

(John) the Sudden Appearance of Thomas

by Willie Mullan

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being present on Sunday morning and honoring the gathering of God's people, as well as the need for personal faith and trust in Christ.

Duration: 1:02:58

Scripture: John 20:30

Topics: "Thomas"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the tender sympathy of Jesus towards a group of disobedient and independent-minded disciples. He encourages the audience to underline the disciples and pay attention to the clouds. The preacher highlights the importance of having a personal connection with Jesus and experiencing his light. He also mentions the significance of Jesus being the Christ, the Son of God, and how this belief leads to eternal life. The sermon concludes by mentioning the upcoming discussion of Thomas and the anticipation of a thrilling chapter in the Gospel of John.

Transcript

It's a shame that we're commencing the Bible study with this evening, looking at our Lord's sudden appearance to God. Then John closes this chapter with two very remarkable verses, verses thirty and thirty-one, and many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book, but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name. These two verses show us the reason why John recorded these wonderful twenty chapters.

This is the recorder giving his reasons for recording these wonderful chapters. These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. And we want to deal with these two verses very carefully this evening.

Then we're going on into the next chapter, to the first three verses, because these set the stage for the last words in this wonderful gospel of John. And we shall just go and see these disciples, apparently discontented and very definitely defeated, and we shall see the Lord coming through the next week in a wonderful way. These are the things that lie ahead of us this evening, his appearance to Thomas, the closing verses of chapter twenty, and the setting of the stage for chapter twenty-one.

Now, we're going right back now to chapter twenty and to verse twenty-four. That's where this third scene really commences. You see, in the previous verses, the Lord has suddenly appeared, and he has blessed, and he has really thrilled the disciples.

Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. But we record that John, in writing this, in verse twenty-four, he reminds us, but Thomas, but Thomas, but Thomas, one of the twelve, called Jedimus, was not with them when Jesus came. So we start with the absence of Thomas.

Thomas was absent on this, the first day of the week, when our Lord wonderfully appeared to his disciples and really thrilled and blessed them. Now, how can we account for the absence of Thomas? Let me just quickly explain quite clearly here that it was not geographical distance. He wasn't away somewhere in the north of the land, at Galilee or somewhere like that.

Oh no, the geographical distance was not the cause of his absence. You see, the moment that these people were thrilled, it says in verse twenty-five, the other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. So that they hadn't got to go very far to look for him, he was quite close at hand, so that the cause of his absence was not geographical distance.

And it most certainly wasn't physical illness. The moment that they found him, they didn't say, you're feeling better now. You went out last Sunday.

Are you quite well? Oh not at all, they didn't talk like that. There wasn't one thing wrong with him physically. And geographically, he was quite close at hand.

I think the reason is found very simply in the reply he makes to these disciples. Verse twenty-five, the other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his eye, I will not believe.

Oh, you can see the state of the man, can't you? Oh, it was something spiritual that was wrong. It wasn't anything physical or geographical. It was something physical.

He was depressed. He was downcast. He was despondent.

He was running about down in the dust. He didn't know where he was. It had kept him away on Lord's Day from meeting with God's people and the midst of blessings.

And you know, my dear, if you ever get depressed, and who doesn't? Well, when we even have an Elijah under the juniper tree, any one of us can get there. And my dear, if you ever get depressed, and downcast, and despondent, and you feel that the whole bottom has fallen out of the boat, and your sigh is dark, and you're almost in despair, the first place you should make for is God's house on Lord's Day. That's where you'll really get lifted.

And never let it keep you away, my love, of anything that should bring you there. Because all the other disciples were just as bad as he was. You remember they'd shut the door for fear of the Jews.

And they're all huddled up together, and they don't know what's going to happen. But when the Lord appears, and His word comes to the heart, why, they're thrilled. They enter the meeting distressed.

They leave the meeting delighted. The reason that so many of God's people keep down in depression is because they forgot to go to God's house on God's Day to hear God's message. Remember, it's Lord's Day morning.

The Lord stands in the midst of His flock, and He hath got a word. And it's usually a word of comfort for His people. And if you're not there, you'll have a weep down in the dumps.

