

MY LORD AND MY GOD

John 20

Introduction

[From Illy] ... WAKE-UP CALL

One night during the 1991 Persian Gulf War, Ruth Dillow was at her home in Kansas when she received a telegram from the Pentagon that her son had stepped on a landmine in Kuwait and was dead. It was, of course, a terrible shock.

Three days later, however, Mrs. Dillow got a telephone call. The voice on the other end said, "Hi, Mom! I'm alive." At first, Mrs. Dillow couldn't believe her ears—it was the voice of her 21-year-old son whom she had been mourning for three days. She said, "I jumped up and down. I was so overjoyed!"

That's a little like the Christian's joy on Easter morning when we wake up to realize our Lord who was dead is now alive! [Clergy Journal, Mar 1992. Page 17.]

What a change a couple of days can make.

[From Illy]... CHRIST IS ALIVE!

On one occasion the great artist Michelangelo turned to his fellow artists and said with frustration in his voice, "Why do you keep filling gallery after gallery with endless pictures on the one theme of Christ in weakness, Christ on the cross, and most of all, Christ hanging dead?" he asked. "Why do you concentrate on that passing episode as if it were the last word, as if the curtain dropped down there on disaster and defeat? That dreadful scene lasted only a few hours. But to the unending eternity Christ is alive; Christ rules and reigns and triumphs!"

Michelangelo was right. Even though the cross is vitally important because of the redemption Jesus accomplished for us there, we must not emphasize His death to the exclusion of His resurrection victory.

The death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ—that is what Easter is all about. As we look at the evidence and the testimony concerning Jesus, we cannot help but conclude with the Roman centurion who presided over Jesus' crucifixion, that "truly this was the Son of God."

But today, as we look into John's account of the resurrection (ch. 20) I want to carry this thought through to its logical conclusion. You see it is not enough to say that Jesus was the Son of God. There needs to be a response. If Jesus is the Son of God, then what does he expect of me? What is it that I must do? What response does He want from me? The answer is nothing less than total and complete submission and worship.

I believe that the key words of this chapter (notwithstanding v. 31) come from the mouth of Thomas, the one we often call "the doubter". Yet it is interesting that when he came face to face with the risen Lord, his response was exactly what Jesus is looking for from every one of us. Note his words in v. 28 – "My Lord and my God."

In this 20th chapter of John I believe we can see a progression, a series of steps through which these followers of Jesus moved to come to that response that was expressed by Thomas in v. 28. As the disciples and the women, specifically Mary Magdalene, faced the events of that day and the week that followed, and as they met Jesus on different occasions, they moved in a steady upward progression of response to him.

I trust that as we look at this text we will be drawn through the same steps to arrive at the same response.

The Awakening of Faith – vv. 1-10

Discuss the text –

- v. 1 – first day of the week – after the Sabbath was over
- v. 2 – ran to tell Peter and John
- v. 3-4 – Peter and John ran to the tomb to see for themselves
- v. 5-7 – the evidence of the resurrection – review briefly.
- Then a change occurs
- v. 8 – John's awakening faith – "...believed" – what? The primary object of his faith would be the statement in v. 2 – the body of Jesus was gone. But there is more that he began to believe and understand. Look back to John 2:18-22.
- v. 9 – know – understand. They did not understand it all – the necessity of Jesus death and resurrection. That would yet come as the Holy Spirit revealed to them the plan and the purpose of God, but in that moment, standing in that tomb, looking at the empty burial cloths, I'm convinced that Jesus' words came back to John and we have the awakening of his faith in the resurrected Jesus, even though he had not yet seen him alive.
- v. 10 – the disciples returned home, not quite sure what to make of it all. But Mary stayed on in the garden.

The Recognition of His Authority – vv. 11-18

My Teacher – the one who deserves my Attention.

The text:

- v. 11 – Mary – who was she? Mary Magdalene, a woman who had been possessed by demons – seven demons. She became a devoted follower of Jesus.
- v. 12 – two angels – the tomb was no longer empty
- v. 13 – she didn't understand what had happened – she was searching for answers.
- v. 14-15 – she meets Jesus but doesn't recognize him.
- v. 16 – with only a word, Jesus reveals himself to her, and she realizes who he is.

Her response is the next step in that growing faith:

Rabboni – Teacher - Her recognition of his authority and wisdom.

Mark 1:21-22 – “And they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching. And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes.”

John 7:45-46 – The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, “Why did you not bring him?” The officers answered, “No one ever spoke like this man!”

This was the first recognition given to Jesus Christ after his resurrection from the dead. “My Teacher” – the one with authority, the one who deserves my attention.

But this was only the first step. Jesus was not through with his followers yet.

Recognition of His Lordship – vv. 19-25a

My Lord, my master – the one who deserves my allegiance.

Again we go to the text:

- v. 19 – same day – later – in the evening. The doors were shut because of fear. The Jewish leaders were up in arms about the disappearance of Jesus' body. Then Jesus himself appears to them – even though the doors were closed and locked.

- v. 20 – their fear turned to gladness – there were overjoyed
- v. 21-23 – we have Jesus' blessing on them and his commission
- v. 24-25 – they relate the events to Thomas who was not there

Note the second acknowledgment given to Jesus after the resurrection:

- 1st – Mary – Rabboni – Teacher
- 2nd – disciples – Lord – Master

“We have seen the Lord” – kurios – supreme master. Greek dictionary definition:

- he to whom a person or thing belongs, about which he has power of deciding; master, lord
 - the possessor and disposer of a thing
 - the owner; one who has control of the person

They recognized that He was their supreme master. No doubt the knowledge they now had, knowing that Jesus Christ was risen from the dead, reinforced in their minds, the fact that He was, indeed, Lord and Master, the one who controlled all things, the one to whom they owed complete allegiance and submission.

- He is my teacher – the one who deserves my attention.
- He is my Lord and Master – the one who deserves my allegiance.

But there is still more.

Recognition of His Deity vv. 25b-28

My God – He deserves my Adoration (worship)

The Text:

- v. 25 – Thomas' doubt
- v. 26 – eight days (a week) later – the next Sunday. This time Thomas was with them – Jesus again appeared.
- v. 27 – this appearance was specifically for the benefit of Thomas, the doubter. He knew that Thomas needed to see him. He addresses Thomas specifically – showed him his hands (nails) and his side (spear)

- v. 28 – we have the next and final stage in this growing faith and it is expressed by the one we call the doubter.

“My Lord and my God.”

- Not just “teacher” – the one who deserves my attention.
- Not just “Lord” – the one who deserves my allegiance.

Yes He is all of that, but He is more than that.

He is “My God” – the one who is worthy of my adoration and my worship.

Thomas’ declaration revealed an attitude of heart that I believe God desires in each of us. An attitude of worship, of adoration. A recognition of the deity of our Saviour.

Conclusion

v. 29 – Jesus commends Thomas’s faith – he saw and believed. But then he adds something else—a special blessing on those who believe without having seen him in the flesh. Today, we cannot see Him with our physical eyes, yet we can still believe and acknowledge him just as Thomas did.

- He is my teacher – the one who deserves my attention.
- He is my Lord and Master – the one who deserves my allegiance.
- He is my God – the one who deserves my adoration

v. 30-31 – John’s purpose in writing this account – go through verses

- Do you believe – that Jesus is the Son of God?
- Have you put your faith and trust in the risen Lord?
- Invitation to receive Christ as Saviour at this Easter season.

Closing Hymn - # 220 – He Lives