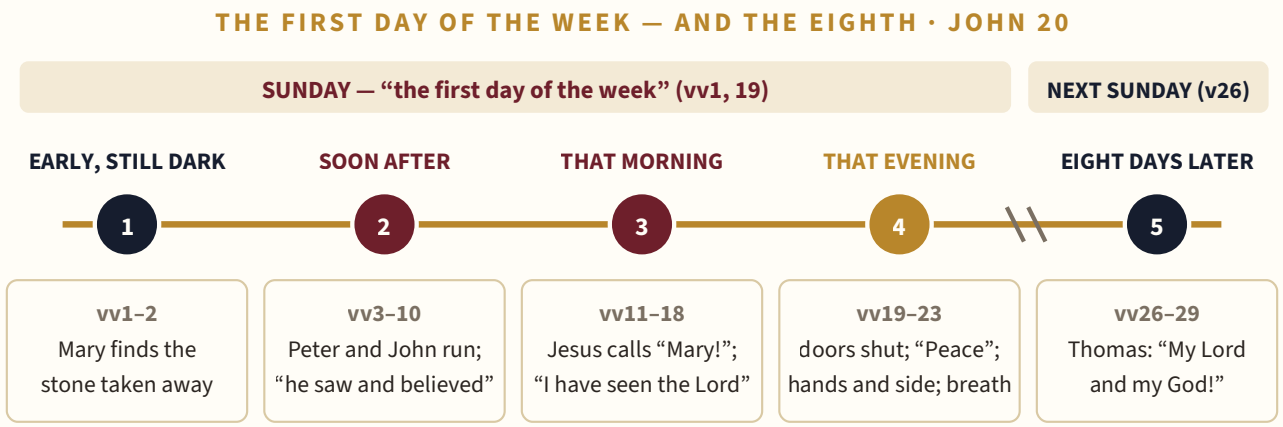
01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · JOHN 20:8

"So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb then also entered, and ☆ he saw and believed."

FIGURE · TWO SUNDAYS



Every scene ends with someone who has seen the Lord — and the last word goes to those who have not seen (v29).

Follow the five scenes left to right: four on the first day of the week, one a week later, and in each one someone sees the risen Lord.

Setting. Jerusalem, the first day of the week after the crucifixion — Sunday — from before dawn (v1) to evening (v19), then one week later (v26). Places: the garden tomb of 19:41, and a room with shut doors where the disciples hid "for fear of the Jews" (v19). John himself is "the other disciple whom Jesus loved" (v2).

Structure:

- vv1–10 — **the empty tomb:** Mary Magdalene comes while it is still dark and sees the stone taken away; she runs to Peter and John: "They have taken away the Lord." The two run; John arrives first and looks in; Peter enters and sees the linen wrappings and the face-cloth rolled up by itself; John enters, "saw and believed" — though they did not yet understand the Scripture that He must rise (v9).
- vv11–18 — **Mary:** weeping outside the tomb, she sees two angels where the body had lain; she turns, sees Jesus, takes Him for the gardener; He says, "Mary!" — "Rabboni!"; "Stop clinging to Me … go to My brethren"; she announces, "I have seen the Lord."
- vv19–23 — **the locked room:** evening, doors shut; Jesus stands in their midst — "Peace be with you"; He shows His hands and side; they rejoice; "as the Father has sent Me, I also send you"; He breathes on them — "Receive the Holy Spirit"; forgiving and retaining sins.

- vv24–29 — **Thomas:** absent, he hears "We have seen the Lord!" and refuses: "Unless I see … I will not believe." Eight days later Jesus comes, invites him to reach with finger and hand; "My Lord and my God!"; "Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed."
- vv30–31 — **the purpose:** many other signs not written; "these have been written so that you may believe … and that believing you may have life in His name."

