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## JOHN 20:1-10

John Series: Get a Life in Jesus

[PRAYER] Lord, teach us what it means to come to you with a childlike faith. Teach us how to respond to you with trust and also commitment. We thank you for your work in our lives and we thank you for faithful people who serve you. We thank you for the privilege of being part of a church. We're grateful. Now Lord, we're going to look at your word and as we do you would teach us and equip us for this week. Use your word to change our hearts today. We ask in Jesus' name, amen.

I want to welcome Pastor Ted. He's here from Tennessee. Welcome, Pastor Ted. Thank you for joining us today.

Soon after we finish the gospel of John, we're going into the book of Nehemiah. So this is your assignment: Read the book of Nehemiah in advance and you'll be ready for some of the life lessons we're going to learn as we go verse by verse through the book of Nehemiah.

But today we're continuing into the end of the gospel of John, studying about Christ's life. And each time now as we've gone through the crucifixion, we've looked at a passage of scripture outside of the gospels that use the crucifixion story as their basis for something. We've used that in a way that allows us to see how practical the crucifixion is for our daily lives.

For example last week we looked at Peter who was using Christ as the example for our current suffering, unjust suffering. And then we read the story in John about that. But we recognize that the crucifixion itself is very practical for us to know, not just theologically, but practically in our lives and how to apply it there as well.

Now we're going to start with the resurrection story. Again, I want to do the same thing. I want to look at a passage of scripture outside of the gospels first where one of the writers takes the idea or this truth about the resurrection and develops it somehow into the practical parts of our lives. I think that's going to help us then take this into our own hearts and lives as well.

So I'm going to take you to Paul's writing in Ephesians 1:18-21 and I want to ask that you stand with me in honor of God's word. If you brought your Bible, please open it up and you can follow along. I encourage you to have your own Bible and maybe mark on the sides notes that you have as kind of your journal, your spiritual tracking so you know what things you're learning.

In Ephesians 1:18-21 it says these words: *I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know* (three things: number one) *the hope to which he has called you,*

(number two) *the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and (number three) his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.*

The power of Christ's resurrection affects us every day, every situation that we're involved in. I don't think we can make that connection well enough or often enough, so that's what we're going to try to do today. That's what Paul is praying for us. We're coming back to this verse, but let's go and look at the gospel itself.

You may be seated.

Well we studied the crucifixion of Christ and we saw that that took place on a Friday. Now we're going to look at Sunday morning. But before we do, let's just think about Saturday. Kind of a quiet day. I'm sure a very dark day. Mary lost her Son. Somewhere being consoled by John who was assigned by Jesus Himself to take care of Mary. Somewhere Caiaphas and Annas, the high priest and the father of the high priest that we talked about, it's the Sabbath for them, so they're likely enjoying family relationships and looking back on this week. This was sure a hard week for both of them. I wonder if Pilate and his wife were still arguing about whether Pilate should get involved with this person Jesus. Soldiers were probably cleaning their equipment, getting the blood off their equipment. Disciples, most of them scattered. But maybe staying together maybe a consolation of some kind. They didn't know Sunday was coming.

I know that some of you live in the Saturday of your life. There's some bad thing that happened on Friday, there's some bad thing that happened in your life, some traumatic event, some disappointment, some discouragement, something that's rather hopeless and despairing, and you feel like it's Saturday. Paul's prayer in that passage is, "Hey, I want to pray that your eyes of your heart will be enlightened, that you will know about these things that are there, these three things, that Sunday is coming."

I just want to encourage you today, if you're living in that place of despair and discouragement, you need to grab onto this sermon today that Paul is sharing in Ephesians 1, but also that we read in the gospel that Sunday is coming. And that Sunday is that blessed hope that we enjoy. It's that special place that we recognize that death has been conquered, that our despair turns to hope, and (as we saw last week) that our joy comes from mourning. There's something powerful in the midst of that that God wants us to understand.

The Sunday morning was a surprise for the people, obviously. No one knew it was coming. It was just a very dramatic surprise. So we read that it starts early in the morning in John 20. *Early on the first day of the week...* That would be Sunday early in the morning. Now that's relative early morning. I know that some of you early morning is a little later than other people. Good morning is somewhat of an oxymoron for some. A good morning is staying in bed longer for a lot of people. So we have it defined here for us a little bit more. It says – *Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark.* So I did a Google search this week. About what time does it get light in Jerusalem in the springtime? About 6:30 in the morning. So still dark. So sometime, 6,

5:30, something like this we have this scene opening up of the Sunday morning and the surprise starts to take place.

