

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for November 23, 2008

The One Who Conquered Death
John 20:19-23
Dale Whitehead

The apostle John manifests Christ's complete and total mastery over death in three different ways in John 19:30-20:31. Christ's mastery over death was manifested in His dying (John 19:30-37). Christ's mastery over death was manifested in His burial (John 19:38-42). Christ's mastery over death was manifested in His resurrection (John 20:1-31).

The first exhibit that John presented to support the resurrection was the empty tomb (John 20:1-10). The second exhibit was eyewitness accounts (John 20:11-31).

The first eyewitness account was Mary Magdalene's (John 20:11-18). The second eyewitness account was Christ's disciples with Thomas absent (John 20:19-24).

In John 20:18 we see Mary Magdalene after her encounter with Christ going and telling His disciples that she had seen Christ alive.

The other women who had been told by the two angels that Christ had risen, also subsequently encountered Christ and later told the disciples they had seen Him alive (Matthew 28:8-10).

Though Mary Magdalene and the other women had told the disciples they had seen Christ alive, the disciples thought they were talking nonsense (Luke 24:11).

The apostle in John 20:19 tells us that Christ, in the evening on the first day of the week, suddenly appeared in the midst of His disciples while the doors were shut.

John tells us that the doors were shut in order to communicate the supernatural nature of Christ's appearance in the midst of His disciples (John 20:19).

Christ showed His disciples both His hands and His side in John 20:20 in order to reassure them that He was not simply a spirit of, in other words, a ghost (Luke 24:36-43).

After Christ showed the disciples His hands, feet and side and after He ate a piece of broiled fish, the disciples, being convinced that He was alive, rejoiced (Luke 24:38-43).

Jesus, after having convinced His disciples that He was in fact alive, went on to emphasize the mission on which He was about to send them (John 20:21-23).

He highlighted their mission by simply declaring it (John 20:21).

When Christ told His disciples that He was sending them He meant He was sending them with His gospel into the world in order to make disciples (Matthew 28:19-20).

He highlighted their mission by speaking to them of His provision for it (John 20:22).

Without the provision of the holy spirit we, as the disciples of Christ, would not be able to carry out our mission (Acts 1:8).

Christ did not immediately give to His disciples the Holy Spirit but rather He prophetically communicated to His disciples through His words and actions in John 20:22 that He shortly would (Acts 2:1-4).

He highlighted their mission by speaking of the authority He would entrust to them to pronounce certain judgments when presenting the gospel (John 20:23).

Jesus, in John 20:23, is telling His disciples that they, based on the authority of God's Word, can declare a person saved or unsaved based on how that person responds to the gospel.

May God give us the grace to understand, based on the promise of Christ and His complete mastery over death, that even if we die, we will live again.