

## INTRODUCE

Well, if you have your Bibles, and I hope you do,

- please grab them and turn to John chapter 20.
- You can open a phone or a tablet to John 20,
- or you can use one of the hard-backed black bibles
  - under every single chair.
  - You'll find John 20 on page **906**.

## INTRODUCTION: TEBOW

On Sunday, January 8th, 2012

- the Denver Broncos were playing
- the Pittsburgh Steelers
- in the first game of the NFL playoffs,
  - the AFC Wild-Card game.

Denver had a 20-7 lead at the half,

- but the Steelers fought back in the second half
- to end regular time with a 23-23 tie, forcing overtime.

The Broncos' quarterback was none other than Tim Tebow...

- you remember Tebow?
  - Kneeling and all that...
- He was the great Christian hope for the Broncos.
  - before Russel Wilson...and we know how that's gone...

Well, I was at that game with one of our elders,

- and on the first play in overtime Tim Tebow dropped back,
- and threw a perfect pass deep down the middle
- to wide receiver Demaryius Thomas
- for an 80-yard touchdown.

And the stadium erupted!

- I mean, it was the most electric live sporting moment
- I have ever witnessed first-hand.

And I turned to Jon and screamed,

- *“ARE YOU SEEING THIS!?!”*

And then we went on to get crushed the next week

by the eventual Super Bowl winning Patriots...but whatever...it was wild!

## **INTRODUCTION: HARPER**

On Monday, June 1st, 2015 my wife gave birth to our daughter Harper.

- Harper was breech,
- so we had to have a planned cesarean section.
  - That meant there was no water breaking.
  - There was no waiting for labor.

I literally had an event in my Google Calendar which read...“Have Baby”

*“I guess we’ll do that today!”*

But at the pre-planned time, we got in the operating room.

- And I got to watch one of the most beautiful...
- and simultaneously disturbing things I’ve ever seen.

I watched them surgically remove my daughter from my wife.

- And I was in a bit of shock,
- but I think I said to Maryse,
- *“ARE YOU SEEING THIS?”*

And she’s like,

- *“Are you kidding!?!”*
- *Get back here and hold my hand.”*

## INTRODUCTION: JESUS

And the central claim of Christianity is that on a Sunday, 2000 years ago:

- a man who had been confirmed dead,
- got up out of a tomb,
- walked around,
- hung out with hundreds of his followers,
- ate with them,
- taught them,
- and then 40-days-later, ascended back to heaven.

This is what the disciples claimed happened,

- and if that claim is false,
  - then Christianity is just like every other religion...
  - it is one among many...
- but if it is true...
  - it changes everything!

I'm calling today's sermon: **SLIDE ARE YOU SEEING THIS?**

ARE YOU SEEING THIS?

- That's the phrase we say when we see something...
  - that's shocking,
  - or disturbing,
  - or too fantastical to believe!

An overhyped running back throwing a game winning pass...

- ARE YOU SEEING THIS?

A child miraculously coming into this world...

- ARE YOU SEEING THIS?

And it's an amazing thing

- that a Galileean carpenter from 2000-years-ago
- would bring people, like us, here in modern times
- to focus on his resurrection from the dead.

## TRANSITION

And so I want to ask that question of us today...

- thoughtful,
- modern,
- intelligent people...

ARE YOU SEEING THIS?

We're gonna talk about HOW we see the resurrection of Jesus.

So, let's get after it. John chapter 20, starting in verse 1:

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## JOHN 20:1-2a

[1] Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. [2] So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved,

## EXPLAIN: JOHN'S NICKNAME

Now, just real quick: if you're new to church and the Bible... there's some stuff that you're going to need to know real quick.

- There were 12 disciples, one of them was named John.
  - And John had a nickname.
  - His nickname was, *the one whom Jesus loved.*

- Now, the interesting thing is,
  - the only place John is called that is in,
    - you guessed it,
  - The Gospel of John,
  - written by?
    - John.

