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**November memory verse: [Philippians 4:13 \(NKJV\)](#)
I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.**

Shoe boxes are due back by Sunday November 8th

Commentary on John Chapter 20, by Chuck Smith 11.4.2020

The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and she saw the stone was taken away from the sepulchre. Then she ran, and came to Simon Peter, and the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we don't know where they have laid him ([Jhn 20:1-2](#)).

Now, the other gospels tell us that Mary came with several of the women. And there is no need to think a discrepancy, nor to think that Mary did not come with several women early to the sepulchre. John makes mention of Mary because she is the one that ran to his house and brought Peter and him the news of the empty tomb. But notice what she said when she brought the news. "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre and we..." not, "I know not," but, "we know not," inferring indeed that the other ladies were with her, as the other gospels relate. And they came to the sepulchre and found the stone rolled away. And so, this account is not contradictory to the other gospels as some people would suppose.

There are differences in the accounts of the resurrection morning and of the events that happened which can all be harmonized very easily. But some people see insolvable differences and, of course, the Bible critics like to play up the differences in the various accounts that are given. Instead of proving that the Bible is not the Word of God, it definitely proves that the writers did not get together in collusion, and say, "Alright, let's keep our stories straight, fellows! This is the way we've got to tell it." And if every story was exactly the same and all of the details, then there would be great cause to question whether or not there was not collusion in the writing of the story. But because we get it from different angles, it precludes collusion.

So, Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple [who we know to be John], and they came to the sepulchre ([Jhn 20:3](#)).

Now, Mary, no doubt, was there at the home of John when Mary Magdalene came with the news, because John took her to his house, the nineteenth chapter, and she stayed

with him. So Peter and John went running to the sepulchre to find out just what had happened.

They ran both of them together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter ([Jhn 20:4](#)),

Now, I don't know that John needed to add that to the record, but perhaps a bit of boasting there. He was a younger man, and so he did outrun Peter.

and he came first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying there; yet he did not go in. When Peter following him, went into the sepulchre, and he saw the linen clothes lie ([Jhn 20:4-6](#)),

Now, the Greek construction indicates that the linen clothes that were wrapped around Jesus were still lying in a circular form as though a body were in them.

And the napkin, that had been about his head, was folded in a corner by itself ([Jhn 20:7](#)).

So that they could see that there was no body within the linen wrappings. This, of course, brings up the question of the shroud of Turin, as to whether or not it was actually the shroud that was wrapped around Jesus Christ. And there are many who do believe that it was indeed the shroud wrapped around Christ. I have difficulty with that, inasmuch as John's gospel tell us distinctly that the linen cloth that was about His head was folded and over in a corner by itself. And in the shroud of Turin, it has the entire form including the head. And so, that it was indeed the shroud that was around Jesus, I seriously question myself.

It is tragic that man has such difficulty worshipping the unseen God and needs an object, which so easily becomes an idol. Or idolatry. And that is the worship of any object, is idolatry. And that is something that is forbidden by the scriptures. But it is something that man is so prone to do. And because of man's penchant towards idolatry, I do feel that the Lord deliberately just X'd out all of the stuff that related to Jesus Christ. Things that He may have touched, the coin that Peter took out of the fish's mouth, and all of these kind of things. And I believe that the Lord just deliberately has removed these artifacts to keep us from idolatry.

Now, whenever a person begins to worship an artifact, there's always a twofold revelation. Number one: it reveals that that man has lost the consciousness of the power and the presence of God in his life. The moment I am worshipping some artifact, it means I have lost that vital consciousness of God's presence. It means that I am somehow longing for that which I lost. And so, I have a reminder of what God had done. But idolatry, any idolatry, always speaks of a degraded state of spiritual experience. Well, of course, just the very way that the shroud of Turin is treated as an artifact of which great reverence and all is placed upon, is just a classic indication of why the Lord, I think, allowed all of the things to deliberately be lost or discarded.

Now, the other disciple [after Peter went in], also went in to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed ([Jhn 20:8](#)).

So, John bears record of his own belief. When he saw the clothes lying there, he realized that Jesus must have risen.

For as yet they did not know the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. And the disciples went away again unto their own homes ([Jhn 20:9-10](#)).

Probably back to tell Mary what they had discovered. That is, Mary the mother of Jesus who was staying at John's house.