You deserve it. He was absent. I think you can see something more here, can't you? From the wording here, you not only see the cause of His absence, but you can see that not only was He depressed and downcast and despondent, but you can see that Thomas is in a state now where he's going to question everything.

Why, here he is. He's in the grip of unbelief. It's a horrible thing, you know.

You see, these men whom He had traveled down the years with, these men who had been His brethren in the service of the Lord, these men whom He had learned to love and to trust, these men come out and say, Thomas, we have seen the Lord. He also has seen it shining in their faces. They were thrilled.

He said, unless I put my finger into the print of the nails, and so on, I will not believe. He's practical now. And it's a horrible thing when God's children get into this state of being scattered.

I've seen this in your life. I'll tell you this. If God ever blesses you, you see, the Lord has come upon you, and He has blessed you.

Or He blesses the assembly that you belong to. And time after time, they've had the experience of having the Lord in their midst, of power poured on their heads, and they've seen the arm of the Lord again and again, when they've had a brief experience with the Lord. There's a lot of boys that never kissed a sexy girl.

A lot of boys sitting in wee, damp meetings, where there's never God in their life. They begin to question it. They've never been here to see it.

They're the boys that say, I will not believe. They think they're big fellas, don't they? They know it all, don't they? They're in a state of, well, I've had a whole lot of them. I get fed up looking at them, and I get fed up listening to them.

They've never had a text of God's blessing for years. But they can be skeptical of the men who've had experiences with the Lord. They wouldn't have a Bible class with sex men to listen to them for two weeks.

But they can be skeptical about men that God uses. They want to go and find out the state they're in, because that's where Thomas was. I will not believe.

That's where he was. Not a very happy company to be in, I can tell you. You know, my dear friends, I think it always works the other way.

If God ever comes and blesses your soul, and blesses the assembly you belong to, as soon as you hear a blessing in some other part of the country, be it in the Presbyterian or the Methodist or anywhere else, you just shout hallelujah. That's what I do anyway. I praise the Lord for every soul that's blessed and saved, no matter where they're saved.

The love that we've got to learn. Oh, yes. That's just a tremendous thing.

You see, this was very imprudent, but I shall be proving this to you in a moment or two. You know, you might stand outside the church, down the street, and we'd better say a few things, but let me tell you this, the Lord hears all that you say, because he very soon let Thomas know that he heard. He says, reach out of your thing.

Why, the Lord heard them. Very unwise to talk out of turn, you know, because the Lord's at your elbow. And by your word, you shall be justified.

And by your word, sir, you shall be judged. It was imprudent. Now, watch this.

This is very important. Let's read the whole story, verse 24. But Thomas, one of the twelve, called them up, was not with them when Jesus came.

The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nail. May I just stop and say that that's the only place in the Gospels where you have got the word nails, and I think I'm right in saying it's the only place in the New Testament.

It's the one word in the New Testament that proves that Jesus was crucified and his hands and feet were pierced. Crucifixion is not always, and was not always, by piercing. Sometimes they only tied the feet and the hands to the cross and let them die of exhaustion.

But on this occasion, there is no doubt that they pierced his hands and his feet because the word is there. But Thomas is talking out of concern. Verse 25, in the middle of the verse, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails and put my finger into the print of the nails and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

It is a lovely wee bit, don't jump it too quick. And after it's day, I want you to get the word after. After it's day.

It's counting by Jewish time here. It's the first day of the week again. A whole week has gone by.

I want you to be very careful here and go very slowly with me. You see, Thomas had a great opportunity of going to God's house with God's people on the first day of the week and meeting the Lord and getting blessed. But he was so down in the dumps he didn't go.

Well, let me tell you this, that the Lord never spoke to him all week. The Lord didn't speak to him again until next Lord's Day when he was in his place. And he said to all you saints out there, you see, by this very action of the Lord, the Lord is honoring, honoring the gathering together of his people on the first day of the week.

