

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

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MEETING

WITH THE BELIEVERS

IN RESURRECTION

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In the evening on the day of His resurrection the Lord met with His disciples for the first time since being resurrected. [John 20:20](#) says “And having said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples therefore rejoiced when they saw the Lord.”

FULFILLING THE PROMISE TO MEET WITH THE DISCIPLES FOR THEIR JOY

This was a fulfillment of the Lord’s promise in [16:19](#) and [22](#), where He said, “You therefore now indeed have sorrow; but I shall see you again and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you.” Now the disciples saw the newborn “child” ([16:21](#)), who was the resurrected Lord born in His resurrection as the Son of God ([Acts 13:33](#)). As we shall now see, this fulfillment by His coming back to His disciples brought them five blessings: His presence, His peace, His

commission, the Holy Spirit, and the authority to represent Him ([John 20:23](#)).

BRINGING PEACE TO THE DISCIPLES

In both [20:19](#) and [21](#) the Lord said to His disciples, “Peace be to you.” This took place in the first meeting of the Lord with His disciples after His resurrection. Peace is something which is often brought to us in the meetings. Many times we need to come to the meetings before we can have peace. The Lord brought peace to the church. Hence, we must attend the meetings, for it is in the meetings that we enjoy peace.

COMMISSIONING THE DISCIPLES

After saying, “Peace be to you,” the Lord said to His disciples, “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you” ([20:21](#)). The Lord said that just as the Father sent Him, so He would send us in the same way. The sending of the Lord is the same as the sending of the Father. The Father sent Him, and He will send us. By what way did the Father send the Lord? It was only by the way of the Father’s being in the Son. The Father sent the Son by being in the Son. The Father’s life, nature, presence, and the Father Himself came with Him. The Lord sent His disciples with Himself as life

and as everything to them. In the same way, the Son now sends us. He sends us with His life, His nature, and His presence. As the Father sent the Son by being one with the Son and by being within the Son, so in the same way the Son sends us by being one with us and by being within us.

The way the Lord sends us is by breathing the Holy Spirit into us ([20:22](#)). This was why, immediately after saying, “I also send you,” He breathed the Holy Spirit into them. By His breathing, He entered as the Spirit into the disciples to abide in them forever ([14:16](#)). Hence, wherever His disciples are sent, He is always with them. He is one with them. As we shall see, to breathe the Holy Spirit into us means that the Lord breathes Himself into us. The Lord sends us by being within us. The only way that the Lord can be one with us and be within us is by breathing Himself into us. Therefore, we must receive the Spirit, which is the reality of Christ. If we have received the Spirit of Christ, we have received the reality of Christ. In other words, this simply means that we have received Christ Himself. By this we see that the Lord sends us by breathing Himself into us.

AUTHORIZING THE DISCIPLES

After breathing on His disciples, the Lord said

to them, “Whosoever sins you forgive, their sins have been forgiven them; and whosoever sins you retain, they have been retained” (20:23). Here we see that the Lord gave His disciples the authority to represent Him in forgiving people, granting them the authority to bind and loose. This is the authority to forgive people or to keep them under condemnation. Although the disciples had this authority, it was not to be exercised in themselves, but in the Holy Spirit. When we are in the Holy Spirit and filled with the Holy Spirit, we have the authority to decide whether or not a person is forgiven by God. If we say that he has been forgiven, it must be so. But this authority can only be exercised when we are in the Holy Spirit and filled with the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, this authority must be in the fellowship of the Body and for the fellowship of the Body. It is in the fellowship of the Body that we have this authority to represent the Lord in forgiving people. This is also for the Body, that we, representing the Lord, may receive the God-forgiven people into the church, His Body.

THE FIRST MEETING OF THE CHURCH BEFORE PENTECOST

The gathering of the disciples in 20:19 in the

evening of the day of the Lord's resurrection may be considered as the first meeting of the church before Pentecost. This meeting was to fulfill [Psalm 22:22](#) according to [Hebrews 2:10-12](#) for the Son to declare the Father's name and to praise the Father in the church. To declare the Father's name is to make the Father known to the disciples as the source of life that they might partake of His divine nature. To praise the Father in the church is to praise the Father in the praising of His believers in the church meetings. According to [Psalm 22:22](#) and [Hebrews 2:10-12](#), the resurrected Lord did both of these things in the first meeting of the church on the day of His resurrection.