To me, it is interesting; "for they did not yet know the scripture." And yet Jesus had told them that He would rise again the third day. Yet, they just did not still fully comprehend this.

But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping ([Jhn 20:11](#)):

Now, John and Peter had run to the sepulchre. They went in, saw the grave clothes lying there, and went on back to John's house. Mary, after telling them that the sepulchre was empty, made her way back again to the sepulchre, this time alone.

and as she was there weeping, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and she saw two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they said unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? And she said unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus ([Jhn 20:11-14](#)).

Now, it is interesting to me how that Mary wasn't interested in the angels. These two men sitting there in white, saying, "Why are you weeping?" Now, what would be your response if you saw angels? I'm sure we would be very fascinated. We'd be intrigued. But you know, when your heart is longing for Jesus, even angels won't do! And she was longing for Jesus; she was wanting Jesus. And angels are not even a decent substitute when your heart is yearning after Jesus. And so, she turned away from the angels, not really interested in angels. "I want my Lord." And Jesus was standing there and she did not recognize Him.

Now, it is interesting how that there did seem to be a certain difficulty in recognizing the risen Christ, and the difficulty, it would appear, was on the part of the beholder. We read that the two fellows were on the road to Emmaus and Jesus joined with them, but they did not recognize Him. It said, "For their eyes were holden that they could not see." In other words, there was an actual spiritual thing involved here, where the recognition of Him was something that was held back by God. And it was not until He had broken the bread and they probably saw the nail prints in His hands that they recognized Him.

Now, Mary did not know that it was Jesus. She thought maybe He was the gardener standing there. It is possible that it was early in the morning, and because she had been weeping so much that her vision was distorted by the tears in her eyes. Though she did not recognize that physical form, she sure did recognize the voice. But first of all, He said unto her the same thing that the angels had said,

Woman, why weepest thou? who are you looking for? ([Jhn 20:15](#))

Do you think that Jesus said to Mary, "Why weepest thou?" because He didn't know why she was weeping? Of course He knew why she was weeping! Questions are often used in teaching methods; not so that the teacher can find out the answer, but so that the person can find out what they know or can express what they know. And it is a very common teaching practice to ask questions, not because you don't know the answers, but you want people to start thinking. Our minds are lazy oftentimes, and if someone asks a question, they think, "Well, what is that?" And it starts you thinking, and it starts drawing out from you. And it's a very common teaching practice.

"Woman, why weepest thou? Whom are you seeking?" He knew good and well why she was weeping and who she was looking for.

She, supposing him to be the gardener, said unto him, Sir, if you have born him away from here, if you'll just tell me where you have laid him, I will take him away ([Jhn 20:15](#)).

Jesus said unto her, Mary ([Jhn 20:16](#)). Now, there were many Mary's that followed Jesus. There was His mother Mary. There was that other Mary mentioned at the cross. There was Mary Magdalene. And with all of these Mary's around, it could get confusing. In our household it was confusing because of Chuck Jr. So, someone called, "Chuck," and oftentimes both of us would answer. So, I imagine that Jesus had a certain way of saying "Mary" in a personalized way for each of them. So that when He would say "Mary" or "Ma-r-y," that they would recognize from His intonation which Mary He was talking to. And I imagine that He had a way of saying "Mary" that was just specially and specifically for Mary Magdalene, this woman out of whom seven devils had been cast, who became a fervent disciple. And He said, "Mary!" in such a tone that she knew exactly who it was that she cried, "Rabboni! Master!"

And Jesus said unto her, Touch me not ([Jhn 20:17](#));

If you'll look more carefully at what Jesus said in the Greek language, He said to Mary, "Mary, don't cling to Me." I can imagine that when Jesus said "Mary" and she cried out "Master!" that she fell upon Him and grabbed Him around the neck in a chokehold, as if to say, "You got away from me once, but You'll never get away from me again. I'm not letting go." And thus, He said, "Mary, don't cling to Me."

I'm not yet ascended to my Father: but go and tell my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and to your Father; and to my God, and your God. Mary

Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her ([Jhn 20:17-18](#)).

Now, though Mary had come and told the disciples, "I've seen the Lord. He talked to me, He told me to come and tell you that He hasn't yet ascended to the Father," I would imagine that they must have just passed it off as the hysterics of an excited woman.