I'll tell you this, the Lord is not only honoring the gathering together of his people on the first day of the week, he's honoring the very place where they gathered. Some of you people Talking to Baptists now, I can fuck them as hard as I like. Talking to you Baptists.

Some of you, you know, can lie on in your bed Sunday morning. The old pastor sometimes, my boys are here, I know whether I'm telling the truth or not. Sometimes the old pastor is up all night, holds his hand every hour of the night to get a message for God's people to get that very word of comfort that they so much need.

But as summer gets so cold and so far away from God, you'd rather have your bed than your blessing. Oh yes, you can sleep in on Sunday morning, can't you? And then you're so miserable that you're looking for the pastor in the middle of the week to help you out of the dumps. What way are you treating the Lord? Let me get this over for once and for all.

If it's only the pastor and a few headings that are here on Sunday mornings, lie on in your bed. I wouldn't get out of it if I were you. But if the Lord is in the midst and this is the Lord's message, for the Lord's people, I wonder why you're staying in your bed.

Let me tell you and let me teach you that you'll go through the whole week and the Lord will not speak to you. He's getting around stocking up for Thomas that week. He says, all right, my boy.

You're not torn out from the people and you don't want the blessing. How will you go a week without it? It is utter Mind you, it's very important to be in your place on Sunday morning if you want the Lord to talk to you. You see, the Lord has ordained.

The Lord has appointed a day. I am the Lord has appointed a way. He's got pictures to teach you and get His message and bring it for you, all this stuff for you if you don't have it.

My dear friend, do you think the Lord will run after you, do you? I hope you'll learn like the early disciples to come on the first day of the week. And here's what it says in Acts chapter 20 and verse 7. The disciples met together on the first day of the week to break bread and Paul preached unto them. Have a look at it, some of you brethren-eyed boys.

Do you think there's not a picture on Sunday morning? You never read it. Well, have a go at it now. Come round and have a go at me afterwards and I'll give you more.

Well, do what you think God's gifts are for? Treading under your feet? God has given gifts to the touch. And there's such a thing as the ministry of the Word. And it can only be ministered by men who have been medieval ministers of Christ.

Breaking of bread is a place where we all worship the Lord in this place. Absolutely free to any saint to worship the Lord as he will. But the early disciples met on the first day of the week and Paul preached.

And if you're not there, you'll miss the Lord and the message. And you might go eight days before you hear his voice again. It's important.

I hope you're learning. You can see he's present now, can't you? Oh, what an experience he has. Verse 26.

And after eight days again his disciples were with him and Tom was with them. Then came Jesus. The door's been shut.

That's almost like a verse we read last week except for one thing. Look at verse 19. Then it came that even being the first day of the week when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews.

But this time there was no fear of the Jews in it. Did you notice that? It's not there this time. Oh, they've seen the Lord.

Last week they've met the Lord. By the days to follow it had dawned on their toes that he's really alive. And being occupied with the passion of Christ the fear was driven out.

It's not there this week. They're assembled and the doors are shut but there's no fear of the Jews in this text. See it? Verse 26.

And after eight days again his disciples were with him and Tom was with them. Then came Jesus. The door's been shut and stood in the midst and said, Isn't that lovely? Peace.

Be unto you. Remember last week when he came? Verse 19. The doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews.

Came Jesus and stood in the midst and said unto them, Peace. Be unto you. You know, again and again in these resurrection messages you will find that the Lord seems to be deeply concerned with the peace for his disciples.

Very wonderful. Lord Jesus, for something has depressed you and you're under the juniper tree and you're downcast and you're afraid and frightened and you're living in that gloomy place where Thomas lived. For it is the Lord who doesn't want you there.

Be sure of that. Why, the Lord wants his people to experience. And he never changes at this thing.

Last week he came in and the first thing he says, Peace. And next week he comes in and the first thing he says, Concern, you know, with you getting peace in your mind. How many of God's people don't seem to get it.

Peace, that part of all understand it. And mind you, the old book of declared long ago that he will keep them in perfect peace. Whose mind has stayed on him.