*Mary Magdalene went to the tomb.* Now Mary Magdalene was with Christ at the cross. She probably followed them and knew where the tomb was, so she's coming there first thing in the morning. Matthew tells us, by the way, that there was an earthquake in the morning when the angel came and opened the tomb and the stone was rolled away. There was an earthquake. I wonder if the earthquake is what awoke her. I wonder if she couldn't go back to sleep so she decided now she's going to go out to the tomb. And when she went to the tomb, *saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance.* That was quite a surprise. It's the first of many surprises on this day. Surprise! Jesus Christ is alive. Of course she doesn't know that. She doesn't know what's going on. All she sees is an empty tomb.

And when she sees the stone rolled away, she says, "I'm getting out of here," and she runs *to Simon Peter and the other disciple.* The other disciple is John. As we've seen all through the gospel, he refers to himself as either *the other disciple* or *the disciple whom Christ loved.* 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!"* So their idea here is that His body has been stolen.

*So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple* (that's John, who's writing these words) *outran Peter and reached the tomb first.* I have no idea why he wrote those words except to say he runs faster than Peter. So maybe there's a competition among these disciples, as we've seen along the way. But he wants you to know he's a faster runner than Peter.

*Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in.* Now that's important. I mean any Jewish person in their right mind would not go into a tomb because they would be ceremonially unclean. And the process of becoming ceremonially clean takes time, energy. You don't want to go through that if you don't have to. So you don't want to go into a place where a dead body is or where a dead body has been. So he's smart. He stops...unlike his friend.

We know Peter. He's rather impulsive. So notice what it says about Peter. *Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb.* Again, John's reporting this and wants us to know Peter just starts right in there. He goes inside of the tomb and *he saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.*

Now I just wanted to park on these verses for just a few minutes because there's some things here... You know the New Testament was written in the Greek language. And the word *saw* that you see over and over again. *Saw* in verse 1, verse 5 it says *he looked*, verse 6 it says he *saw the strips*, and then down here in verse 8 it says he *saw and believed* and then he *understood*. So I'm going to take those words and I want to show you because they're all four different Greek words that are used there that I think describes sometimes our spiritual pilgrimage. They describe our

experience as we come to know Christ more, understand the surprise of Christianity more, understand how it applies to our lives.

So I've underlined this word *looked* which is the same one as in verse 1. You see the word *saw* up there? That's the word *blepo*. It's the common word for seeing. If you see an eye chart 20/20, it's just that you can see. It's the physical ability to see, which Kathleen appreciates. She just got her sight back in her right eye a couple weeks ago through surgery and that's the sight we're talking about.

Now some people, that's how they live every day. They're just thinking about what they can see. They don't have an idea about a spiritual plane, it's just the physical plane that they're on. And on that physical plane they're just thinking about the next thing, the next level of their video game, their next class they're going to go to. They're thinking about the next episode that's going to come out, or they're thinking about what they're going to eat, or they're going to pay their bills, and then they're going to be able to go to bed. I mean we just got through the day. That's what it looks like. That's the first word. It's just the common looking. *Blepo*.

Then we come to the next word and I underlined it here, the word *saw*. This is an interesting word. Well the word is *theoreo*, which is where we get our word 'theater' (where someone is putting on a demonstration to give us an idea) or we get our word 'theory' from. A theory is more than just looking at the evidence. It's taking it and turning it into an idea. That's what's happening here. If you notice what's happening, is that Peter went in the tomb, he saw the strips of linen there as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head.

Now that ought to get you thinking. I mean if you think the body was stolen, as was suggested by Mary, and then you come and you find the graveclothes still there, you've got to think something's wrong with this picture. Because nobody is going to steal a body and leave the graveclothes. It would be too gross. So they're not going to do that. So here we have graveclothes there, so he's starting to think. He's starting to move up in his thinking to another level.

This is fascinating when it comes to, I think, our spiritual lives because we as Christians start thinking on a new level. Sometimes when a person is coming to Christ, they really don't know Christ yet, but they're starting to think, "Hey, I'm going to visit a church," or "I'm going to read the Bible." They start moving to another level and they start saying, "There must be something here. I'm going to check this out. Life doesn't make a lot of sense on this physical level. I want to see what the spiritual level is like." So that's kind of what it's like here. Peter's going to this next level and he's got this theory, shall we say. It's just moving forward. What's going on? He does not know, as we see in the last verse. He does not understand fully yet, but this idea is that he's got this theory. Something's moving forward for him.

The next word, as you see down here I've underlined it down in verse 8 – *he saw and believed*. This is John now. *Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in. He saw and believed*. This is *horao*. The idea of this perception that's taking place. Oh I get it. Oh He said He was going to rise. Oh He's alive? It's starting to come into the picture here and he's going whoa!