Yeah, so...take that however you want.

So, she ran to Simon Peter and John...

### JOHN 20:2b

and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him."

### EXPLAIN: MARY

Now, can we just stop right here?

Mary has been following Jesus for almost 3 years.

- She's heard him preach,
- she's heard him teach,
- she's seen him do miracles.

And for the last several chapters in the book of John,

- Jesus has said over and over and over,
  - *"I'm going to be handed over to the Jewish leaders,*
  - *and I'm going to be crucified,*
  - *but on the third day I'm going to rise again."*

But her initial assessment is, "Somebody stole the body!"

Which, listen, seems reasonable to me!

The stone was rolled away...

- And she doesn't know what's happening.
- She thinks someone has stolen Jesus.
- So, she runs to the disciples.

I point this out to say:

- Nobody...not even his closest followers...
- was expecting a resurrection like this!

## **EXPLAIN: WOMEN**

And just as an aside:

- the fact that the very first people...
  - to bear witness to Jesus' resurrection...
    - were women...
- lends a great deal of credibility to the veracity of this account.

Listen, we have historical records from the Roman Empire...  
criticizing the early Christian movement.

And part of why they thought it COULDN'T be true, was they said:

- *"How can you trust those irrational and emotional women*
- *to be witnesses to an event like this?"*

That's what the dominant Roman culture thought about women.

But Jesus treated women much differently!

Verse 3:

## **JOHN 20:3-4**

[3] So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. [4] Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first.

## EXPLAIN: RUNNING

So, John...

- the one whom Jesus loves...
- the writer of this book...

wants you to know that...

- not only, does Jesus like him a little better than everyone else,
  - but also, that he got there first!
    - He beat Peter to the tomb!

I mean, leave it to a dude to boast about his own athletic prowess

- while he's writing about the resurrection...
- of the only begotten Son of God.

Verse 5.

## JOHN 20:5

[5] And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in.

## POINT 1: GLANCE

So, while John gets there faster, he certainly isn't braver,

- cause he just pokes his head in...
- and he's like, "Nah...I ain't going in that tomb."

But it's interesting, the Greek word here for "he saw" is *blepō* (blep'-o).

ARE YOU SEEING THIS?

Well, it's the first way, in this text, of seeing Jesus.

- *blepō* is literally a **SLIDE GLANCE**

John GLANCES with his eyes...but he doesn't go any deeper.

- He sees...
- but he stops.
  - He doesn't go in.
- It's just a GLANCE.

And listen, this is how many today see Jesus.

- They SEE that something happened back then.
- They GLANCE at it.
  - But then they move on because they're not interested...
  - or they just write it off before ever digging deeper.

## APPLICATION

Some who GLANCE at Jesus say things like:

- *"Good for you if this is meaningful for you..."*
- *but we know these are really just simple myths*
- *from a pre-scientific era.*
- *People don't rise from the dead."*

And they chalk this up to fiction, rather than history.

*"Isn't all this just a bit too childish?"*

And maybe this is how you are seeing Jesus.

- You've GLANCED at him,
- and made some sort of judgment,
  - but if you're really honest,
  - you haven't really gone much deeper than that.

So, to the question of, ARE YOU SEEING THIS?

- You can say, *"yeah, and it's just not my cup of tea."*



And if that's you today, I just want to encourage you with this:

- it's worth taking a deeper look.

For all our progress and education and development...

over the last 20-centuries...

the world is just as broken as it's ever been.

- Depression and anxiety are at all time highs...
- addiction and substance abuse are astronomical...
  - suicide...
  - mass shootings...
  - political unrest...

I mean, for a world that was supposed to be on an upward trajectory...

things seem awfully uncertain.

## TRANSITION

So, maybe Jesus is worth more than a GLANCE.

ARE YOU SEEING THIS?

That's the first way of seeing Jesus in this text: the GLANCE.

Verse 6:

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## JOHN 20:6-7

[6] Then Simon Peter came, following him,

- Just another little jab at Peter here...
  - "Don't forget, he was following me..."
- Just a little flex from John.