That same evening ([Jhn 20:19](#)),

Earlier in the afternoon, He appeared to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. And it is interesting to me the very first person Jesus appeared to after His resurrection was a woman. And He appeared to her who loved Him so much. Jesus said, "He who is forgiven much, loves much." And His response to Mary's weeping, His response to her love, was that she was the first one that He appeared to. Then to the other women who held His feet and worshipped Him. And then to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. And now it's the evening. Jesus made a quicker trip back from Emmaus than the other two disciples, though I imagine that they were pretty fast getting back. "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, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and said unto them, Peace be unto you ([Jhn 20:19](#)). The typical Jewish salutation of peace, shalom. When he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side ([Jhn 20:20](#)).

Now, Jesus at this point still is bearing the marks of the cross. He showed them His hands, His side. "It's Me." When He is in heaven, He will still be bearing the marks of the cross, for in Revelation chapter 5, when the scroll is in the right hand of Him who is sitting upon the throne and the angel proclaims with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to take the scroll and loose the seals?" And John is weeping because "no one is found worthy in heaven and earth under the sea to take the scroll, or even to look thereon." The elders said unto John, "Behold, weep not, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah has prevailed to take the scroll and loose the seals." And John said, "I turned and I saw Him as a lamb that had been slaughtered." Still the marks of the cross. Isaiah in chapter 52 tells us that all that look upon Him will be astonished, shocked, because His face has been so marred, you can't recognize Him as a human being. In the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, he tells us that "we, as it were, hid our face from Him." The idea being that His appearance was so shocking that you can't really stand to look. But then he goes on to say, "But He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities." Now, when Jesus returns, He will still be bearing the marks, "for they shall look on Him whom they have pierced." How long will He bear these marks? I don't know; surely not all of eternity. For John sees Him in the book of Revelation in chapter 1 in that glory of the kingdom, and he describes that glorious vision of Christ in Revelation, chapter 1. But for a time, and I'm sure, as a shocking reminder to us of just what He was willing to endure in order to bring us salvation, your first view of Jesus is apt to be a very shocking experience. Just be prepared for it. So often, we think, "Oh, to look upon the face of Jesus," and we behold a perfect face. The Rose of Sharon, the Lilly of the Valley, the

Bright and Morning Star, fairer than ten thousand. But your first view is apt to be very shocking, as shockingly you are reminded how much God loves you, as you see what He was willing to endure to bring you salvation.

So, Jesus showed them His hands and His side.

And then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. Then Jesus said unto them again, [Shalom] Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you ([Jhn 20:20-21](#)).

"The Father sent Me." To what? "To serve, to give my life for others, so send I you." How? For what? To serve and to give yourself for others.

And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit ([Jhn 20:22](#)):

"He breathed on them." It is interesting to me that the word for spirit in Hebrew is *ruwach*, which is the same Hebrew word for breath. The Greek word for spirit is *pneuma*, which is the Greek word for air. Pneumatic tires means tires that you fill with air. Pneuma--air. But it also the Greek word for spirit. So, in the Old Testament, when God formed man out of the dust of the earth, He breathed into man. Now, when the Hebrew scholars translated the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek, which is known as the Septuagint, it's a translation of the Old Testament into Greek, done by seventy scholars some 200 years before Christ. When they made this Septuagint translation, the Greek word "breathed into man, and he became a living soul," is the same word that John uses here and it's the only place it's used in the New Testament. "Jesus breathed on them." Even as God breathed into that shell that He had formed out of the dust of the earth and man became a living spirit. But that spirit, you remember, died when man sinned and man lost fellowship with God. Now Jesus is restoring that which was lost by Adam, as He breathed in them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit, that life of God, that Spirit of God, that spiritual life." And so, that which was lost by Adam is now restored by Jesus Christ. The life of God within man, that God had breathed into man in the beginning now restored.

Jesus had said to His disciples just four nights earlier, "I will pray the Father and He will give you another Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive because it seeth Him not, neither knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and shall be in you." And I believe that when Jesus breathed on them, and they became, at that point, once more living spirits, restored as was Adam in fellowship with God in the Garden of Eden. And I believe that that was the point when the Holy Spirit came into their lives.

