



# Going Beyond the Sermon

Sunday, April 11, 2021 – Dr. Matt Russell

“All the Light You Cannot See”

John 20:19-31

## Bible S.W.A.P.

### S-Scripture

19 When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” 20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” 22 When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

24 But Thomas (who was called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.”

26 A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” 27 Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.” 28 Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” 29 Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. 31 But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

## **W-What Does it Say and What Can I Obey?**

This passage is FULL of important points and themes that strongly influence Christian faith, practice, and interpretation of Scripture. Read the passage and note what you read about peace, the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), doubt, belief, the resurrection, discipleship, and the purpose of Holy Scripture. As a reader of this passage, you could choose to dig into any of these themes and spend weeks exploring its meaning and effect on your life.

For this sermon series, the Going Beyond the Sermon notes will look to each Scripture passage for direction in discipleship. We will make connections with the stages of discipleship being experienced by the characters in the stories and where we are in the discipleship journey. For the “What Can I Obey?” portion of study, we will be challenged to take a next step of faith, with the goal of using the passage and notes as a tool for processing and learning to direct ourselves to grow in closeness to Christ.

The disciples had been following Jesus for three years. They had observed him in all kinds of situations; and now he had died, been in a tomb for three days, and was alive! They were seeing him again, as if for the first time. Circle the word “see” every time it occurs in the passage. Much is made of seeing Jesus – and he invites their closer inspection. For Thomas, he makes a special appearance, just to be sure that this independent thinker sees his hands and feet and side for himself. He wants Thomas to take a look and believe.

The stage of discipleship depicted here is called “Come and See.” Read John 1:38-46 and hear Jesus’ invitation to come and see him for the first time. In this stage, people are curious about Christianity, but may also have doubts – like Thomas. What most people in this stage of faith need is exactly what the resurrected Jesus offers Thomas – authentic relationship in which it is safe to ask questions and express needs. This is the “next step” for this stage.

## **A-Apply**

Persons in the Come and See stage of discipleship are often catapulted into faith exploration by a life event like the birth of a baby, an amazing experience with creation, or a trauma. They may be drawn to Christ by nagging doubts that they decide to examine. To determine if this is your stage, read the following statements and see if they apply to you at this time in your life.

I attend public worship when I feel a need.

I appreciate Christians who lovingly include me.

I am drawn to God and want to explore the faith and the Scriptures.

I am learning about Jesus’ teaching through classes, groups, and Bible reading.

I notice those who selflessly serve others and I want to make a difference as well.

I contribute financially whenever I attend worship.

If these statements describe where you are currently, your next step of faith will be to engage in a faith community to explore your beliefs and see authentic Christians living out their faith.

### **P-Pray\***

Picture yourself as Jesus standing face to face with Thomas. Say to him, “Peace be with you . . . You can touch me, Thomas.” Watch Thomas as he stares at your wounds. You love him through those difficult moments as his mind makes the transition from doubt to recognition. You give Thomas exactly what he needs in order to make his leap of faith.

*Can you give up reason to accept mystery? Can you give up logic to receive grace?*

\*Each passage in this sermon series invites us to imagine the scene. We will use guided imagery from “Christheart” by Jeanne Miley, as prayer prompts. This week, the prompt is from Honoring Doubt, Day Four, p. 209.

**To learn more about the Stages of Discipleship, go to  
[www.chapelwood.org/mynextstep](http://www.chapelwood.org/mynextstep).**

*Going Beyond the Sermon is written by Teresa Rossy, Director of Grow Ministries,  
Chapelwood United Methodist Church in Houston, Texas.*

*Source material is quoted throughout. The sermons are streamed online and worship is in person at 9:00 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. in the Sanctuary of our Greenbay campus. Go to [www.chapelwood.org](http://www.chapelwood.org) for details.*

*To get Going Beyond the Sermon in your inbox, e-mail Laura Frost, [lfrost@chapelwood.org](mailto:lfrost@chapelwood.org).*

