

# THAT YOU MAY HAVE LIFE

## (A Study of the Gospel of John)

### The Power to Go

TEXT: John 20

Graduates, I hope you understand the sentiments already expressed by the church in their applause and their reaction to you this morning, that all of us offer to you our heartiest congratulations on your accomplishments and especially upon your graduation.

This is probably a time in which you are remembering some of your favorite parts of your high school experience, but I suspect that more than looking back at the past, most of you are busily engaged in considering the future.

And that is exactly what I want to ask you to think about with me for a moment this morning. We have been studying through the gospel of John, and we are near the end, in fact, the next to the last chapter, chapter 20. It is the chapter of the resurrection, but since I just preached on the resurrection on Easter Sunday two months ago out of the text where Jesus told His disciples that He was going to die but rise again, I am not going to preach about the resurrection *per sé*. Instead, I want to look to John, chapter 20 to see the immediate aftermath of the resurrection of Jesus.

#### I. THE OVERWHELMING EVIDENCE FOR THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS ENCOURAGED PEOPLE TO BELIEVE.

- First at the tomb was Mary Magdalene. She sees the stone rolled away and runs to get Peter and John.
- They run back to the tomb, John stopping at the entrance, Peter running past him inside; but they both see the empty graveclothes. John says that was the moment he truly believed.
- Peter and John leave, but Mary remains outside the tomb weeping when Jesus comes up beside her and asks why she is weeping. She thinks He is the gardener until He speaks in a way that she recognizes His voice, and she believes.

And that is what is happening when we come to our text this morning beginning in John 20:19.

John 20:19–29 19 Then, the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, “Peace *be* with you.” 20 When He had said this, He showed them *His* hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

21 So Jesus said to them again, “Peace to 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, they are forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they are retained.”

24 Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 The other disciples therefore said to him, “We have seen the Lord.”

So he said to them, “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.”

26 And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, “Peace to you!” 27 Then He said to Thomas, “Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand *here*, and put *it* into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.”

28 And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!”

29 Jesus said to him, “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed *are* those who have not seen and *yet* have believed.”

- So, not only did John and Mary Magdalene believe, but all of the rest of the disciples.

I do want to remind you, that the disciples believing that Jesus really rose from the dead is a very powerful argument for the reality of the resurrection and for the Lordship of Christ.

- These men had access to all the hard evidence.
- They did not believe easily or early. Every one of them had to see to believe, not just Thomas. He just missed the first opportunity to see Jesus alive.
- Nobody had more at risk by believing than these eleven men.
- Each of them followed and served the Lord Jesus the rest of their lives without wavering.
- Ten of the eleven were martyred for their faith in Jesus as the Savior and the Son of God.

But secondly I want you to see that the next immediate aftermath of the resurrection was the calling of God upon their lives. This calling was not to be disciples. They were already disciples.

## II. JESUS CALLED THEM TO GO ON MISSION.

John 20:21 So Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.”

- **Jesus said the Father had sent Him to seek and to save those who are lost.**
- The fact that Jesus is giving this same mission to the disciples is made clear in His statement to them in verse 23.

John 20:23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they are retained

Jesus is not here conferring authority for the disciples to arbitrarily be able to forgive or retain people's sins based upon their own whim or judgment. Jesus previously told them the same thing when they were at Caesarea Philippi. Jesus said I give you the keys of the kingdom, and with those keys, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

**And what are the keys to the kingdom?  
The Gospel of Jesus Christ**

Graduates, please listen to me for a moment.

You have been given many precious and valuable things already in your life.

You are about to be given more:

- Your diploma
- Later a college diploma
- Various jobs
- A career

But nothing you have or will be given is of greater value or significance than what you have been given as a follower of Jesus Christ. You have been given the keys to the Kingdom of God.

When you use those keys, the Gospel, to unlock the gate of heaven for someone to go in, they will live with God forever!

When by the sharing of the gospel, you unlock eternal life for a person, you also give them a set of the keys to the kingdom. Now they can unlock heaven for others.

One of these days, and it may not be but 7 years and a few months or years away, you will be walking on an earth that has been restored to its primeval beauty and elegance. The Lord Jesus Christ will be reigning as the King of the Earth, and you may be a governor or mayor or city engineer.