Now, Jesus is going to be telling them, "Now you wait in Jerusalem, for in a few days the Holy Spirit is going to come upon you. You're going to be empowered now by the Spirit, empowered now for your service for God. Now you wait until you get this endowment of power for service." But I believe, at this point, when He breathed on them

and said, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit," that there was the born again experience. There was where God's life was again placed into man, the Spirit of God. And man came by that Spirit into the union and fellowship with God.

Then Jesus said,

Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins you retain, they are retained ([Jhn 20:23](#)).

Does this mean that Jesus gave His disciples the power to forgive sins?

When they had brought to Jesus a man who was bedfast as the result of palsy, you remember they tore up the roof and let him down in the midst of the room in front of Jesus? And Jesus said unto him, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." And the Pharisees among themselves said, "Oh, that's blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God?" They were correct in that statement. Only God can forgive sins. Jesus was only proving to them that He was God. They didn't recognize that. But their assumption was correct, only God can forgive sins.

Then what did Jesus mean when he said to His disciples, "Whosoever sins you remit, they are remitted; whose soever sins you retain, they are retained"? I think that one of the most joyful experiences that a child of God has is to lead a person through the sinner's prayer. To me, it's always a joy to have a person who is come and says, "I want to receive Jesus Christ." And I'll say, "Alright, follow me in this prayer." And as we prayed that God would forgive our sins, and as we pray that the Holy Spirit would come and begin to indwell our lives, and that we might now have this new relationship with God as we just invite Him to come in and take over, in Jesus' name; when they say their "Amen," it's always a joy to me to be able to look them square in the eye and say unto them, "God has nothing against your account; you're completely forgiven, every sin you've ever committed." Oh, how I love to say that! What a thrill that gives to me to be able to say that to a person!

Now, on what basis do I say that? Because here I am, I have the power to say, "Hey, it's alright! Cancelled, man!"? No way! I make that statement on the basis of their confession by faith, that Jesus Christ is the Lord and they've invited Him to come in and be the Lord of their life. And upon the basis of what they have confessed with their mouths, and knowing that if we ask God anything in the name of Jesus, it will be done. And because they've asked the Lord in Jesus' name to forgive them and cleanse them of all of their sins, I can say according to the Word of God, "Your sins are forgiven!"

Now, if someone comes and says, "Well, I don't like Jesus Christ. I don't want to have anything to do with Him. He might cramp my style," I can't say to them, "That's alright, your sins are forgiven anyhow. I'm going to forgive them." No way! But to that person I can say, "Friend, one day, if you do not receive Jesus Christ as your Savior, you're going to have to stand before God and answer for your sin. And your sins are going to condemn you. You're still in your sin." And even if a person comes and says, "Well, I've

done so many good deeds. Now, I know that I did some pretty bad stuff, but I've made up for it for all the good deeds that I've done." I say unto them, "Look, all of your good deeds cannot put away your guilt of sin; you're still guilty before God." "Well, I meditate and I go through my little thing." "You're still guilty before God. Until you receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you're still guilty." And so, "Whosoever sins you remit, they are remitted; whosoever sins you retain, they are retained." But I only do that on the basis of what they have done or declare.

Now, there's a lot of times that people who have even gone through the sinner's prayer are still reluctant to believe the Word of God. "Oh, but I'm such a horrible wretch; I can't believe that God can just forgive me just that easy, just that simply. Surely there's something that I've got to do, because I was so horrible." But it's glorious to be able to just say, "No, there's nothing you can do, except what you've already done, and that is just to believe in Jesus Christ and confess Him as your Lord. Your sins are forgiven." And many times that word of faith to them is the thing that triggers their faith, and causes them to realize.

I went down one night to a lady who had come forward to receive Jesus Christ. And I said to her, "How do you feel now?" And she started crying and she said, "I still feel miserable. I still feel all of my guilt and I still feel miserable." And so, I went through, "Now have you asked Jesus Christ to come into your heart?" "Oh, yes." "Did you ask Him to forgive you of your sins?" "Oh, yes." I said, "Then, your sins are forgiven. God has nothing against you. Now, if I should suddenly come and give you a glorious, fabulous gift, what would be your response?" She said, "Oh, I would thank you." I said, "Alright. God has just given you a glorious, fabulous gift of eternal life. Don't you think you ought to thank Him?" And as she started thanking the Lord, hey, the old burden of sin rolled off and the joy of the Lord and the power of the Spirit just came upon her life in such a glorious way. Your sins are forgiven. I can declare that to a person on the basis of the Word of God and the confession of their faith.

