

Gospel of John Chapter 20 -- John Karmelich

1. If people ask you, do you believe Jesus is God, what do you say?
 - a) What if they ask why?
 - i) Why do you believe Jesus is God?
 - b) Does “faith” mean we are to believe Jesus is God,
 - i) because we say so?”
 - ii) because we *think* it is true?
 - iii) because we have this “feeling” inside of us?
 - c) When Bible scholars talk about “faith” in the Bible, they usually go to the New Testament Book of Hebrews, Chapter 11. This chapter is often called “The Hall of Faith”, as it lists the great men of faith in the Old Testament. Notice the first verse:
 - i) Now faith is being *sure* of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.
 - a) This is from the Hebrews 11:1 NIV *emphasis added*).
 - ii) Let’s read the New King James Version for further clarification:
 - iii) Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the *evidence* of things not seen.
 - a) This is from the Hebrews 11:1 NKJV *emphasis added*).
 - iv) What these verses are saying (this is very important) is:
 - v) God calls us to have faith, but it should be faith based on the evidence.
 - a) God does not want our foundation for faith in God to be based on “some feeling inside of us”.
 - vi) Hebrews Chapter 11 Verse 1 is teaching us that the foundation of our faith is based on the evidence.
 - vii) Why am I making such a big point about this?
 - a) Because this is what the Gospel of John is all about!
 - b) The key verse of the whole Book is the last verse of this chapter.
 - c) “But these (miracles, events, etc.) are written that you may *believe* that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” (John 20:31, NIV *emphasis added*).
 - (1) The evidence given in this book is written so that we may *believe* in Jesus.
 - (a) And what good does that do us?
 - (b) Last part of this verse:
 - (i) “by believing you may have life in his name”
 - (ii) The believing is a continual action.
 - (a) Believing is a continual growing in faith.
2. Chapter 19 ended with the death of Jesus.
 - a) If the Gospel of John had ended with this verse, it simply would have been a (wonderful) tragic, story.
 - b) If the Gospel ended at Chapter 19...
 - i) Jesus would have believed he died for our sins.
 - ii) But we have no proof that God *validated* his death.
 - iii) We *may* have believed Jesus died for our sins.
 - iv) How do we *know* God the father *accepts* Jesus death for our sins on our behalf?
3. The answer is Chapter 20. God resurrected Jesus from the Dead.
 - a) Without the fact of the resurrection, we are wasting our time being a Christian.
 - b) Paul himself understood this:
 - i) If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."
 - a) (1 Corinthians 15:32b NIV)
 - ii) The whole 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians is about the resurrection.
 - iii) Paul understood that without the resurrection, we have no hope for the future!

4. I mentioned many lessons ago, that the #1 fear most non-believers have is the “fear of death”.
 - a) Death represents the “unknown”.
 - b) “Fear of death” is really asking the question “is there life *after* life?”
 - c) One commentator I read this week put it this way:
 - d) “At every point in someone’s life, they ask 3 questions:
 - i) 1) “Where do I come from?”,
2) “Why am I here?”
3) “Is it really necessary to leave?”
 - e) The Bible takes on all 3 questions, and gives *evidence* to support its answers.
 - i) Where do I come from?
 - a) God formed you *personally* before the foundation of the world
(1) (Isaiah 44:2, among other references).
 - ii) “Why am I here?”
 - a) To give glory to God. (Philippians 1:21 & 2:13). Once you discover that, you begin to *know* what living life is really all about!
 - iii) and “Is it really necessary to leave?”
 - a) Yes. Consider Ephesians 2: 6-7:
 - b) Here is our future (Vs. 6): “ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,” Why?:
“in order that in the *coming* ages he might show the *incomparable* riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. (Eph. 2:7 NIV)
 - c) “in order that in the *coming* ages he might show the *incomparable* riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. (Eph. 2:7 NIV)
 - iv) In a “nutshell” that is God’s game plan.
5. OK, I’ve been talking for 1½ pages so far, and I haven’t even touched Chapter 20. Why?
 - a) Because you can’t underestimate the importance of the resurrection.
 - i) It is the validation of our future.
 - ii) It is the proof, that the Bible is fact, and not fiction.
 - iii) It is the proof that *believing* in Jesus gives eternal life.
 - a) And *not believing* is eternal damnation.
6. With that, let’s examine the evidence: Chapter 20, Verse 1: Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. ² So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!”
 - a) Mary Magdalene is mentioned in the other Gospels. She is the one who Jesus cast out seven demons. She became a follower of Jesus to the end. After the crucifixion, Mary Magdalene took the first opportunity she could to see Jesus.
 - i) Seeking God early reminded me of this verse: “My soul yearns for you in the night; in the morning my spirit longs for you. (Isaiah 26:9a NIV)
 - b) Mary Magdalene did not understand the resurrection at this point. She went to the grave to grieve. She thought somebody *stole* Jesus’ body. She called for Peter & John (John refers to himself as “the disciple Jesus’ loved) to come verify the fact that someone took the body.
 - a) Notice any lack of reference of a resurrection by Mary Magdalene!
 - ii) She waited until Sunday to go to the tomb because Saturday was the “Sabbath” and Jewish law does not permit travel on the Sabbath. She waited until Sunday morning.
 - c) The other Gospels mention there were several women who ran to the tomb.
 - i) In Verse 2 Mary Magdalene says: “we don’t know where they have put him”.
 - a) The “we” refers to her and the other women.
 - b) A small point to show the lack of conflict between the gospel accounts.

