

John Chapter 20 v 19 - 31

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[0 : 00] 33. This passage is the end of the story about the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, Cleopas and someone else, and we find that their eyes were opened to the risen Lord, and in verse 33, that's Luke 24, verse 33, we read this. They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem, and there they found the eleven and those with them assembled together and saying, it is true, the Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon. Then the two told what had happened on the way and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread. While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, peace be with you. They were startled and frightened, thinking this old ghost. He said to them, why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself. Touch me and see. A ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see I have. When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet, and while they still do not believe, because of joy and amazement, he asked them, do you have anything here to eat? They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence. He said to them, this is what I told you while I was with you. Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms. Then he opened their minds so they could understand the scriptures. He told them, this is what is written, that Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

And we'll leave that there and turn over to John chapter 20. John chapter 20 and verse 24.

So this is really the consecutive continuation of what we've just been reading. John 20 verse 24.

Now Thomas called Didymus, one of the twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. When the other disciples told him that they had seen the Lord, he declared, 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 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. 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. And Thomas said to him, my Lord and my God. Then Jesus told him, because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 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. Amen.

Amen. Please be seated, as you are. Let's just come to the Lord in prayer. Let's ask his blessing upon the word. Oh, Holy Spirit, we pray for your blessing upon this, your word this evening.

[4 : 24] Lord, we can read your word and it can mean nothing to us at times, just words and familiar stories. And it's only when your Holy Spirit is given and comes and enlightens our minds and warms our hearts that we can understand the things that are written in this book. So we pray that you'll help us, Lord. We pray that, Holy Spirit, you will come as our old prophetic fire and that you will burn in our hearts, that you will melt our hearts, that you will move us by the quickening of your Holy Spirit.

And you will come and bless us. And we may know that blessing and that unity and oneness that we experience when you, O Lord, are with us in the power of the Holy Spirit. So please come, we pray, for the glory of your name. Amen.

We're going to be largely looking in John chapter 20 this evening. And I'll entitle the sermon, Seeing is Believing. And I'm going to prove to you tonight that believing is, that the opposite is true. But we live in a world where seeing is believing. It's the foundation, as we heard this morning, of modern day science, that you can prove anything and everything through science. Ultimately, we'll be clever enough and have computers big enough to do that for us. And scientific investigation through the reason and logic will solve all mysteries. Even the mystery of life will be solved scientifically. It's going to happen, folks, because the desire to understand life and to discover the origin of life is so inbuilt amongst men. And so what we do is we build a 17-mile circular hadron collider to discover, or maybe not discover, the Higgs-Boson particle, which is meant to be something that was there at the very beginning of time when the Big Bang happened.

Scientists are now saying they don't think the Big Bang is happening. It didn't actually happen like that. But we got a hadron collider, and we're after the Higgs-Boson particle, and we spent 10 million, sorry, 10 billion pounds trying to make this thing work. And it's taken 30 years to build it. I can remember 30 years ago selling computers to the CERN laboratories so that they could, as they were starting the work on what is now known as the Hadron Collider. It's taken a lifetime to build this huge underground donut where they're going to whistle particles around and hopefully discover something about life.

And that's the only way we're going to do it, folks, because seeing is believing, and faith is actually a bit debunked, isn't it? And the premise is that faith is not reasonable. Science is, logic is, is reasonable. You can work it out. You've got one, two, three, four, five, six, seven steps, and there you are. But faith is not reasonable. And you can't believe in the resurrection because that is naive because it doesn't happen. We've been around long enough to know that resurrection doesn't happen. When you're dead, you're dead. And that was the first problem that the early church faced. And it's a problem that faces us now is the skepticism around the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. And that's what we had this morning, wasn't it? But he is indeed risen from the grave.

[8 : 41] Now, sad old Thomas, we all know Thomas, don't we? Sad old Thomas, well, he missed the demo, didn't he? He missed the demo. And we don't know why he did, but he was not there when the Lord first appeared to the disciples. But the disciples had a big problem. The big problem was addressed by the words of the Lord. And he said to them, why are you troubled and why do doubts arise in your mind?

Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself. Touch me and see. A ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see I have. So the early disciples on that first appearance, on that first ascension day, saw the Lord and they were troubled and they just couldn't believe it.