But Thomas, one of the twelve, called the twin ([Jhn 20:24](#)), Didymus is twin, so Thomas evidently had a twin brother 8was not with them when Jesus came ([Jhn 20:24](#)).

Now, Thomas was a very practical sort. He was never one to pretend to believe something that he did not really believe. For instance, when Jesus was talking to His disciples that final night, He said unto them, "And if I go away, I'm going to come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know." And Thomas said, "Wait a minute, Lord! We don't know where You're going and how can we know the way?" You see, he was never one to pretend to know something he doesn't really know, or believe something he doesn't really believe.

When Jesus was with His disciples down at the Jordan River, and they received word of Lazarus's illness and finally Jesus said, "Let's go that I might awake Lazarus out of his sleep." And the disciples said, "Lord, if he's sleeping, he's probably getting better."

Jesus said, "No, he's really dead. But I'm glad for My sake I wasn't there, that you might really see the glory of God." And Thomas said, "Well, let's go and die with him."

Now the disciples said, "Hey, we've see Him. He showed us His hands, His side. We've seen Him. He's alive; He's risen." Thomas said,

Unless I see his hands in the print of the nails, and I put my finger into the print of the nails, and I thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe ([Jhn 20:25](#)).

"I've got to see it for myself." Now, you'd think that he would trust these guys. He had been around them for a long time. But Thomas was just the kind that's from Missouri, "You've got to show me."

After eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas was with them ([Jhn 20:26](#)):

Now, notice after eight days, they had gathered together on the first day of the week. Eight days later they were gathered together, which would have been the first day of the week again. And, it is believed that here is where the practice of gathering together on the first day of the week for worship actually began, right after the resurrection. That's how early Sunday became the day that the disciples gathered to worship the risen Lord, and thus, the church meets today on Sunday, rather than the Sabbath day, which is Saturday. The first two gatherings of the disciples were on the first day of the week. Eight days later would be the Sunday again, the first day of the week. They were gathered together again. This time,

the doors were shut, and Jesus stood in the midst of them, and said, Peace be unto you. Then he said to Thomas, 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 ([Jhn 20:26-27](#)).

This indicated that when Thomas was expressing his doubts, Jesus was right there listening to his expressions. For the first thing Jesus said, "Hey, Thomas, okay, you want to do it? Go ahead." Now, what Jesus was actually seeking to train the disciples at this point was that He was present with them even as He said, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." That He was present with them even though they did not see Him, and that is the consciousness He wants us to develop, the presence of Jesus with us. Though we do not see Him, He is with us always. And He wants us to be aware, to be conscious of His presence at all times. And so, He's training the disciples now in this very way that they will realize that He is present with them, though they don't see Him.

Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God ([Jhn 20:28](#)).

Thomas acknowledged Jesus as his God. John acknowledged Him as God, "In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God and the Word was God" ([John 1:1](#)). Paul acknowledged Him as God, "For we look for the glorious appearing of our great

God and Savior Jesus Christ" ([Titus 2:13](#)). And even God Himself acknowledged Him as God, for in Hebrews we read that God declared Him, actually, to be God. Speaking of Him, He said, "But unto the Son He saith, 'Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a scepter of righteousness, the scepter of Thy kingdom'" ([Hebrews 1:8](#)). Now, the Jehovah Witnesses do not want to acknowledge Him as God. But if Thomas says, "My Lord and my God," and John said He is God, and Paul the apostle speaks to Him as God, and if God Himself calls Him God, then who am I to believe, the Jehovah Witnesses? I would rather believe God.

Jesus said unto him, Thomas, because you have seen me, you have believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet believed ([Jhn 20:29](#)).

That's good, you see and you believe, that's alright. But hey, blessed are they who believe without seeing.

Now many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God; and that believing you might have life through his name ([Jhn 20:30-31](#)).

So, John was writing his gospel with a definite purpose in mind, and that is to make believers out of people. That's why this gospel was written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, or the Messiah, the Son of the living God, and by believing might have life in His name. That is why the gospel of John is the best thing you can put into the hands of a sinner to read. Encourage them to read the gospel of John, because God's Word will not return void. This gospel was written to convince people that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God, in order that by their believing they might have life through Him.