7. Verse 3: So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. ⁴ Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in
 - a) It helps to get a good visual picture. There is a cave, with a low entrance. Inside are several flat beds to lay bodies. This grave, which belongs to Joseph of Arimathea, was a new grave and unused until Jesus. On the report of several women, including Mary Magdalene, Peter & John went to check out if someone had actual stolen Jesus' body.
 - b) Verse 4 mentions John got there first.
 - i) I think John was simply bragging about his running ability to out-run Peter.
 - a) Most commentators fail to find any spiritual application to this verse.
 - c) In earlier lesson, I've described John as a "contemplator". A man who thinks about things before he takes action. Peter is just the opposite of John. Peter is the guy who "shoots first and asks questions later". It is John's style to *contemplate* the strips of linen but not go in. Peter rushes in without thinking.
 - i) The counter-argument is either 1) John was scared to go in and/or he considered Jewish law that does not permit a person to touch a dead body.
8. Verse 6: Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, ⁷ as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen. ⁸ Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. ⁹ (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.)
 - a) Here comes Peter, probably huffing and puffing. Peter had no fear of going in the cave. He went in and examined the evidence.
 - i) There were two pieces of cloth. The body piece and the head piece.
 - ii) The head piece was folded up by itself, separate from the line (Verse 7)
 - iii) Question. If the body was stolen, why was the headpiece "folded up"?
 - a) Does a thief stop and fold-up the linens before taking the body?
 - b) It's also important to understand burial cloth. Let's re-read John Chapter 11, when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead:
 - i) The dead man (Lazarus) came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go." (John 11:44 NIV)
 - a) The point is Lazarus couldn't come out by himself, he needed help.
 - c) At this point John, Peter & Mary Magdalene thought someone stole Jesus' body. Think about this. Why would Jesus' enemies *want* to steal His body? Remember what the Pharisee's asked Pilate to do in Matthew 27:62b-64:
 - i) The chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. "Sir," they said, "we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise again.' So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first." (NIV)
 - a) The point is the Pharisees *understood* Jesus' claim that Jesus would be alive again on the 3rd day, even though the disciples didn't. The enemies of Jesus had no motivation to steal the body.
 - b) Imagine how hard the enemies of Jesus must have tried to find the body of Jesus. I can just imagine the search parties and inquisition.
 - d) The climax to this passage is the last part of verse 8: "He saw and believed"
 - i) "He saw and believed" what?
 - a) That Jesus was no longer in the grave? That is the obvious.
 - (1) No. That Jesus had risen