But for that 1,000 years in the Millennial Kingdom of Christ, when you are hanging out with old friends or with new, and you are talking about things in the old earth, when sin was rampant and the devil ruled far too much in the affairs of men, do you know what is going to be the most important thing to you then?

- It won't be what clubs or teams you were a part of.

- It won't be whether you were first in your class or 201<sup>st</sup>.
- It won't be the kind of car you drove.
- Or the job you had
- Or how much money you made

No, what is going to be important then will be how you used the Keys of the Kingdom.

- Who did you let in by telling them the gospel?
- Who did you not let in by not telling them the gospel?

**What's going to matter in that day is**

**when the Lord Jesus said, "As the Father sent me, now I am sending you,"**

**DID YOU GO?**

No matter what you do professionally – nurse, teacher, construction worker, accountant, store clerk, whatever

DID YOU GO?

DID YOU GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES?

DID YOU GO AS A WITNESS OF CHRIST TO YOUR JERUSALEM, JUDEA, SAMARIAL, AND THE END OF THE EARTH?

DID YOU GO AND USE THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM, THE GOSPEL, AND LET PEOPLE LIVE WITH GOD FOREVER?

When you are living in the Millennium, that's what you are going to talk about, because that is what will be important, because that is what Jesus said to do.

And right now, there are some of you adults thinking, "I wish I had heard that when I was finishing high school.

Well, you're hearing it now. Jesus is saying to you, "As the Father sent me, I am sending you."

You are saved. You have the keys to the kingdom. Who have you let in lately?

Where have you gone, what have you done, to share the gospel with someone here in Panama City, or in this country, or in another far off place on the globe?

- I just read a report on the most recent meeting of our IMB.
- David Platt pointed out that right now, out of more than 7 billion people on the face of our planet, more than 3 billion of them have never heard the gospel, not even once.
- He also pointed out that the IMB has realized that we are not going to get the gospel to even a large percentage of them by just sending out hundreds more career missionaries.
- It is going to take the churches planting churches all around the globe to get the gospel proclaimed to all the people of the earth.
- But do you know that it is possible?
- Listen, in the last 10 years, SABC has helped to plant far more than a hundred churches in West Africa, Brazil, Mexico, and India, averaging well over planting 10 a year. Now I do not say that to brag. In fact, my point is just the opposite. We are not special. We are not doing anything that God will not enable any other church to do. Every church can be sending out teams of volunteers and working with believers in other areas of the country or the world and planting new churches.
- And if every church that preaches the gospel of Jesus Christ would do that, we could get the gospel to every person on the globe in the next 10 years.

Graduates, you can be a big part of that.

Church, all of us can be a big part of that.

We are sent. We have the keys of the kingdom!

Lastly,

We also have the power.

John 20:21-22 21 So Jesus said to them again, “Peace to 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.”

### **III. THE HOLY SPIRIT HIMSELF GIVES US THE POWER TO GO.**

THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES US THE POWER TO PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL.

THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES US THE POWER TO GO TO OUR JERUSALEM, JUDEA, SAMARIA, AND THE END OF THE EARTH.

Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Graduates, do you want to experience the power of God working in your life?

Then spend your life as one sent by Christ, unlocking heaven by the sharing of the gospel. It will be the Holy Spirit giving you the power to do it.

Dear brother or sister, I do not care how old you are, do you want to have God Himself empowering your life doing eternal work through your hands, speaking words of everlasting life through your lips?

Then spend your life as one sent out by the Master. I don't mean just once in a great while, but as often as He allows. Let this become the focus, the purpose of your life is to carry the gospel

- Sometimes across the street
- Sometimes next door
- Sometimes to relatives in another town
- Sometimes to other countries around the world

Make it your purpose in life to be one who has accepted Christ's call to use the keys of the Kingdom entrusted to you in the sharing of the gospel of Christ.

The power of the Holy Spirit will enable you to do it.

CONCLUSION: There may be someone here today and you are saying, wait I need someone to use the keys with me. I want to go to heaven when I die and I don't know how. Somebody, tell me the gospel.

I will be glad to.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins.

Jesus rose from the dead.

Jesus now offers to forgive our sins and give us eternal life as a gift if we will trust Him as our Savior and Lord.

Lord means Master, the boss of our life.

**Romans 10:9 ... if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.**

Say, "I know I am one sent by You Christ, and I will be intentional in spending my life using the keys of the kingdom by sharing the gospel everywhere You give me opportunity."