They, poor old Thomas is sad because he'd had a whole week to work this out, hadn't he? We read in Luke chapter, in John chapter 20 verse 35 that it was the next, that he comes and he appears a week later. He's had a whole week to work it out, hasn't he? He's had all these, you know, excited people, men and women saying we see the Lord and he wasn't there. And well, he's right, isn't he? You know, it can't have happened. So Thomas has gone down in history as a great skeptic, hasn't he? But let's not be too hard on him because the Lord was not too hard on him because not only was it sad because he missed the demo, but he was also blessed because they had a personal demonstration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus does not rebuke him. It's interesting, isn't it? What he says, he instructs him and says, well, look at my, use your eyes, use your hands and touch me and use your mind and think about what you're seeing because I truly am risen from the grave. And so the main point of this evening and the passage I want to look at is in fact in verse 29 of chapter 20 of John, John 20, 29. Then Jesus told him, because you have seen me, you have believed, blessed are those who have not seen and have yet believed. It's counterintuitive, isn't it?

Seeing is believing, but blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe. And that's what I want us to look at as we go through this passage this evening. The disciples were not 30 years in the making, like the Hadron Collider. There were three years in the making and they were an important part of the testimony that Jesus was going to leave behind. A mixed crew, as we all know, some wealthy, some poor, some clever, some not so clever. But they were, each one of them, they were eyewitnesses.

And their eyewitness accounts of Jesus and the things he said and the things he did were actually vital in the proclamation of the gospel. They had to be able to say, we saw him do that. Or we heard him say that. Or he touched that person. Or he walked this way.

[12:22] They were eyewitnesses accounts. They became the eyewitnesses of the early church. But their eyewitness accounts were limited. They were only there with the Lord for three years. Then the Lord dies, he rises from the dead. Forty days later, he ascends into heaven. That's the last they see of him.

So the account is limited. So the Lord wanted to make an impression on their mind. Because as eyewitnesses, what they witnessed were transitional things. They were never meant to be permanent.

The Lord Jesus was never meant to be there with them all the time. Just those three years. And the reason they're transitional is because sight had to be replaced with faith. That's really important. Their sight, the things that they saw, the things that they were eyewitnesses to had to be replaced by something far stronger and far more dependable. And that was faith. And so faith actually becomes our hadron collider against modern science. Because modern science says faith is not reasonable.

And what we're going to see this evening is that faith is reasonable. In fact, the only thing that is true and solid and foundational and unmovable is in fact the faith that comes through understanding the gospel. So what I want to do tonight is to look at John 20. John 20 verse 29. The verse that we just read, because you have seen me, you have believed. Bless are those who have not seen me and you have yet believed. And I want to show three things. The first two are really sort of clearing the rubbish out of the way. The first thing is it was a blessing to have seen Jesus. You might read that and come away with the impression, well, it doesn't matter. Well, it does matter. It was a blessing to have seen Jesus.

And the second thing I want to clear out the way is that seeing Jesus does not always bring a blessing. And that's quite important as well. And then the third thing I want to show is that believing is seeing. Not seeing is believing, but believing is seeing. And I might get that the wrong way around at some stage tonight. But believing is seeing. That's what I want to show this evening. It's reversing, as it were, the Hadron Collider. So let's have a look at that first thing, which is, I mentioned, was that it was a blessing to have seen Jesus. A blessing to have seen Jesus. And I want to give two reasons why it was a blessing to see Jesus. And just to help us all, what I want to do is I want to put some scriptures up on the board here, on the back here. Seeing is believing.

[15:16] Or believing is, well, we'll see, won't we? And what I want to do is to look at the first reason. The first reason is that to see Jesus was a blessing is because Jesus said that himself. And he, he said this in more than one occasion. Here he says in Matthew 13, but blessed are your eyes, because they see, and your ears, because they hear. For truly, I tell you, many prophets and righteous people long to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it. And that is right in the middle of the parable of the sower. And it's right after Jesus had quoted Isaiah, where he says, you have ears that you can be ever hearing, and having eyes, but never seeing. So what he's saying is that the reason why you don't understand these things is because you don't have spiritual insight. But blessed are your eyes to his disciples. Blessed are your eyes, because they see. Now the next scripture is Luke 10, which is almost identical, almost word for word.