As I'm pondering this this week in my own study, I'm thinking man, this must have been something because sometimes we have a surprise and it takes our brain a little bit of time to catch up. I don't know if that's happened to you.

I remember when I was sixteen there was a surprise birthday party for me. Now my birthday is in June. But this surprise birthday was in November. My mom tells the story that I was too busy in June to have a party and she couldn't work it out in my schedule, so she planned this party in November. So I'm coming in from the garage out of the car and I walk into the house and all of a sudden all these people are there yelling, "Surprise!" A lot of my friends, "Surprise!" Now it takes a few moments for a brain to hear the word 'surprise' and to figure out what's going on here. I walk in there and first of all I'm wondering, "Why are all these people in this room, many of them my friends. Why are they yelling at me and what's the surprise? It's not my birthday." So I'm figuring out what's going on here and then they yell, "Happy birthday!" and my mom explains to me it's your birthday party for being sixteen that we didn't do back in June when your birthday was. But I remember it just took time for my brain to catch up to what was happening.

I'm sure you've experienced some kind of a surprise like that. The brain just takes a while. It's so disoriented trying to figure out what's going on. That's what I imagine is happening in the other disciple's mind. He finally comes to this place and says, "Oh I get it. Oh I believe." He believes something.

But then I'm going what's the next statement for? If he believes, I get the impression he must have figured it all out. It's all clear now. But the next statement (this is another Greek word), this is the word *understand*. *They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead*. This is the word *ginosko*. It's a word about experiential knowledge. It's the word that's used about a man knew a woman and as a result a child came. That's real experiential knowledge. Okay? So this is the idea of experiential knowledge that oh I see what this means. I understand this and it makes sense and I know how to apply this to my life.

I'm not sure all of us are to that place yet, or any of us are to that place yet. That's where I feel I'm still at that place where I believe, I see, I believe, but I'm still trying to apply God's word to my life and understand how it fits into all the daily things of who I am and what I'm doing.

This event of running there to the tomb, seeing the open tomb with the stone rolled away, Peter barges right in there just changed his life I'm convinced. He wrote two books of the Bible, Peter. Let's go to one of them. Here's what he says as he introduces his book. He greets everybody in verse 1 and 2 and then in verse 3 he says this: *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*. That's how he starts his book. Wow.

This is the verse, by the way, that we named our church after. Calvary Chapel Living Hope. This is our key verse. *He's given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*.

It changed Peter's whole outlook. And he's going to talk to them about suffering, as we talked about last week. He talked about all these different things about the believers who are being persecuted all over. So Peter is writing to them to encourage them about the hope that they have. Why do they have hope? Because Jesus Christ rose from the dead.

Now let's take that and let's go to Paul and see what he has to say. Because as Paul is writing, he says these words: *I pray that the eyes of your heart...* Not just the eyes that see physically, not just the eyes that tell your brain to perceive something, but the eyes of your heart. This is the place where you make decisions. This is the place where you feel things. This is where your desires are. This is the place where it all makes sense. It all comes together inside of the heart and so Paul is praying for this.

*That the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know (three things) the hope to which he has called you.* The human heart needs hope. You know that when you're discouraged or you're despairing, when the problems and challenges of life feel overwhelming, when things just feel so mundane you don't feel like you have purpose and meaning, there's hope. There's this hope that comes to us. Paul is praying for these people that they would understand this hope, that it would make sense for them.

The second thing he prays for is that *the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people.* The riches. There's this richness about the saints and being with them. There's nothing like being physically present with other believers. Okay, you can watch TV. There are great preachers on TV. You can listen to the radio, listen to podcasts. There's great insight that we can gain from those. You can listen to worship music...well I don't know if it's as good as here, but there's really good music that you can listen to on your worship station. But there's nothing like being together with the people of God. There's a richness involved in that. It's just beautiful. It's just a treasure.

This week I went to Canada because my aunt passed away. So I went there to do the funeral. She's 98 years old. Aunt Annie. When you're 98 years old, you've outlived most of your friends. So we expected 6-10 people to be at the funeral, just the family members that were there. And 30 people came. That was a big crowd, much more than we expected.

I was intrigued and fascinated by the people who came. You see, my aunt was a Christian and she loved the Lord. And the first person who came into the door an hour early for the funeral, she's about 50 years old. I said, "Well how do you know my Aunt Annie?"

She says, "I was in her Sunday school class."

I'm going, "In her Sunday school class?"

"Yes, she taught my Sunday school class." My Aunt Annie loved children.

So more people came in. As they came in, three ladies (older ladies) came in. They weren't all together. They came in at different times, but three of them were Sunday school teachers with her. She taught Sunday school for 30-40 years and made an impact on those children and those other teachers. I can just imagine what that was like. So to hear their stories was just really fun.

