



## NG Study Guide: Jn. 20:24-31 “Peace to You” Resurrection Sunday 4.1.18

### Love God + know the Bible better:

1. Read the passage cited above, and try to answer the questions below before your group meets.
2. *Leader note: Please review the brief instructions for leaders at the bottom.*

### The Study

**Thesis:** All of us are searching for something. We long for a life that has contentment. We long for a sense of wholeness that transcends our circumstances, experiences, relationships, possessions, achievements, past, present, or future. We yearn to be free of worry, anxiety, and fear. We want real life and real peace. And today as we contemplate Jesus’ resurrection you’ll discover how to experience real peace and life in Christ.

*“Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> The other disciples therefore said to him, “We have seen the Lord.” So he said to them, “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.” <sup>26</sup> And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, “Peace to you!” <sup>27</sup> Then He said to Thomas, “Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.” <sup>28</sup> And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!” <sup>29</sup> Jesus said to him, “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” <sup>30</sup> And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; <sup>31</sup> but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His” [Jn. 20:24-31].*

#### 1. Jesus wants to resolve any doubts [24-27]

Jesus had appeared to His disciples, after His resurrection, but Thomas wasn’t there [24]. The other disciples told Thomas about Jesus coming to them, but Thomas doesn’t believe them and thinks he’s being pranked [25]. Thomas wants proof, and wants to see the wounds from Jesus’ crucifixion [25].

Sometimes, Thomas gets looked down upon for not believing, and even gets called, “Doubting Thomas.” Yet, Jesus wants to resolve doubts.

**Jesus answers the skeptics doubts:** Jesus comes to them again eight days later, and this time Thomas is there [26]. Jesus’ resurrected body is different, as He passes through the walls despite locked doors, but is a physical body as shown by His invitation to Thomas to touch and examine the wounds from His crucifixion [27]. He wants to resolve our doubts so that we won’t be unbelieving, but believing [27]. The primary source of the appeal of Christianity is Jesus - His incarnation, His life, His crucifixion, and His resurrection.

**Jesus provides evidence beyond a reasonable doubt:** Harvard Law Professor, Dr. Simon Greenleaf observed, “According to the laws of legal evidence used in courts of law, there is more evidence for the historical fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ than for just about any other event in history.” Consider some of the evidence. First, the missing body. The Jewish leaders would have produced the body of they took it. The Roman guards wouldn’t take the body for they would face the death penalty. The disciples were very unlikely to overcome the Roman guards, and even if they did they would have recanted before experiencing martyrs’ deaths. People won’t face martyrdom for a known lie. Second, the transformed lives of the disciples. They went from frightened men behind locked doors to bold courageous men openly proclaiming Jesus’ death and resurrection. Third, the eyewitnesses. The Bible records ten post-resurrection appearances by Jesus. On one occasion, there were more than 500 witnesses, and most of them were alive at the time of the New Testament, and could thus be questioned. Fourth, the fulfilled prophecy. The events of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection were all foretold by the prophets in the Old Testament.

Billy Graham noted, “There is more evidence that Jesus rose from the dead than there is that Julius Caesar ever lived or that Alexander the Great died at the age of thirty-three.” The Christian faith is distinct from all other religions, philosophies, and faiths because it can withstand critical analysis. Knowing the resurrection is true would be reason enough to follow Jesus, but it is what He offers us that makes the gospel so attractive.

## **2. Jesus offers real peace and real life [26, 30-31]**

What is real peace? *Jesus stood in the midst, and said, “Peace to you!”* [26]. Jesus is offering peace with God and the peace of God. Jesus is offering *shalom*, real peace, the sense of wholeness and contentment that can only be experienced in the spiritual life that God can give, and a life in intimate relationship with Jesus.

What is real life? The apostle John makes clear that the reason for writing his gospel account of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection was to prove that Jesus is the Messiah, or the Christ, so that you would believe. And that in believing you would have life in Christ [30-31]. The Greek term translated life is *zoe* which speaks of the essence of life, or spiritual life with God; and is contrast with the Greek term *bios* which refers to mere physical life. You were created for eternal relationship with the God who loves you so much that He gave His only Son so that you could live with Him on earth and in heaven [Jn. 3:16]. Jesus is offering you what you really want and what you really need: real peace and real life!