Then he turned to his disciples and said privately, blessed are the eyes that see what you see, for I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you did not see, and to hear what you did not hear. So the, it was a blessing to see Jesus, because Jesus said he was. And he said, if you've seen me, you've been really blessed. And we can look back at those times when he walked this earth. And what would we not give to have a sight of the Savior? And it's not wrong to think like that.

But the point is, that's past, by and large, and until he returns. But for the disciples, that was really important. Now the next reason is that it was a testimony of the disciples as well. So they were blessed, and they recognized the blessing. Here we have John in his first letter, and he's writing, and he's recapping many years after the resurrection and the ascension. And he's saying, that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at, and our hands have touched, this we proclaim concerning the word of life. The life appeared, and we have seen it, and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father, and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ. You know, he's touched, and he's handled. And this was important to him. He was able to say, and make that, and write it in a letter which we have today, to say, look, I've touched and handled. I've seen and heard. I know what I'm talking about. As an eyewitness account, it was vital. We also see that it was a testimony of the disciples, because they saw his glory. And this is the amount of transfiguration. While he was still speaking, a bright crowd covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, this is my Son, whom I love. With him I am well pleased. And at the very bottom there, it says that Jesus instructed them, don't tell anyone what you've seen until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead. But when the

Son of Man was raised from the dead, what does Peter do? Well, Peter says this, for we did not follow cleverly devised tales, where we made known to the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to him by the majestic glory, this is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased. And we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with him on the holy mount. And that is, you know, the witness of the Lord Jesus Christ and the witness of the disciples regarding the blessedness of seeing Jesus is very, very foundational. Jesus was a real person, and he had real friends and real people with whom he associated with. And the reason for that is that the way we were going to become essential witnesses of the resurrection and the life of the

Lord Jesus Christ. Now, it says in Deuteronomy and verse 19, sorry, chapter 19 and verse 15, it says this, one witness is not enough to convict a man accused of any crime or offense, or he may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.

[20 : 27] So in the case of murder, and Jesus was murdered, there had to be at least two or three witnesses called to testify to that very act. And that is the reason why. And that is why we read as as we look and go through Acts. We saw it this morning, and we're seeing it now. This is Peter again. God raises Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. You killed the author of life. You murdered the author of life. But God raised him from the dead, and we are witnesses of this. See, it's important to fulfill the Old Testament law of two or three witnesses. They were up there, James and John, and they were saying, we are witnesses. We saw this happen. And so it's really important. So there's blessing, blessing that comes through that testimony of Jesus, blessing that comes through the testimony of the disciples, blessing that comes to us because it helps us to understand the foundation of our faith. So it was a blessing to have seen Jesus.

Now, the next thing I want to look at is that seeing Jesus does not always bring a blessing. Now, that might sort of amaze you a little bit. You think, well, anybody who sees Jesus would be blessed. But that's not so. And there are many, many examples. The most obvious example of this is Judas Iscariot. Judas Iscariot was one of the 72 who went out and presumably performed miracles. Judas Iscariot was the man who, for maybe up to three years, was in the constant company of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was eating. He was walking. He was living with him. He was banking for him.

Judas was a very privileged person. He knew Jesus. He would be able to recognize him and say, that's Jesus. Whereas if Jesus walked through here, we wouldn't recognize him necessarily unless he revealed that to us. And yet it was his unbelief that brought him personal disaster. So Judas saw Jesus, but he never received a blessing through that association. In fact, Judas was probably dead before Jesus was. That's a shocking thought. But Judas probably did not last that day out. He committed suicide, as we know. The other thing is that the other person we can look at is Herod. We can look at Herod. Herod was somebody who wanted to see Jesus. Well, that's a good ambition to have, isn't it? I want to see Jesus. So here's Herod. Now, Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus, for he'd wanted to see him for a long time, because he had been hearing about him, and he was hoping to see him perform some sign or a miracle. And he questioned him at some length, but Jesus answered him nothing. So there's Herod, king Herod, the Tetrarch, in the present with Jesus as a prisoner before him.