After His resurrection, the Lord came to meet with His disciples, starting from the evening of the first day. Thus, in the Lord's resurrection, the matter of meeting with the saints is crucial. Mary the Magdalene met the Lord personally in the morning and obtained the blessing ([John 20:16-18](#)), but she still needed to be in the meeting with the saints in the evening to meet the Lord in a corporate way to obtain more and greater blessings ([20:19-23](#)). In this first meeting of the Lord with His disciples after His resurrection, we have the Lord's presence, the peace, the Lord's sending, the breathing, and the authority to bind and loose. These

are the blessings which the Lord brought to His disciples in that church meeting. However good Mary's fellowship was with the Lord during the morning watch, she still needed to come to the evening meeting to obtain all these blessings. These blessings are greater and more important. We may receive something from the Lord and even of the Lord during the morning watch, but this is something we need personally and individually. We must also come to the meetings to receive something more important. The morning watch and the church meetings are two aspects. We need the personal blessing of the first aspect as well as the corporate blessing of the second.

Thomas missed the first meeting the Lord held with His disciples after His resurrection. However, he was compensated for what he missed in that meeting by attending the second meeting ([20:25-28](#)). Oh, we must not miss any of the church meetings! We should not say that it does not matter and that we shall rest at home. If the Lord comes, we, like Thomas, may miss Him. Thomas missed the Lord's appearing. Due to his absence from that church meeting, he really lacked something. This chapter is full of revelation, but Thomas missed it all. He missed the revelation, the discovery, and the experience of the

Lord's resurrection because he missed the morning watch and the church meeting. He missed the revelation that the disciples are the brothers of the Lord and the sons of God. He missed the peace, the breathing of the Holy Spirit, the divine commission, and the authority. He was saved and he was a brother, but because he did not attend that meeting, he missed a great deal.

In the mornings we should have the morning watch personally and individually, but in the evenings we must come to the church meetings. How we need to come together with the other brothers and sisters! Then the Lord will come with something more, something different, and something greater. Do not be proud of your wonderful experiences during morning watch, and do not say that morning watch by itself is good enough. You also need to come to the church meetings and meet with the saints. Some of us miss the morning watch, and some miss the evening meeting. But we must have a personal morning watch as well as attend the corporate evening meeting. The morning watch cannot replace the evening meeting, and the evening meeting cannot be a substitute for the morning watch. We need both. With God, everything is of two aspects. Even in contacting the Lord, there are

two aspects, the personal and the corporate. For this matter, there are the morning watch in the morning and the meetings in the evening. Therefore, we must neglect neither the morning watch nor the church meetings. Mary received something new, fresh, and firsthand in the morning, and nothing could replace it. Nevertheless, she still needed something more—the peace, the sending, the breathing, and the commission. These things can only be received in the church meetings. The commission from the Lord is to the church, not to the individual. Thus, we must be in the church before we can be sent. The commission is a matter of the Body. Hence, we must be sent by the Lord in and through the church.

It is strange that this chapter never indicates that the Lord departed. It never tells us that He left the disciples. It is so strange that the Lord, with a physical body which could be touched, came in through the closed door. This means that, after His resurrection, the Lord was the Spirit. Because the risen Lord is now the Spirit, He can be with the disciples at any time and at every place. Since His resurrection, the Lord has no problems with time or space. The Lord can now be with us under any circumstances. Although we may shut the door, He is still with us.

According to this chapter, we do not know from where He comes or when He comes and goes. I have read this chapter many times and I cannot find any indication where the Lord went. This means that after the resurrection, the Lord is the Spirit and is with us as the Spirit at any time, at any place, and under every circumstance. The Lord is always with us; the only difference is that sometimes we sense His presence and sometimes we do not. Even when we do not sense His presence, He is still here. With us today, it is not a matter of His coming or going; it is a matter of His appearing or disappearing. When He comes, it means that He appears; when He goes, it means He disappears. Actually, however, He is here all the time. Whether we sense His presence or His absence, the Lord is still here. There is now no coming or going with the Lord. Now it is only the difference of His appearance or disappearance. Since He has accomplished everything, He has made Himself one with the disciples, and they are now one with Him.

MEETING WITH THE BELIEVERS

John 20:26 says, “And after eight days, His disciples were again within, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut,

and stood in the midst and said, Peace be to you.” The gathering of the disciples here may be considered as the second meeting of the church held with the Lord’s presence before Pentecost. As the phrase “after eight days” indicates, this gathering was on the second first day of the week, the second Lord’s day after the Lord’s resurrection. Praise the Lord that there was not only one Lord’s day, but a second one. On the second Lord’s day, Thomas was there. As we shall see, the Lord came this time purposely for Thomas, coming directly to him to meet him and to deal with him.