Repeated words, with counts:

- "Jesus" ×14 — vv2, 12, 14 (×2), 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 24, 26, 29, 30, 31.
- "see / sees / saw / seen" ×13 — vv1, 5, 6, 8, 12, 14, 18, 20, 25 (×2), 27, 29 (×2).
- "disciple(s)" ×11 — vv2, 3, 4, 8, 10, 18, 19, 20, 25, 26, 30.
- "tomb" ×9 — vv1 (×2), 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 11 (×2).
- "believe / believed / believing" ×7 — vv8, 25, 27, 29 (×2), 31 (×2) (plus "unbelieving," v27).
- "laid / lying" ×7 — vv2, 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 15.
- "Lord" ×6 — vv2, 13, 18, 20, 25, 28.
- "hand(s)" ×5 — vv20, 25 (×2), 27 (×2); "side" ×3 — vv20, 25, 27; "nails" ×2 — v25; "finger" ×2 — vv25, 27.
- "weeping / weep / wept" ×4 — vv11 (×2), 13, 15.
- "Father" ×4 — vv17 (×3), 21.
- "first" ×4 — vv1, 4, 8, 19; "stood / standing" ×4 — vv11, 14, 19, 26.
- "Peace be with you" ×3 — vv19, 21, 26; "ran / running" ×3 — vv2, 4 (×2); "sins" ×3 — v23.
- "Woman" ×2 — vv13, 15; "doors" ×2 — vv19, 26; "send / sent" ×2 — v21.

Contrasts: darkness (v1) ⟷ the risen Light. "They have taken away the Lord" (v2) ⟷ "I have seen the Lord" (v18). Lazarus bound (11:44) ⟷ the wrappings left behind (vv5–7). Weeping (vv11–15) ⟷ rejoicing (v20). The gardener (v15) ⟷ the risen Lord. Doors shut for fear (v19) ⟷ "Peace be with you." "I will not believe" (v25) ⟷ "My Lord and my God!" (v28). Seeing and believing (v29a) ⟷ not seeing and yet believing (v29b).

Shape of the chapter: four scenes, each ending with someone who has seen the Lord — John (v8), Mary (v18), the ten (v20), Thomas (v28) — and then a turn to the reader who has not seen (vv29–31). It moves from an empty tomb to a full confession, and from "they have taken away the Lord" to "My Lord and my God."

Chapter theme (my words): Jesus is risen. He shows Himself to the grieving, the afraid and the stubborn — by His word, His wounds and His breath — turns deserters into brothers and witnesses, and gives the Gospel's purpose: that we who have not seen may believe He is the Christ, the Son of God, and have life in His name.

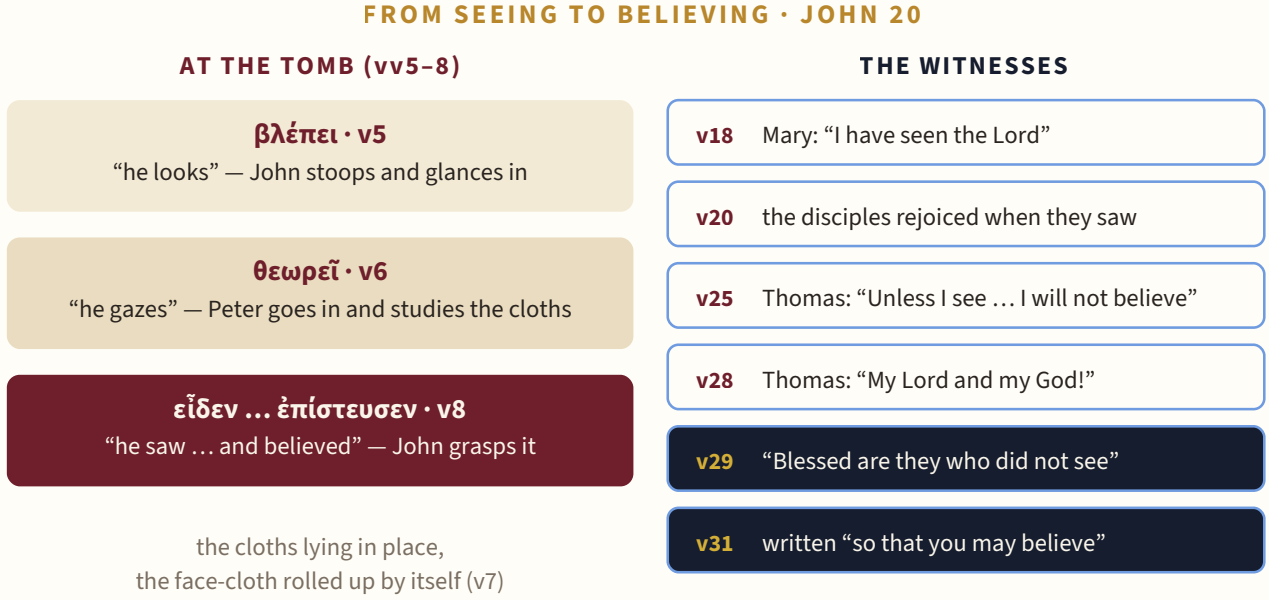
02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · JOHN 20:17