And he wants to see him perform some miracle. And he questions him, and Jesus answers him, not a word. Herod never received any blessing. What about the chief priests? The chief priests, this is Luke chapter 23, verses 8 and 9. The next verse, verse 10, and the chief priests and scribes were standing there accusing him vehemently. The chief priests and scribes knew Jesus. They were familiar with him and familiar with his teaching. In fact, it was his teaching that caused them to want to murder him.

But they never knew a blessing. And then finally, Pilate, following on in verses 11 and 12, Herod with his soldiers, after treating him with contempt and mocking him, dressed him in a gorgeous robe and sent him back to Pilate. Now, Herod and Pilate became friends with one another that very day, and before they had been enemies. I mean, that's amazing, isn't it? There's three people in that short passage who met Jesus and never, ever received any blessing. So it was a blessing to have seen Jesus, but it doesn't mean to say that seeing Jesus is necessarily a blessing in and of itself.

[25 : 04] To be right with God requires more than simply seeing Jesus. What's going on here is going on all the time. Jesus is separating the goats from the sheep. He's separating those who believe and those who don't believe, those who have faith and those who don't have faith. Now, the main point I want to get to is this statement of Jesus. Let me just remind you again. Jesus told him, that's Thomas, because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.

Jesus is saying, believing is seeing. You could rephrase it and say, faith is sight. And what he does in this passage and the passage we read in Luke is that he gives us two hooks to hang our faith on. Two very, very important hooks. Or he gives us two hinges on which to hang a door on that enables us to enter into spiritual truth. And the first one is this. The first one is, believe the miracles. And the second one is believe the prophets. Believing is seeing. How do I see?

How do I believe? Well, believe the miracles. And the other one is believe the prophets. Believe the scriptures. Take a look back in John chapter 20 and have a look at verse 30 and 31. Let me read it to you. Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 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. So here we have Jesus doing many miraculous signs.

And there is a purpose behind that. The purpose is to authenticate his ministry. The purpose is to demonstrate that he was who he said he was. Thomas has just cried out, my Lord and my God. You can't get around that scripture. Jesus is God as well as man. Thomas has just said it. Jesus doesn't say, oh no, I think your theology is a little bit twisted there, Thomas. Let me just put you right.

No, Jesus accepts it as a true statement that Jesus is God. And Jesus spoke about the miracles and how they authenticated who he is. And that's the purpose, the main purpose of miracles is to understand who Jesus is. If we turn back to John chapter 10. John chapter 10 is part of the big argument that arises with the chief priests and the scribes at the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem. Jesus had just been saying that he is a shepherd of the sheep. He is a shepherd of the sheep. And he says this. He says, the Jews again picked up stones to stone him. But Jesus said to them, I have shown you many great miracles from the Father. For which of these do you stone me? I've shown you many great miracles.

[28 : 34] Why are you stoning me? And they go on and say, well, we're not stoning you for any of these, but for blasphemy because you were mere man, said that you're God. So here's a testament of Jesus through the miracles showing that he is God. And in just a few verses later on, Jesus says this, do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. This is John 10 verse 37. But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles that you may learn and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father. And the greatest miracle that we're talking about here is not as Lazarus was raised from the dead only to die again. But we're talking about the greatest miracle is the resurrection of the dead, the raising up of the Lord Jesus Christ into a wonderful body that we cannot really understand. The greatest miracle of Jesus being raised from the dead is to prove his power and his deity. Jesus is bigger than the Hadron Collider. You know, you might have something using, I've got some stats somewhere showing how many kilowatts of energy it uses. Well, Jesus is so much more powerful than that. Jesus is, through his resurrection, the greatest miracle worker ever.

So that's one hinge. Believe the miracles. Miracles are really important. There are not many miracles in the Bible. Check it out. Okay, there are just various times when they appear with Moses and then Elijah Elijah and Elijah and by and large there's just complete silence until you get to the New Testament.

And here you have more miracles than the whole of the rest of the Bible together. Authenticating Jesus. Believe the miracles. But the other hook, the other hinge in believing is seeing, in having spiritual sight, is believe the prophets. In Luke 24, to the two people on the Emmaus Road, Jesus says this in Luke 24, 25.

He said, he then said to them, he said, how foolish you are and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and enter into his glory?