For a second time he wants you to know he got there first!

[6] Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, [7] and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself.

## POINT 2: CONSIDER

Now, this is the second way of seeing Jesus.

- Peter saw the cloths...
  - And what's fascinating is that
  - it's an entirely different Greek word than *blepō*.
- The Greek here is *theōreō* (teh-o-reh'-o),
- and it's where we get our word: to theorize.

So, if *blepō* was a GLANCE.

Then *theōreō* is to **SLIDE CONSIDER**

- Peter considered what was going on.
    - There was a wrestling with...
    - and an attempt to make sense of...
    - what was going on.
- ARE YOU SEEING THIS?

This is the question that Peter is CONSIDERING...theorizing about.

## EXPLAIN: BURIALS

Now, burials in those days followed many different traditions.

- Egyptians were famous for embalming bodies.
- The Greco-Romans were known to cremate their dead.

But the Israelites...

- would wrap the body in pounds of linen and spices.
- And they would lay the body face up, not in a coffin,
- but on a bench in a tomb.

## **EXPLAIN: PETER CONSIDERS**

And Peter goes in and SEES...

- the cloths are there,
- and the spices are there,
- and the face cloth is there...
- but Jesus is not.

And you can almost see Peter's wheels turning.

ARE YOU SEEING THIS?

- Like...if robbers took it, why leave the valuable spices?
- If the disciples took it, why dishonor the dead body of Jesus by unwrapping all the cloths? Jews never would have done that!
- Additionally, the face cloth was folded up by itself?
  - What's that all about?
  - Cause typically, when you steal something,
    - you're in a hurry.
  - You don't stop to tidy up the crime scene...NO!
    - You just grab and go...
    - you scoop and score!

And if you've never stolen anything...

- good for you...but just know...
- that your pastor was once arrested for stealing...
  - So...welcome to Fathom...and watch your purses!

But Peter CONSIDERS all this...he's wrestling with what has happened.

And I just want to say this:

- the Christian faith isn't just something
- where you check your brain at the door.
  - *"Well, it's probably idiotic,*
  - *and it makes no sense,*
  - *but the people are nice,*
  - *so let me join."*

No! Our faith is a reasoning faith.

- John is pointing out that one of the ways we see Jesus...
- is to theorize...to observe...to consider...
- to wrestle deeply with these things.

## **EXPLAIN: THEORIES**

Now, believe it or not,

- THAT the tomb was empty on that Sunday morning
- is a fairly agreed upon fact.

Obviously, not everybody believes that Jesus rose from the dead...

But just about every scholar agrees that:

- a man named Jesus of Nazareth really lived,
- that he was executed by the Romans,
- that he was buried,
- and that on the third day,
  - the tomb where he had been laid,
- was found empty.

On that point, there is no substantial disagreement.

The question for debate is 'how did the tomb GET empty?'  
And man, all kinds of theories have been proposed about what happened.

I already mentioned the stolen body theory, ok?  
But there are others.

## **SWOON THEORY**

One is called the swoon theory. The swoon theory says:

- Maybe Jesus never really died.
- Maybe he just passed out or went into a coma.
- And then he was put in the tomb...
  - and on the third day he woke up,
  - unwrapped himself from his grave clothes,
    - folded them up...
  - rolls a sealed boulder away from the cave...
    - Jackie Chans twelve Romans soldiers...
  - travels miles to appear to hundreds of his followers...
  - convinces them that he was the resurrected Son of God,
    - and finally, he moves to France
    - with Mary Magdalene,
    - has some children,
    - which no one knew about
    - until Tom Hanks figured all this out
    - with the help of DaVinci.

Do I need to go into the problems with that theory?

This is a real theory, y'all...but there are some holes in it.

First, the Romans were breathtakingly good at executing people.

- We have no historical record
- of anyone EVER surviving a Roman execution.
  - And hear me, they killed a ton of people.