"Jesus said to her, "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.'""

FIGURE · FROM SEEING TO BELIEVING



On the left, John's three verbs at the tomb move from a glance to understanding; on the right, the chapter's witnesses lead to the reader, who believes without seeing.

What did John see that made him believe (vv5–8)? Not yet the risen Lord, but the grave clothes: the linen lying there and the face-cloth "rolled up in a place by itself." Barclay, quoted by Guzik: they "did not look as if they had been put off or taken off." Thieves do not unwrap a body and fold the cloths. Henry adds that the disciples' slowness — "as yet they knew not the scripture" — is itself an argument: these were not men primed to imagine a resurrection. Guzik: the fact of the resurrection is the start; Scripture gives its meaning.

John and the other Gospels. Matthew, Mark and Luke mention several women and angels who speak first. John tells one woman's story, though her "we do not know" (v2) shows she was not alone. Sproul, in Ligonier's summary

of his sermon, showed this from the text itself and worked through other seeming inconsistencies. Different eyewitnesses tell the same morning from where they stood.

Why didn't Mary recognize Him (vv14–16)? Tears, the half-light, the last thing she expected. Whatever the reason, she knew Him by His voice speaking her name. Guzik: "Jesus didn't reveal Himself to Mary by telling her who He was, but by telling her who she was to Him." It is John 10:3 come true — He "calls his own sheep by name."

"Stop clinging to Me" (v17). Not "never touch Me" — a week later He tells Thomas to touch (v27). Guzik: stop holding on, not a ban on touch. Sproul, cited from his commentary *John*: Jesus was telling Mary that He was not yet leaving to return to heaven. Spurgeon: "Embrace me not; there will be time in heaven for that" — there was a message to carry. Henry: "Public service ought to be preferred before private satisfaction."

"My Father and your Father, and My God and your God." Jesus does not say "our Father" — His sonship is unique — but He shares it: what He is by nature, we become by grace. And He calls the deserters "My brethren." Spurgeon: "They were his brethren still, though they had forsaken him."

Peace and wounds (vv19–20). Jesus walks into a room of men who had abandoned Him and says, "Peace be with you," then shows His hands and side. The wounds prove identity — Henry: "Christ's wounds were to speak on earth that it was he himself" — and they are the price of the peace He speaks.

What happened when He breathed on them (v22)? *Emphysaō*, the verb of Genesis 2:7: a new creation. Guzik ties the breath to the creation account and quotes Dods: "His very own Spirit was imparted to them." Some read this as a real first gift of the Spirit for their mission, with Pentecost the full outpouring; others as an acted promise fulfilled in Acts 2. I hold the first loosely, and hold firmly that Pentecost (Acts 2) is when the Spirit came to baptize the church.

Forgiving and retaining sins (v23). Rome built the sacrament of penance on this verse. The grammar points the other way: "have been forgiven … have been retained" are perfect passives — the church announces what God has already done. The church's authority is the gospel: tell the repentant believer, with Christ's authority, that he is forgiven; tell the unrepentant the truth. Guzik takes the passage as a pattern for the church's ongoing ministry.

