

“I Have Seen The Lord” John Chapter 20

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is at the very heart of the Gospel message. Yet doubters can be found on every hand. God must have anticipated the doubters. He made sure that His Word would record many eye witnessing to the risen Christ. During this message, eye witnesses to the resurrection will be called from the pages of God’s Word.

1. First, here is Mary Magdalene. Mary was one whose love for Jesus was deep and abiding. Even after Jesus had been taken down from the cross and placed in a tomb which was sealed with a high rock, Mary could not give Jesus up. And so on that first Easter Day, John tells us that Mary made her way to the grave very early in the morning. But when Mary arrived at the grave she discovered that the stone had been rolled away and the body of Jesus was gone. Then Mary ran to Peter and John and said: “They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid Him.” Wondering what had happened, Peter and John ran to the tomb and discovered for themselves that Mary was right. Indeed the body of Jesus was gone. Amazed with this sudden turn of events, Peter and John rushed back to the security of their own home because they feared the same treatment that Jesus had received. But John tells us that Mary stayed on at the empty tomb weeping. And then Jesus – the resurrected Lord – appeared to Mary, and when Jesus called Mary by name she turned and said, “Master, Master.” Immediately Jesus commanded Mary to go tell the disciples that He had risen from the grave. With a heart overflowing with love and with a mind filled with wonder, Mary ran to the disciples and cried out: “I HAVE SEEN THE LORD!” To Mary Magdalene the reality of the resurrection was clear. She had seen the Lord and she testified to that divine truth.
2. Second, here are the disciples – without Thomas. The disciples give clear testimony to the reality of the resurrection. John tells us that on the same day that Mary saw the resurrected Lord ten (10) of the disciples were gathered together in the upper room in Jerusalem. While they were gathered there with bolted doors in the security of the upper room, Jesus came and stood in their presence and said: “Peace be unto you; as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.” Now these ten (10) disciples could proclaim with Mary Magdalene: “We have seen the Lord!” With their own eyes also they had seen the resurrected Lord and had heard His command to them to go tell others about Him.
3. Third, here are the disciples – with Thomas. Thomas was not with the Lord’s disciples when they first saw the risen Savior. When they told him that they had seen the risen Christ he doubted and said: “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails and put my finger into the print of the nails and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe.” Eight days later, Jesus appeared to the

disciples again. This time Thomas was with them. The all-knowing Lord – realizing that Thomas doubted – called to Thomas and said: “Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side and be not faithless but believing.” And Thomas answered and said unto Him, “My Lord and my God.” Now Thomas also had seen the risen Lord! His testimony is clear – “My Lord and my God,” he shouted.

4. Fourth, here is Saul of Tarsus. During his early years, Saul had persecuted the Christian church and did all he could to destroy the early Christians. In the book of Acts, Luke tells us that Saul was an official witness to the stoning to death of that man of God named Stephen. But one day as Saul was traveling to Damascus with authority to arrest the Christians there and bring them bound to Jerusalem something happened. As Saul journeyed a light came from Heaven and Saul heard a voice saying: “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” And Saul said: “Who art thou, Lord?” And the Lord said: “I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.” And Saul said: “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” From that day on Saul was never the same. He had seen the risen Lord and his life was transformed by the power of God. His conversion was so transforming that his name was changed from Saul to Paul. From that time on Paul went out into the world saying that he too had seen the risen Lord. He too had stood in the presence of the resurrected Lord. And in that great 15th chapter of I Corinthians Paul testifies to the risen Christ and answers the criticism of some who doubted the resurrection by saying:

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

No wonder Paul could say: “It is not I who lives but Christ who liveth in me.” Paul saw the risen Christ on the Damascus road and from that time on Christ was the power behind his life.

5. Fifth, here is Phillip Morrow. I too have seen the risen Lord! I did not see the risen Lord outside that empty tomb as Mary did. I was not in the upper room where the risen Lord appeared to His disciples. Christ has never invited me to place my finger in His nailed scarred hand or to thrust my hand in His wounded side as he did Thomas. The risen Lord did not knock me down with a blinding light as He did Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus road. But, nevertheless, I have seen and experienced the transforming power and presence of the living Lord in my own heart and life. In His own quiet, effective manner He called me from sin to salvation. With His firm and powerful hand He directed me away from the course that was leading me to law school as He called me into the Christian ministry. I have never seen my risen Lord through these weak physical eyes but I have seen Him and I do see Him through the powerful eyes of faith. You cannot convince me that Christ

is dead because I opened my heart's door when He knocked and He came in and lives in my life today.

Like all these witnesses and many others, you too can see the risen Lord. Open your heart's door and let Him in. Then, with your own transformed life and with your own clear voice shout out the glorious Easter message – 'I HAVE SEEN THE RISEN LORD.'

“He lives! He lives!
Christ Jesus lives today.
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart.”

Reverend Phillip R. Morrow Sr.