## **3. Faith in Jesus is the way to experience real peace and life [28-31]**

Thomas realizes that Jesus is truly resurrected and he responds to Jesus with the declaration, “My Lord and

my God!” [28]. He recognizes that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ, and is in fact God who became man. Jesus responds by acknowledging Thomas’ worship. Jesus points out that Thomas believed, because He saw the risen Jesus, but others will be blessed, or content, because they believed the evidence and believed the gospel without personally seeing the risen Jesus.

What is faith or belief? A confident trust in Jesus, and the work He accomplished on the cross, resulting in commitment, submission, and salvation. Your contentment flows from faith in Christ, and

the spiritual life He gives. Peace flows from learning of and from Jesus, and proximity to Him [Matt. 11:28-30, Ph. 4:4-7].

**Here is the gospel, or message of good news:** First, all of us have sinned against an all-holy and righteous God [Rom. 3:23]. Thus, we deserve God's judgment [Rom. 6:23]. God shows His love for us in that while we were rebelling against Him Christ came and died for us [Rom. 5:8]. God will forgive all of your sin, and give you spiritual life and abundant life with Him on this earth and in heaven if you will submit to Him [Rom. 10:9].

C.S. Lewis observed that if nothing in this life can satisfy then it is reasonable to assume that there is something beyond this life that will. Following Jesus is a life of faith, but it is not a blind faith. The evidence that Jesus rose on the third day, just as He said He would, and just as the prophets foretold is beyond a reasonable doubt. The truth of Jesus' resurrection is what we celebrate, because it proves that Jesus sacrifice on the cross for us was accepted by God, and we can now experience real life with God and the real peace of God.

### Study Guide Qs

***Q1. As you contemplate Jesus' death and resurrection, what are some of your thoughts and feelings?***

***Q2. How does your growing trust in Jesus' resurrection and gospel provide you contentment?***

***Q3. What are some of the circumstances that can cause followers of Jesus to have doubts?***

***Q4. What are some of the doubts that skeptics are likely to have towards the gospel and the resurrection?***

### **"Digging Deeper" (optional or alternative study)**

**1. Search the phrase, "Evidence of the resurrection" and consider some of the abundant evidence of Jesus' resurrection.**

2. Read 1Cor. 15:1-58. Paul makes clear that the Christian faith hinges on the truth of the resurrection. And since the resurrection is true, there are moral implications [34, 58]. How would you like to apply those lessons in this season of your life?

**Love your neighbor *outside* the group better:**

1. Who would like to share how they sought to befriend or build relationship with their neighbors where they live, work, study, or play this past week?
2. Are there some needs that can provide us an opportunity to love our neighbor outside the group?
3. Here is a neighboring idea(s) for us to consider for the week(s) ahead:

**Many of you and your neighbors will be enjoying a break from school and/or work at this time. Look for opportunities to connect or reconnect and catch-up with each other. Look to share how Easter Sunday impacted your life.**

**Love your neighbor *inside* the group better:**

1. Are there some needs in our group that can provide us an opportunity to love our neighbor within the group?
2. What might we do about that need to help?

**Prayer [Loving God and Neighbors better]:**

Close the NG meeting with a time of group prayer. Encourage each participant to pray, but don't force anyone to pray. Encourage the group to keep their prayers brief so that each person can pray.

**Leader Notes:**

1. **Seek to involve as many group participants as possible.** A good group discussion time allows people to get to know the passage and one another better.
2. **Feel free to pre-select the discussion questions that you want to focus on** in case there isn't enough time to answer them all.
3. **The "Digging Deeper" section provides some optional or alternative study and discussion activities.** As a group leader, you can choose to focus on the "Digging Deeper" section, include part of

that section in your group meeting, or not use it at all. Try to give the group sufficient notice so they can be prepared for the meeting.

**4. Every time you meet consider asking:**

**a. What about this passage is particularly exciting, challenging, or confusing?** If a leader is uncertain about a question of doctrine or theology don't hesitate to follow-up with your coach during the week. Then revisit the issue(s) when the group gathers next time.