And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the scriptures about himself. And we were looking at that in our home meeting during the week and there wasn't anybody there who said, gosh, didn't you want to be there when Jesus was opening up the scriptures? Of course you wanted to be there because it was the best Bible study ever. And beginning with Moses and the prophet, he explains to these two men what was going on. But the testament is the same to the disciples. When Jesus first appeared to them in Luke 24 and 44, he said to them, this is what I told you why I was still with you. Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets and the Psalms. So it's believe the miracles, but believe the prophets, believe the scriptures. Now science mocks faith, but believing is true and reasonable. Paul said that to Festus when he's before one of his trials, he said, you know, what I'm saying is true and reasonable.

[32 : 36] Believing in Jesus Christ is true and reasonable. Believing in the miracles is true and reasonable. Believing in the scriptures and fulfilled prophecy is true and reasonable. How can we prove that?

Well, let me give you a demonstration. Let's imagine, looking for my bit of paper here now, let's imagine that there are eight prophecies. Eight prophecies. We know that with Jesus there are about 300 prophecies about him. But let's just take eight. You know, a prophecy like that he would enter Jerusalem and a donkey. What do you think the odds of that being statistically? Well, I'll tell you.

It's about one in a hundred, right? Statistically. I don't know how you do this, but okay. Somebody worked it out. For Christ to be betrayed by a friend is about one in a thousand. For Christ to be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver is about one in a thousand, is one in a hundred thousand.

And although innocent, that Jesus kept silent at the trial is about one in a thousand. Statistically. The fact that Jesus was crucified, statistically, is about one in ten thousand. And if you take eight prophecies like that, and then you work out what the mathematical probability of those eight prophecies happening and occurring with a single, in a single person at a single moment, when these prophecies are across a whole span of time is ten to the power seventeen.

It shouldn't sound a lot, does it? But it's ten with seventeen zeros behind it. It is an enormous number. That's just eight prophecies. Ten to the power seventeen. How can I explain ten to the power seventeen?

[34 : 40] Well, you've got to imagine Texas, right? The state of Texas is the biggest state in the United States of America.

It's about three times the size of the United Kingdom. And you've got to imagine that the whole of Texas Texas is filled to about two feet, about that high, all over with silver dollars, right? Silver dollars.

Or if you want to bring it a bit closer to home, you could say, well, let's imagine, because the UK is a third of the size, that it's six feet of the whole of the UK filled with silver dollars.

And what you have to do is give one person one chance to find a specially marked silver dollar.

They can go anywhere they want to, anywhere across Texas, because they're only two feet deep in Texas, or across the UK and they're six feet deep. But you can go anywhere. It could be anywhere in that, from the top to the bottom, from Land's End to John O'Groats.

[35 : 51] Now, the only thing you don't have is a piece of information, is how big is the silver dollar? How big is the silver dollar? Well, I happen to have a silver dollar. I was preparing this and I thought, I think I've got a silver dollar somewhere.

So I went and searched it. That's a silver dollar. Looks like an old-fashioned crown for those of us old enough. So you've got to imagine that 10 to the power of 17 will fill the whole of Land's End to John O'Groats, six feet deep, and you've got one chance to find this one silver dollar.

That is the chances of eight prophecies coming true at one moment in time. Now, there are at least 48 prophecies directly associated with the death and the resurrection and the life of Jesus Christ.

There are about 300 all told. And the chances of that happening are just impossible. 10 to the power of 50 is considered to be an impossible thing.

So whilst the skeptic, the scientists will say, well, it's too big a number. It's too unlikely a chance. Therefore, we discount the resurrection.

[37 : 11] We discount the life of faith because the number is too big. Mathematically, it's beyond us. We turn that around and we say, no. It's because you've got eight prophecies or 48 prophecies or 300 prophecies, all of which have come true.

It's because we have this that we believe in a God beyond and outside of mathematics. A God who can bring the authentication of his word through fulfilled prophecy.

That's how important fulfilled prophecy is. Because God, over the whole of time, has been sowing his seed of his word and saying, well, here's another one.

You know, that he shall ride on a donkey, the colt of an ass. That he shall be crucified. That he will be marred more than any other man.