Additionally, they didn't want to mess one up...

- because Roman law said
- if they pulled someone down before they were dead,
- they would be punished by crucifixion themselves.
  - This is why they pierce Jesus' heart with a spear,
  - just to make sure he's dead.

Second, remember how badly Jesus was beaten before his crucifixion?

- Let's just assume that somehow Jesus did survive the cross...
- how good do you think he's feeling waking up in that tomb?
  - Good enough to get undressed?
  - Good enough to move a boulder?
  - Good enough to beat up some guards?
  - Good enough to convince his followers
    - that he was victorious over sin, death, and hell?

No, he would have needed intensive care for a good long while!

This does not seem like a very plausible theory to me.

## **HALLUCINATION THEORY**

Another theory is called the hallucination theory.

This theory says that witnesses to the resurrection all had hallucinations.

- Like, under the great stress and grief,
- they had hallucinations of their friend and savior...
- come back to life.

It is well documented that under great grief, these visions do happen.

- BUT, hallucinations don't happen to groups of people.
  - They happen to individuals.
  - Yet, we have over 500 eye-witnesses cited.
- AND for those hallucinations to go on for 40 days...
  - and then to have them all simultaneously stop.
  - Well, that's very curious and speculative.

Plus, the body is still the trump card.

- Where is the body in this theory?
- Just produce the body and this whole thing goes away.

## **FRINGE THEORIES**

And then there are some fringe theories, which are harder still to believe.

Here are just a couple:

- The HYPNOSIS THEORY:
  - All these resurrection visions were a result of hypnosis.
  - So, they somehow hypnotized 500 people
  - to have them all say they saw him alive,
    - like some weird magic show or something.
- The TWIN THEORY:
  - Jesus had a secret twin brother or a look-alike
  - who died on the cross.
    - Like there was Jesus and Jeffery Christ?
  - But, Jesus' mother is one witness at the crucifixion,
  - and mothers have an uncanny ability to tell twins apart.

## TRANSITION

Here's the thing...to my understanding,

- there isn't a really good alternative theory out there:
  - no matter how many Discovery Channel specials
  - they put out there trying to prove that Jesus,
  - in fact, didn't rise from the dead.

See, at some point,

- you have to wrestle with what happened at the tomb.

And this is what Peter is doing...

- he's theorizing...
- he's CONSIDERING.

But at some point, you've gotta be intellectually honest.

- What's a better theory?
- What's your explanation?
- ARE YOU SEEING THIS?

Ok, verse 8:

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## JOHN 20:8-9

[8] Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first,

Alright John, this is getting out of hand...

[8] Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed;



### POINT 3: BELIEVE

John finally goes into the tomb with Peter, and the text says that *he saw*.

And here's the third different Greek word in this passage for seeing.

- This Greek word is *horaō* (hor-ah'-o)
- which literally means *to heed* or *to perceive*.

It'd be like saying, "*Oh, I see!*"

But what's really interesting is

- *horaō* is paired with the word *pisteuō*
- which is translated *believe*.
- He saw and believed.

And that's the third way of seeing.

- You can GLANCE,
- you can CONSIDER,
- but ultimately the deepest way to see...is to **SLIDE BELIEVE**
  - "*Oh, I see!*"

Now, yes, *pisteuō* means *to believe*, but it means a lot more than that.

There's some nuance.

- It means, to believe,
- or to trust,
- or to commit your whole life into.

And so, if I asked some people the question: "*do you believe in Jesus?*"

- Man, a lot of you are going to say, "*of course I do.*"

But my guess is that some BELIEVE ABOUT Jesus...

But this word means to BELIEVE IN Jesus.

- BELIEVING ABOUT...
- and BELIEVING IN...
- are two significantly different things.

## ILLUSTRATION: CHAIR

And the best way I know to describe this is from an illustration I heard when I first became a Christian in High School.

Here's the illustration:

- I know without a shadow of a doubt...
- that you BELIEVE IN the chair that you're sitting in.
- You *pisteuō* in the chair that you're sitting in.