- e) In Verses 5-8 the words “looked in” or “saw” is used three times, (the exact wording depends upon which translation you use).
 - i) First John came to the tomb and saw the linen clothes lying there, The word translated “saw” or looked in” means to look at “visibly”.
 - ii) In Verse 6 Peter saw the linen cloths and the word “saw” means “to study more carefully”.
 - iii) Finally in Verse 8 the word “saw” translated “saw is means “idea” or “I get it”.
 - a) The transitions is from 1) “looking at it”, to 2) “study more carefully” to 3) “I get it”. This is a model of our progress in faith.
- f) Some commentators take a different view of Verse 9: It reads “They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead”
 - i) Some people interpret this passage as “They did not understand *until now* that Jesus had to rise from the dead.
 - ii) The alternative view is that they understood the body was gone, but still did not comprehend the resurrection.
 - iii) Either view is Biblically supported. A compromise view is they believed Jesus rose from the dead, but they did not fully *comprehend the meaning* of it. They simply thought they would never see Jesus again, as He rose from the dead. While they understood Jesus rose from the dead, they didn’t get fully comprehend the purpose and meaning of the resurrection as of yet.
- g) Before moving on, this is a good opportunity to comment on “The Shroud of Turin”.
 - i) There is a burial cloth, dipped in blood, which many people believe to be the *actual* burial cloth of Jesus. It is currently kept in a church in Turin, Italy.
 - ii) A few months ago, I listed to a radio interview with a scientist who spent years studying this Shroud. He was part of a team of Christian and Jewish scientists. (Non-believers were added to the group for authenticity.)
 - iii) I was fascinated by the *methods* they used to date the cloth. The technology involved was amazing.
 - iv) Their conclusion after *all* their research. Uncertain.
 - a) There is the *possibility* the cloth dates back to the 1st Century.
 - b) Now if *these* guys are uncertain, who am I to speculate?
 - v) The danger of icons like the “shroud of Turin” is that it can get our focus off of Jesus and on to symbols that represent him. God want’s us to look directly to *Him* for our lives, not through some symbols or cloth.

9. Verse 10: Then the disciples went back to their homes, ¹¹ but Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb ¹² and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. ³ They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." ¹⁴ At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

- a) Why did Mary go back to the tomb? A logical explanation is that Mary figured if she hung around, someone might tell her what happened to Jesus’ body.
 - i) She does not believe at this point in the resurrection.
 - a) She thinks somebody stole the body.
 - b) The application for us is that our *love* for Jesus must be accompanied by our *faith* in what Jesus did for us.
- b) According to the gospel accounts the other women stayed, and there they met two angels who told them that Jesus had risen. But Mary had not yet received that news when she ran to tell Peter and John about the disappearance of the body of Jesus.

- c) One of the things I wondered about this week, is why did the angels appear to Mary (and the other women) and *not* to Peter and John? They were beloved disciples. Peter and John were part of Jesus' "inner circle". Why Mary?
 - i) If I were writing the Gospel, I would have this big scene with lots of flashing lightening, thunder and smoke, and here appears Jesus to the disciples again saying "It is I, I have risen from the dead."
 - a) Is that what happened? No!
 - (1) Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene! (and two other women).
 - (2) Remember the culture. Women were "low on the totem pole".
 - d) A reason God picked Mary Magdalene and the other women can be summed up in a proverb: "For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength." (1 Corinthians 1:25 NIV)
 - i) My loose translation of this verse: "I couldn't make this stuff up if I tried."
 - a) God uses a lowly woman (you know what I mean ☺) to *validate* the scripture. God's whole plan of redemption is so *improbable* and so *unlikely* that it has to be true. Like the saying goes: "I couldn't make this stuff up if I tried." The unusualness of the story supports its validity.
 - e) Back to the text. Let's start at Verse 10 again.: "As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb ¹² and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. ³ They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him."
 - f) You have to love "the Love of Mary Magdalene."
 - i) Did Mary run out and write a best seller called "My visit with the angels?"
 - ii) No. Her focus was on Jesus. She asks them where can I find Jesus.
 - iii) Mary says "tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."
 - a) She loved Jesus so much, she didn't even consider the problem of how she was going to carry away Jesus.
10. Verse 14: At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ "Woman," he said, "why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for? "Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."
- a) I speculate that the two angels were not staring at Mary, but at Jesus behind her. If you were talking to somebody, and they were not staring at you, eventually, you will turn to see what they are looking at.
 - i) A main function of angels is to bring messages from God.
 - a) The angels were looking directly at Him.
 - b) The commentators are full of speculation as to why Mary did not recognize Jesus and thought he was the gardener.
 - i) Some say because it was because of the tears in her eyes.
 - ii) Other's say Jesus simply "blinded" her knowledge of recognition.
 - a) In Luke Chapter 24, after the resurrection, Jesus also appeared to two disciples on the road to Emmaus.
 - (1) Luke, Chap. 24, Vs. 16 it mentions regarding these two disciples "but they were kept from recognizing Him (Jesus)." (NIV)
 - iii) Others speculate that Jesus' resurrection body was still marred from the beatings prior to the crucifixion. Some theorize that Jesus today looks like the way he was to remind us of the price He paid us.

