



My Lord and my God!

John 20

John 20 – How does the resurrection of Jesus set Christianity apart from all the religions in the world?

Most of our associates consider Christianity to be essentially no different than other religions in the world. However, Jesus is the only spiritual leader who rose from the dead. John 20 describes the disciples discovering His resurrection. This authenticates that He was who He claimed to be, the Creator-God who came to make it possible for us to spend eternity with Him. Because Jesus rose from the dead, we can be confident that He will accomplish all He promised. And because Jesus was resurrected, we can be certain that death is not the end of our life. So when you see an associate dismissing Christianity as just another religion, point out the uniqueness of Christ's resurrection. The more people consider the implications of Jesus rising from the dead, the more compelling it will be to follow Him.

20:1-2 – Why shouldn't we worry about not being able to do all that we'd like to for Jesus?

We should be content with doing what we are able to do. John 20:1-2 describes Mary Magdalene going to the tomb of Jesus to discover that His body was not there. The other gospel accounts elaborate that Mary had gone to the tomb with spices to complete the embalming of Jesus' body. Mary was not able to do great things for Jesus such as testify on His behalf before their government but she did what she could. Because of her devotion, she was the first to know about the Resurrection. As believers, we may feel we can't do much for Jesus. However, we're called to take advantage of the opportunities given us, doing what we can do and not worrying about what we cannot do.

20:18 – Why should considering the resurrection of Christ give us courage to speak out about Him?

Since the Lord called us to represent Him in this world, He certainly wants us to share our faith in Christ with our associates. But to do this, we must be fully convinced of His resurrection. Mary Magdalene did not meet the risen Christ until she had discovered the empty tomb. Then, in John 20:18, she "*went to the disciples with the news: 'I have seen the Lord!'*" (NIV). We meet Christ when we discover that He is indeed alive, that His tomb is empty. Having the joy of this personal discovery is a prerequisite for sharing it with our associates. If Jesus was resurrected, so His followers will be.

20:19 – How do we act like fearful Christians before they were empowered at Pentecost?

The Lord arranged for His children to be where we are for a reason. Since we have the Holy Spirit in us, we don't have to stay behind locked doors as the disciples did in John 20:19. We put ourselves behind doors of isolation by not associating with our unbelieving associates. We are behind doors of anonymity when we relate to our associates but never tell them we are Christians. And we cower behind doors of superficiality when we keep to safe subjects with our associates only engaging them in discussions of sports or weather and ignoring any topic that might lead to considering God's perspective. Christ can make His presence known behind closed doors, but He will not unlock them for us. Unless we step out of our hiding places, we'll never see all Christ can do through us.

20:25 – How can doubting the resurrection of Christ be a good thing?

Thomas expressed doubts that Jesus really had risen from the dead in John 20:25. But when Jesus appeared to Thomas, He wasn't hard on Thomas for his doubts. Despite his skepticism, Thomas was still loyal to the disciples of Jesus and to Jesus Himself. Our doubting associates will be encouraged to know that some people need to doubt before they believe. If doubt leads to questions, questions lead to answers, and the answers are accepted, then doubt has been beneficial. It is when doubt becomes stubbornness and stubbornness becomes a life-style then doubt is deadly. When associates doubt, don't let them stop there. Encourage them to nourish the faith they have by searching for the proof they need.

20:26 – What does the resurrection of Jesus tell us about our future resurrected bodies?

Eternal life is not some ethereal existence that is hard for us to appreciate in the here and now. As 1 Thessalonians 5:23 indicates, people will always be body, soul, and spirit. Thus, as God's children, we will always be able to relate to Him through His physical creation. 1 Corinthians 15:20 says that Jesus is the firstfruits of the resurrection thus our resurrected bodies will be physical like His. Jesus demonstrated this when He invited Thomas to touch Him in John 20:26. Knowing that our eternal life will be like it is now only without this world's difficulties should motivate us to experience life as God intended it to be.

20:2, 6, 16, 28 – How does the resurrection of Christ affect people?

When we discuss Christ with your associates, we shouldn't assume they know about His resurrection. People who hear about the resurrection may need time before they can comprehend this amazing story. Like Jesus' disciples, they may pass through four stages of belief: At first, they may think the story is fabricated, impossible to believe as Mary indicated in John 20:2. Next, like Peter, they may have to check out the facts and still be puzzled about what happened as in John 20:6. Only when they encounter Jesus personally will they be able to accept His resurrection as Mary did in John 20:16. Then, as our associates commit themselves to the risen Lord and devote their lives to serving Him, they'll begin to understand the implications of His presence with us as Thomas expressed in John 20:28.