After His resurrection the Lord firstly appeared to His seeker, Mary the Magdalene. Then He ascended secretly to the Father, presenting the freshness of His resurrection to the Father for the Father’s satisfaction. After this, He came back as the Spirit to breathe Himself into His disciples and to meet with His brothers. Now, in [verse 26](#), we see that He is continuing to meet with His brothers. Never consider meeting with the believers as a small thing. It is a great thing, and we should not miss it. I appreciate what Mary experienced early in the morning on the day of resurrection. She certainly had the best morning watch. That morning watch caused her to attend the evening meeting.

HIS COMING BEING HIS APPEARING

After the Lord came in [verse 19](#), eight days before, there is no word or hint in John's record showing that the Lord left the disciples, because actually He stayed with them, though they were unconscious of His presence. After the Lord breathed Himself into the disciples, He abode in them and stayed with them. Since His disciples were not always conscious of His presence, there was the need of His appearing. His coming in this verse was not an actual coming; it was an appearing of His presence. Before His death, the Lord's presence was visible in the flesh. After His resurrection, the Lord's presence is invisible in the Spirit. His manifestations or appearances after His resurrection were to train the disciples to realize, to enjoy, and to practice His invisible presence, which is more available, prevailing, precious, rich, and real than His visible presence. This dear presence of His is just the Spirit in His resurrection whom He has breathed into the disciples and who will be with them all the time.

DEALING WITH THE UNBELIEVING DISCIPLE

In [John 20:27](#) the Lord said to Thomas, “Bring

your finger here and see My hands, and bring your hand and put it into My side, and be not unbelieving, but believing.” Because Thomas had missed the first meeting with the Lord in resurrection, he had become very backward. Now the Lord appeared to deal with this unbelieving disciple by pointing to the prints of His death remaining in His resurrected body. I do not know how the prints of His death could still remain in His resurrected body. Although Thomas had become the most backward, after the second meeting of the church, Thomas became the first, for it was he who said, “My Lord and my God!” ([20:28](#)). Thomas was the first to recognize that the Son of Man is the Lord ([Acts 2:36](#); [10:36](#); [Rom. 14:9](#); [10:12-13](#); [1 Cor. 12:3](#); [2 Cor. 4:5](#); [Phil. 2:11](#)) and God ([John 1:1-2](#); [5:17-18](#); [10:30-33](#); [Rom. 9:5](#); [Phil. 2:6](#); [1 John 5:20](#)). Thomas was not only the first to realize that the Son of Man is the Lord and God; he was also the first to declare that Jesus is the Lord and the very God.

TRAINING THE DISCIPLES

In [John 20:29](#) the Lord said to Thomas, “Because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.” The Lord not only appeared to deal

with the unbelief of Thomas but also to train the disciples to believe without seeing. The Lord was training them to practice His invisible presence. Because the Lord's presence in resurrection today is not a visible presence but rather an invisible presence, we must believe without seeing. If we expect to see before we believe, we are wrong. We must practice believing without seeing because the Lord's presence now is not like it was when He was in the flesh. That was His visible presence. Now that His presence is invisible, we must exercise our faith to realize it. Although we cannot see Him, we have the assurance that He is with us. According to [Acts 1:3-4](#), the Lord stayed with the disciples for forty days to train them to realize and to practice His invisible presence.

THE PURPOSE OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Verses 30 and 31 of John chapter twenty say, “Many other signs therefore Jesus did before His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” These verses indicate that the purpose of John’s Gospel is to testify that Jesus is the Christ ([1:41](#); [4:25, 29](#); [7:41-42](#); [Matt. 16:16](#); [Luke 2:11](#)) and the Son of

God (John 1:34, 49; 9:35; 10:36; Matt. 16:16; Luke 1:35). Together with John 21:25, these verses affirm that this Gospel is the record of a selection of things that serve the purpose of testifying to the matter of life and building.

The Christ is the title of the Lord according to His office, His mission. The Son of God is His title according to His Person. His Person is a matter of God's life, and His mission is a matter of God's work. He is the Son of God to be the Christ of God. He works for God by the life of God that men also, by believing in Him, may have God's life to become God's many sons and to work by God's life to build the corporate Christ (1 Cor. 12:12), thus fulfilling God's purpose of His eternal building.

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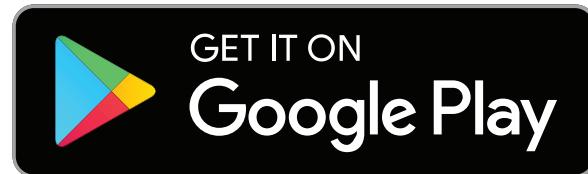
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