11. Verse 16: Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). ¹⁷ Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' "

 - a) Why does Jesus tell Mary not to hold on to Him? Later in this chapter, Jesus tells the disciples to "touch Him" and verify that Jesus is not a ghost.
 - i) Jesus was trying to teach Mary (and us) a lesson here. For Mary to "cling" to Jesus here, means Jesus was unable to minister to other people.
 - a) Jesus *on earth* can only be at one place at a time.
 - b) Jesus *in heaven, at the right hand of God*, can minister to all needs at once.
 - c) This brings up a quick lesson children often ask. How can God be everywhere at once? The answer is not *God's* problem, it's *our* problem.
 - (1) If we worry about this, it is because our concept of God is too small!
 - (2) A God who knows all things is *aware* of all things.
 - (3) "'With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.'" (Matthew 19:26b NIV)
 - b) Notice Jesus statement in Verse 17: I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' "
 - i) Jesus is stating that His relationship with God is different from ours.
 - ii) We have become Sons of God *through faith in Jesus*. (see Galatians 3:26)
 - iii) God's relationship with Jesus is one of deity.
 12. Verse 18: Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her. ¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.
 - a) Notice Mary came back to them probably in the middle of the day.
 - b) Did the disciples immediately run out and spread the news?
 - i) Nope, they hid in the room and locked the doors.
 - ii) They didn't believe Mary's report. Remember, unfortunately, women's testimony didn't carry much weight in those days.
 - iii) Combine this with the fact, as stated the fear of the Jews kept them locked in.
 - iv) The disciples were worried now that Jesus was crucified, they could be next.
 - v) So what was Jesus' first words to them?
 - a) Was it "you guys blew it?"
 - b) Was is "get out there and witness and stop being so scared?"
 - c) Nope. It was "'Peace be with you!"
 - d) God is patient with us. He walks us through all are fears.
 - (1) When we are ready for the next step, He will lead us on.
 - c) Notice John mentions the "joy" in their hearts. They were probably frightened when they first saw Jesus again. Once Jesus showed them he was real and not some sort of ghost (Vs. 20), their fear turned to joy.
 - i) God does that with our fears too. He reassures us. He turns our fear into joy.

13. Verse 21: Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."
²² And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."
- a) It marks the beginning of their ministry. "As the father has sent me, so send I you".
 - b) Many people get this verse confused with "Pentecost". In Acts Chapter 2, there is the Jewish holiday of "Pentecost". This is when the Holy Spirit was given to the believers and the church was born. Special gifts (talents) were given to church members at that point to help minister to other people.
 - i) As opposed to Pentecost, this giving of the "Holy Spirit" is a short "transition" period before the 1-2 month time period prior to Pentecost.
 - c) Let's re-read Verse 23. Jesus says "If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."
 - i) Does this mean *we* have the power to forgive sins?
 - ii) It says we have the power to *proclaim* the forgiveness of sins *by God*.
 - a) If people choose not to accept the Gospel, their sins are not forgiven.
 - iii) Nowhere in the Bible does it imply *we* have the right to forgive sins *on God's behalf*. We can only forgive people who have hurt *us*.
 - iv) In Matthew, Mark & Luke's Gospels, there is the story of a paralytic man brought to Jesus. Jesus says "Son, your sins are forgiven".
 - a) The religious leaders grumbled and said, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (Mark 2:7b, NKJV).
 - (1) They were right. Only God can forgive sins.
 - (a) They simply didn't know Jesus *is* God.
 - (2) This is another proof text of the deity of Jesus as God.
 - v) "God does not forgive men's sins because we decide to do so nor withhold forgiveness because we will not grant it. We announce it; we do not create it. This is the essence of salvation." Ray Steadman
 - d) A lot of commentators like to point out the parallel between Jesus "breathing" on them the Holy Spirit and opening chapter of Genesis where God formed the body of man from the dust of the ground and breathed into him the breath of life.
 - e) A common question is "How can Jesus walk through a locked door?"
 - i) There are a lot of things we don't know about our resurrected bodies.
 - ii) There is a lot more to the world than 3 dimension (length, width & height).
 - iii) Remember when I asked how can God be everywhere at once?
 - a) You can if you exist in more than 3 dimensions.
 - b) It is tough to visualize. Let me try to give an example:
 - c) Imagine a world that is all flat with only two dimensions. We will call it "flatland". The creatures living in "flatland" have *no* concept of height. We can see all of flatland at once, because we have 3 dimensions instead of two. Now if God can see in *more* than 3 dimensions, God can "see" all 3 dimensions at once and be "*everywhere* at once" and Jesus do things like walk through walls.
 - iv) One day we will understand. We will have resurrected bodies like Jesus.
 - v) "Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has *not yet* been revealed what we *shall* be, but we know that when He is revealed (at end of the age), we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." (1 John 3:2 NKJV *emphasis added*)