And then there was another family that drove over from the United States seeing that there was the funeral and so they drove to Windsor, Ontario, Canada because they saw that she had passed away and they wanted to be at the funeral. This family escaped Czechoslovakia years ago under Communist rule, came to Canada, and went to church, and met my aunt and built a relationship. They weren't a family. They were a couple and they loved her. So when they had their two children then those children were the god-children of my aunt. So she became the godmother of these two children.

So one of the girls stood up, this young lady, about 30 years old now stood up and said, "I remember she had all these boxes in her basement and she would put the things in them to send off." It's the same thing we do. It's the Samaritan's Purse shoeboxes. Have any of you done the shoebox thing? Well she did 100 of them every year. Over the course of her life she wrote she did 3,000 shoeboxes personally. She loved children, so she would gather the things, put them in the shoeboxes. Of course they would take them to church, and then from church they would take them to the distribution center, and the distribution center would send them all over the world. My aunt did 3,000 of them herself. That was just amazing to me.

You know it was fun for me at that funeral to enjoy the riches of God's saints, His holy people, this inheritance, this ability to be with people. There's nothing like being physically present with Christians. When you're with them it just does something to you. Paul is praying that people would understand these riches that we have, this inheritance that we have with God's holy people.

And then lastly (and here's where it ties into the resurrection) he says – *and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead.* That's a big power. He's saying that power is available to you and me. It's available to us when we're struggling to make it through the day. It's available to us when we're struggling to overcome an addiction. It's a power that's available to us when we're in a difficult relationship. It's a power that gets us up in the morning and continues when we feel like quitting. This is a power that is practical, it's relevant, and it's something that we can take into our lives and enjoy. Paul is praying for that for you and me. He's praying that we would enjoy this and understand it.

I just think that we've got to think about the resurrection in practical terms because it wasn't just a historical event, it's a practical power that God wants us to experience in our lives. I think life is pretty hard sometimes and we face challenges regularly. We don't face them alone. We have the home that comes from our calling. We're surrounded by saints that provide us that riches that we enjoy and we have this power of Christ's resurrection in our lives. That is a statement that... Well I didn't want to go past verse 10 because I think we just need to meditate on that idea ourselves to understand more of what that looks like for each of us.

You know I think we often experience this challenge of these words and trying to move ourselves from just seeing the mundane in our lives to coming to this place of really understanding. And that's where God has us spiritually. We're growing. We're coming to be the people that God wants us to be so that we can enjoy the things that He wants for us. So the

prayer that Paul has I think is a prayer for each one of us that we can enjoy and benefit from and that's why it's included in His word.

Some time ago in the afternoon I had something in my eye and it was painful. I knew enough not to rub my eye. I tried to flush it out with water. I couldn't get anything. My eye was so painful, I couldn't even look at my computer screen. I just shut my eyes, lay on the couch, and wait for it to heal. I figure I had scratched my eye because the pain wasn't going anywhere, it was just in one place not moving around. I couldn't move it. I couldn't do anything. So I just laid there on the couch and ended up going to bed early and I'll just sleep this thing off and by the morning the scratch would heal.

But in the morning the pain was exactly the same and I knew something was wrong then. So I went to my computer kind of squinting and finding the ophthalmologist's phone number. I called them and they told me to come in. So my wife drove me into the office and I shared my story with them. The doctor said, "Let me look in your eye." She looks in my eye, "I don't see anything there." She says, "Well let me flip your eyelid back." So she flips it back. She says, "Oh there it is. There's a piece of metal in there." She reaches in there, pulls that out, puts my eye down. I was fine! I didn't have any problem. I was instantly healed (thank you to this great doctor and her perception).

I think sometimes when you come to Christ there's instant healing and no longer do you have that desire for doing the wrong thing. And now that your desires have changed it's kind of an instant response. There's other times when it's a lot slower. We wish it would be instant, but God calls it sanctification. It's a process of movement slowly in our lives and He moves us in this direction of greater understanding, greater appreciation of the power. I want to encourage you today to embrace that power in your life this week. Enjoy what God wants to do inside of your heart as you go forward with Him. Okay?

Stand with me. Let's pray together.

[PRAYER] Lord, I'm praying for myself and for my brothers and sisters here that you would empower us with your understanding. Give us a greater understanding of the resurrection and what it means for our lives specifically. Lord, I pray for those who are here today who may not know you as their personal Savior. I pray that you would give them an attraction to see things on a spiritual level and to understand who you are in a new way. Lord, guide us all. We're trying to follow you and live in this world in a way that can move us forward. We ask that you would teach us today, empower us, give us understand to know you better. We trust you, Lord. In Jesus' name, amen.