That Jesus himself will be lowly and humble. That Jesus himself will be a humble king. All these prophecies, all the way from Genesis, where it says that the seed of the woman is indeed the essence of the coming of Christ.

[38 : 26] And all these prophecies together compound into such a huge number that scientifically they are, mathematically, they are impossible. Well, it's because they're impossible that you can have faith.

Because you can't compute it. It's beyond computation. And the word of God can be trusted. And is that hinge, that hook that we have to believe.

Believe the prophets. Believe the miracles. Jesus said to Thomas, Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and have yet believed.

So we're amongst that company of people who have not seen Jesus. But what do we have? We have the life of Jesus in fulfilled miracles. We have the prophecy of the Old and the New Testament all coming together in the life of Jesus.

That's why we're blessed. That's why it's more blessed to have not seen and yet believe. Because we believe in the impossible. And yet the impossible is possible because of who God is and who Jesus is.

[39 : 41] So the resurrection, miraculous signs, the scripture, prophetic words uttered by the power of the Holy Spirit, 2 Timothy 3.16, are the bedrock of our faith.

And they are absolutely dependable and unchanging. But our need is to have our minds open just as the disciples needed their minds opening, didn't they?

And the two on the way to the city had their minds open so they could understand the scriptures. It's a spiritual work. It's an act of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

And it is the Holy Spirit who is the inspirer and the one who leads us into understanding these truths. At one level, faith is intangible.

We can't explain it. We can't explain faith. You know, you hear sometimes people will say, oh, I wish I had your faith. Well, you can't. My faith is my faith.

[40 : 42] What you need is faith, not in me or in anyone else. You have to have faith in Jesus Christ. And so at one level, faith is intangible. You can't quantify it or qualify it.

But for the Christian, it's a sure thing. For the Christian, it is absolute certainty. In Hebrews 11, it says this, Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

And by this, the ancients were commended for it. And so we have in Hebrews 11, the whole catalogue of people who live by faith.

And faith is reasonable. It's rational. Abraham reasoned that he was to kill Isaac, his son, with a knife. He reasoned that God would raise him from the dead.

Think about that. We have a believable faith, a rational faith, a faith that stands all the skepticism of modern science. And so the result of Hebrews 11 is this, Hebrews 12.1.

[41 : 46] Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith. So that's it. That's why it's more blessed not to have seen Jesus than to have been like Thomas, to have seen him.

But Thomas is moved from his skepticism and his disbelief to believing and saying, My Lord and my God. Thomas never was a changed man from that moment on.

And it gives us confidence that we, like those early disciples, can be witnesses. Witnesses because we know that what we read in the Word of God is true.

We can believe the prophets, the scriptures. We can believe the life of Jesus in the power of the miracles. And we can be his witnesses. And maybe witnesses like Thomas, because I'm sure Thomas made a really good witness.

[43 : 00] Come the revolution. Come the day when the Holy Spirit was given and poured out upon the church. So let's close there and let's sing our closing hymn, which is on the overheads.

It's a modern tune. It's O Church Arise and Put Your Armor On, which is the call for us to rise up and follow in the steps of those who've gone before.

Come the Lord. Come the Lord! Come the Lord. Come the Lord, first of all in who các a thousand years tiver.

Tis Christ the future of Rome, in the world of Christ the mountains. For now we can say that we are strong, in strength of all our children.

We shall obey the love to live, the summer is the devil's night.

[44 : 17] For now we know, and we shall surprise them, reaching out to those in darkness. Let's pray.

Oh, gracious God, we do long for that day when with Christ we shall stand in glory. But help us to see that in the meantime we are called to be witnesses.

We're called to be faithful and true. And we're called to trust your word and trust all that we read in your word. We pray that you will give us that boldness and strength against the sceptical world that stands opposed to the life of faith.

We pray that you'll give us that look towards you, Lord Jesus, in heaven itself. That we may be a people who are waiting for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ, coming in glory when every eye will see him.

But in the meantime we pray that you will come and bless us. Fill us with your Holy Spirit, Lord. Give us that grace that we need every moment of every day. So that your name might be glorified through us.

[45 : 34] And we may be powerful and effective witnesses. Let's say the grace together. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore.

Amen. Amen.