Now, I have no idea what you BELIEVE ABOUT the chair.

- I don't know if you know who created the chair.
- I don't know if you know who placed the chair there.
- I don't know if you know who sat in the chair before you.
- I don't know if you know anything about the engineering in it.
- I don't know how much math and science you know
  - to determine how much that chair can hold up.
- I don't know how much you believe in the materials
  - that make up the chair.
- I don't know if you have some past chair hurts...
  - like some trauma from your past
  - where you had a bad experience with chairs.

I have no idea what you BELIEVE ABOUT the chair.

But I do know you BELIEVE IN the chair.

Here's how I know...you're sitting in it!

- At some point you put your faith in that chair.
- You said, "*Alright, here we go!*"
  - And you put the full weight of who you are...
  - onto the chair...
  - and you trusted it to hold you up.

## EXPLAIN: UNDERSTAND

That's what happened with John

- He SAW...
- and he BELIEVED.
- He put his full weight onto it.

And one more thing...look at verse 9:

### JOHN 20:9

[9] for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

So, John **saw and believed**...but he believed without fully understanding.

**Did you know that you can fully believe, without fully understanding?**

- You can fully believe in Jesus...
- trust Jesus...
- surrender your life to Jesus...
- become a Christian...

**You can fully believe in Jesus without fully understanding Jesus.**

Y'all, there's a lot of stuff I don't understand...

and I've been at this thing for a minute.

I'm a professional Christian. Is that weird?

- You pay me to read my Bible and stuff...
- but there's a bunch of this stuff that still messes my mind up.

So, if you have a hard time understanding...

- if you have a little skeptic in you...
- if you're all, "*Well, I don't know...*"
  - *what about dinosaurs...*
  - *and Jonah getting swallowed by a whale...*
  - *and hey, what about all the suffering in our world?!?"*

Well, let me just say, you could make a great disciple of Jesus Christ!

Cause the one thing that these guys did not understand...

- was the resurrection!
  - It's kinda a big deal.
    - Like, it's the main deal.

And they didn't even understand that!

But they saw the evidence and they believed.

**We PUT OUR FAITH in Jesus...**

- **NOT by having our questions all answered...**
- **but by SEEING and BELIEVING his resurrection.**

**And there are good answers to many of those questions...**

**but they aren't pre-requisites to belief!**

## **CONCLUSION**

And so, my question for you this morning is:

- **ARE YOU SEEING THIS?**

C.S. Lewis famously said this:

**SLIDE w/PADS**

*"Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important."*

## **SLIDE ARE YOU SEEING THIS?**

And so, maybe those ways of seeing resonate with you this morning

- Have you been GLANCING at Jesus?
  - You've casually seen all this stuff...
  - but maybe some things are just making more sense...
  - some things might be clicking...
  - maybe this feels like it might actually fit?
- Or, have you been CONSIDERING Jesus?
  - And you've got questions.
  - And you're a bit of a skeptic.
  - And you're trying to get all the puzzle pieces figured out.
  - But deep in your heart you really really want it to be true.

If you're in either of those two places...

- I'd invite you to BELIEVE.
- To TRUST.
- To SEE!

You need only pray,

- *"Jesus, I open my heart to you.*
- *I wanna see you.*
- *I trust you."*

This Easter you can SEE Jesus...

- in a new way...
- in a deeper way...
- in a life changing way!

So, let's end with Revelation 3, these are Jesus' words to you:

**SLIDE REVELATION 3:20**

[20] Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

ARE YOU SEEING THIS?

Let's pray.

## RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – [fathomchurch.org/give](http://fathomchurch.org/give)
- PRAYER - [fathomchurch.org/prayer](http://fathomchurch.org/prayer)
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

### 1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.

## **RESOURCES CONSULTED:**

- Carson, D.A. The Pillar New Testament Commentary. The Gospel According to John.
- Tyson, Jon. *Seeing Jesus*.