Was Thomas a doubter or a refuser (vv24–25)? Guzik: "Thomas didn't doubt; he plainly and strongly refused to believe." He had missed the meeting (Maclaren, via Guzik: he "went away to brood in a corner by himself"), and Henry warns, "Those know not what they lose who carelessly absent themselves." Yet Henry is fair: "Thomas is not Judas." Jesus quotes Thomas's own terms back to him — and Thomas, says Spurgeon, probably never reached out his hand at all.

"My Lord and my God!" (v28). Not an exclamation but a confession "said to Him." Spurgeon: "a most plain and hearty confession of the true and proper Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ." It closes the circle of 1:1 — "the Word was God." Jesus accepts it; a mere man would have torn his clothes.

The last beatitude (v29) and the purpose (vv30–31). "Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed." Sproul: "If you're a Christian, you're included in that benediction." Henry: Christ calls such faith blessed because it shows more of God's grace. Then John tells us why he wrote — Sproul calls John the "most theological" of the Gospels, and Henry says "it was written to bring men to believe." The book exists so that we may believe and have life.

Word study (Greek):

- **sees — *blepō* (G991):** to look (vv1, 5).
- **sees — *theōreō* (G2334):** to gaze, observe (v6).

- **saw — *horaō / eidon* (G3708):** to see, perceive (vv8, 18, 20, 25, 29).
- **stooping and looking — *parakyptō* (G3879):** to bend and peer in (v5).
- **linen wrappings — *othonion* (G3608):** the strips of 19:40.
- **face-cloth — *soudarion* (G4676):** as at Lazarus's tomb (11:44).
- **rolled up — *entylissō* (G1794):** folded, rolled together (v7).
- **must — *dei* (G1163) / rise — *anistēmi* (G450):** divine necessity (v9).
- **weeping — *klaiō* (G2799):** loud mourning (vv11–15).
- **gardener — *kēpouros* (G2780).**
- **Rabboni (G4462):** "my Teacher" (also Mark 10:51).
- **cling / touch — *haptomai* (G680):** present imperative with *mē* — "stop clinging."
- **ascended — *anabainō* (G305); brethren — *adelphos* (G80).**
- **peace — *eirēnē* (G1515):** vv19, 21, 26.
- **sent — *apostellō* (G649); send — *pempō* (G3992).**
- **breathed on — *emphysaō* (G1720):** only here in the NT; LXX Gen 2:7.
- **receive — *lambanō* (G2983).**
- **forgive — *aphiēmi* (G863); retain — *krateō* (G2902):** perfect passives in v23.
- **Didymus (G1324):** "Twin."
- **imprint — *typos* (G5179); nails — *hēlos* (G2247).**
- **unbelieving — *apistos* (G571); believing — *pistos* (G4103).**
- **Lord — *kyrios* (G2962); God — *theos* (G2316).**
- **blessed — *makarios* (G3107).**
- **signs — *sēmeion* (G4592); believe — *pisteuō* (G4100).**

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **The first believer believed before he understood** (vv8–9).
2. **The grave clothes are a witness** — no thief folds the cloths (v7).
3. **The risen Lord is recognized by His voice** — "Mary!" (v16; 10:3).
4. **The first witness was a woman** — not the way anyone would invent it.
5. **Deserters became brothers** (v17) — Spurgeon: "his brethren still."
6. **He came through locked doors with peace, not blame** (vv19, 21, 26).
7. **A new creation breath** — *emphysaō*, Genesis 2:7 (v22).
8. **We announce forgiveness; God grants it** — perfect passives (v23).
9. **Thomas refused — and was still welcomed** ("Thomas is not Judas," Henry).
10. **The last beatitude is for us** (v29; Sproul: "you're included in that benediction").