14. Verse 24, the famous story of “Doubting Thomas”: Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came.²⁵ So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it.”
 - a) Thomas was not with the other disciples in the locked room.
 - i) Some commentators speculate that Thomas was the kind of guy who liked to grieve by himself. Most people like to get together to grieve, like in funeral situations. Others need to be by themselves.
 - b) You have to wonder that if Thomas *had* been with the other believers, the “doubting” would not have been necessary.
 - i) One of the fundamentals to Christian growth is spending time with other Christians.
 - ii) If you meet a Christian who is losing their faith, or is off on some sort of strange (weird) belief, it usually means they are not spending time with other believers.
 - iii) “Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” (Hebrew 10:25 NIV)
15. Verse 26: A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!”²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”²⁸ Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”
 - a) Thomas believed in Jesus, but had some “honest doubts” because He witnessed Jesus being crucified. It is easy to see why He doubted.
 - i) God answers honest doubt. If we believe in Jesus, but are stuck on a scripture that brings us doubt, God will answer that if we bring that problem to Him.
 - ii) The problem is “dishonest doubt”. I don’t believe God answers that. People often doubt for alternative motives. They simply don’t believe the Bible. They don’t want to change their lifestyle to become a Christian. God hides himself from those who continually turn their back on God (Proverbs 1:28) and God reveals himself to those who diligently seek Him (Proverbs 8:17).
 - b) “Thomas expressed fullest faith in Jesus as God. For a Jew to call another human associate “my Lord and my God” would be almost incredible. The Jewish law was strictly monotheistic (one God); so calling any *man* “God” would be regarded as blasphemy. Thomas, in the light of the resurrection, applied to Jesus the titles of “Lord” and “God”, both of which were titles of deity.” Expositor’s Bible Encyclopedia (with some editing for clarification)
16. Verse 29: Then Jesus told him (Thomas), “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”
 - a) When Jesus was with Mary, Jesus told Mary not to cling to Him.
 - i) By telling Thomas “blessed are those who *haven’t* seen and believe, Jesus is teaching Thomas the same thing he was teaching Mary when Jesus said to Mary “don’t cling to me”.
 - a) He taught Mary, even though you won’t see me physically,
 - b) I will be with you always.
 - c) He is teaching both of them to *trust* in Him, although they won’t be able to physically see Him.
 - b) Through the resurrection, Jesus conquered death. The last thing Jesus had left to conquer was unbelief. That is what he did with Thomas.

17. Now comes the *purpose statement* of the Book of John, Verse 30 & 31: Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.
- a) John's gospel was not intended to be a full, detailed description of Jesus' life.
 - b) As I said in the beginning, certain miracles were picked out with the purpose of proving Jesus is God.
 - i) There *is* one more chapter, but it is an epilogue to the Gospel of John.
 - a) The focus on Chapter 21 is on our *roles* as believers.
 - c) When I did my "introduction" notes to the Gospel of John, some 21 lessons ago, I discussed this verse.
 - i) The whole Gospel of John focuses around Verse 31 of this chapter.
 - ii) The next time you re-read the Gospel of John and get confused, think about this verse. The purpose of writing this gospel is so that one can *believe* in Jesus.
 - iii) But remember belief is a *continual, growing* action.
 - a) God does not want us to believe in Jesus, and stop there.
 - b) He wants us to *grow* as Christians. Trust God more and more.
 - (1) This is why God often allows trials in our lives.
 - (a) To test our faith and help us to grow.
 - d) In my opening notes, I placed a strong emphasis on the evidence of the resurrection.
 - i) In summary, none of Jesus' followers expected it.
 - ii) In the other gospels, we learn that Jesus' enemies tried to *prevent it*.
 - iii) The combined body evidence supports the *fact* of the resurrection.
 - iv) This *fact* now becomes the foundation of our faith.
 - v) A faith were like the disciples, we are lead to believe and grow in Christ
 - vi) A faith that has no bounds, no limits, only our self-imposed boundaries.
 - a) And like Thomas, God can conquer *all* our fears and disbelief's to those who diligently seek him.
18. Let's Pray. Father, we thank you for the lessons of the Resurrection. Like the disciples, we go through our own periods of disbelief. We focus on our problems, and not *you*, who provides the answers. We ask for your guidance, your comfort, and your help to grow in our faith, and to trust you more daily. For the blessings and promises you have for our us is far greater than anything we can ever do for ourselves. We ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.