Cross-references: Gen 2:7; Ps 16:10; 30:5; Isa 53:10–12; Ezek 37:9–10; Matt 28:1–10; Mark 16:1–8; 10:51; Luke 24:1–49; John 1:1, 18; 2:19–22; 10:3, 14–18; 11:25–26, 44; 14:19, 27; 15:15; 16:7, 16–22; 17:18; 21:24–25; Acts 1:3; 2:1–4, 27; 13:35; Rom 1:4; 10:9; 1 Cor 15:3–8, 20; Heb 2:11–12; 10:24–25; 1 Pet 1:3, 8; 1 John 1:1–3; 5:13.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · JOHN 20:21

"So Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you.""

Promise to trust — He knows my name. Mary was crying too hard to recognize Him, and Jesus didn't argue with her; He said her name. I have men at the table who think God knows them only as a file number, a case, a disappointment. The risen Lord calls His own sheep by name. When I can't see Him for the tears, I can still listen for His voice in His Word.

Command to obey — "I also send you." Jesus didn't leave the disciples in the locked room. He gave them peace, showed them His wounds, breathed His Spirit on them and sent them out. Fear had locked them in; the mission sent them out. This week I will go to one man God puts on my heart — the one who just got out, the one who relapsed, the one who stopped coming — and tell him the good news that sins are forgiven in Jesus' name.

Sin to confess — Thomas's empty chair. Thomas missed the meeting and then dug in. I know that pattern: when I am hurting or ashamed, I isolate, and when I isolate, my unbelief grows. I confess the Sundays and group nights I have skipped because I didn't feel like being seen. "Those know not what they lose" (Henry). I will be in the room this week.

Truth to live in — brothers, not ex-cons. "Go to My brethren." Every one of them had run off when Jesus was arrested — and the first thing He calls them after the resurrection is "brothers." I want the men I serve to hear that their worst night does not get the last word. In Christ we have His Father as our Father.

Example to follow — Thomas on his knees. Thomas's story doesn't end with "I will not believe." It ends with "My Lord and my God!" — the highest words anyone says about Jesus in the whole Gospel. If you are the hardest skeptic in the room, Jesus is not finished with you. And if you believe without seeing, you are in the beatitude: "Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed."

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. Mary came "while it was still dark." What darkness am I carrying to Jesus this week — and am I still coming? (20:1, 11; Ps 30:5) *Henry: "Love to Christ, if it be cordial, will be constant."*
2. Jesus called Mary by name before she recognized Him. When have I known that Jesus knew me personally — not just mankind in general? (20:15–16; 10:3) *He revealed Himself by telling her who she was to Him.*
3. The disciples were behind locked doors "for fear." What fear has me locked in right now, and what does Jesus say when He comes in? (20:19–21; 14:27) *Peace first, then His wounds, then a mission.*
4. "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." Where is Jesus sending me this week — and to whom? (20:21; 17:18) *The mission flows from the Son's mission and counts forever (Sproul).*
5. Thomas missed the meeting and dug in. When have I pulled away from the brothers — and what did it cost me? (20:24–25; Heb 10:24–25) *Henry: those who absent themselves "know not what they lose."*

6. I have not seen Jesus with my eyes. What helps me believe — and how can I help a man who is where Thomas was? (20:29–31; 1 Pet 1:8) *"Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed." The book was written for exactly that.*

Worship. The stone is gone, the cloths are folded, the tomb is empty. He called a weeping woman by name, walked through a locked door with peace, breathed His Spirit on cowards and made them brothers and apostles, and bent down to the hardest heart in the room. He is the Christ, the Son of God. He is my Lord and my God.

Prayer. Risen Lord Jesus — thank You that the tomb is empty and that You know my name. Come through the locked doors of my fear and speak Your peace. Show me Your wounds when I doubt. Breathe Your Spirit on me and send me as the Father sent You. Forgive me for the times I have isolated like Thomas, and bring me back to the brothers. Bless the men I serve who have not seen and yet believe, and bring the ones still saying "I will not believe" to their knees with Thomas. My Lord and my God. Amen.

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