And if you can only see him in the midst, if you can only get occupied with him, if you can only gaze upon his beauty, if you can see the Lord, why, he can get you peace. So that's the first words again. Peace be unto you.

And then here's what he said. Verse 27. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach thither thy finger and behold my hand, and reach thither thy hand and thrust it into my side and be not faithless, but believing.

Now I think he's shocked, Thomas. You see, Thomas had stood at the street corner and the disciples had gathered round them and had said, We have seen the Lord. He said, Exactly.

I put my finger into the print of the nails and I thrust my hand into the side, I will not believe. And the Lord was listening to him. Do you remember me telling you that right through John's Gospel, the Lord knew everything? I knew always.

Tell me, Ross, what Thomas was thinking. Oh, we must be careful with these cynical and skeptical remarks. We must be careful, for the Lord will make us take them back.

You know, I think that the thing that really struck Thomas more than any other thing, it was not the sudden appearance, but was the very word reach thither thy finger and thrust thy hand. These were the very words he had used himself, and it was the word of the Lord that had come harder even than the appearance of the Lord. Then the rebuke of the Lord, be not faithless, but believing.

Oh, I feel you could take that little phrase out and hold it for quite a while tonight. Why, there's a whole crowd of us to do with it. With the Lord coming near to us and saying, look, Mr. Businessman, be not... I think he could go to some of you fathers, and I think he could come to some of you young women and say, be not but believing.

And very often, he's got to come to the pastor and say, be not faithful. It's a rebuke for the whole crowd of us, for there are times we miss the Lord and we don't believe at all. What an experience he had when the Lord suddenly appeared and used his very own words and then touched him with this rebuke, and out of the soul of this man who was so skeptical that he would not believe his brethren, comes one of the greatest whispers in the whole Bible.

Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord, and my God, what a moment this must be, the eloquence that's there now. You know, friend, let me say this before I forget. Some of you people are about to be pressed and downcast if you would only get into God's house and sit at the Lord's feet and let him show himself to you before very many minutes you begin to pay them.

Now, you spend your whole life cruel, as it's your fault, not his. Why don't you look at the Lord instead of being occupied with your own misery? And if you did, mother would hear music in heaven like they never had before. That's what happens here.

My Lord! A little carefully at the statement. My Lord, my God. The moment that we lay the emphasis on the my, we're showing Thomas how to personal trust in Christ.

If this is Thomas personally trusting Christ, which is your mind! I'm not answering for anybody else here. It's your mind! It's a very personal thing. Thomas personally trusting Christ the Saviour.

But the moment he says, my Lord, my, this is Thomas crowning Christ our sovereign, he says, Lord, Lord, that's objection now. Is there my Lord? And the moment that Thomas says, my God, oh, this is adoration. And this is adoration of the highest, the highest quality.

My God. For a Jew to look into a man's head and say, my God! And there's not a Unitarian in the land can say it. Not a Unitarian in the land dare say it.

Well, couldn't call Jesus Christ God because they don't believe He's God. They couldn't say it. My God.

Mind you, when Peter went into the house of Cornelius, the Gentile, and this very great picture among the Jews was coming into the house of Cornelius, Cornelius got down before him. Peter said, no, don't do that for I'm just a man like yourself. I wish all were poor.

Aye, it would be good, wouldn't it? No, they just walk the other way round. They love to have somebody cringing at their feet. Well, Peter didn't.

Why didn't they learn from the boy they're supposed to follow? They told you to, and I'm just a man like yourself. But Peter diabolical potpourri doesn't be as honest as that. Not at all.

Doesn't. Nor doesn't. You remember when John was in the Isle of Patmos and the angel appeared, and he got down to worship the angel and said, Do not! But when Thomas said, My God! There is not one word of rebuke from Jesus.

It's true. He's really God. Tell me, is he your Savior? Is he your Lord? Have you heard him about this possible baptism? And don't be talking about the Lord if you're not obedient.

Tell me, is he your God? He's my God. When you get home to heaven, who do you think you'll see on the throne? You'll see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ! He's my God. What a wonderful thing that Thomas, you can see his absence, his imprudence, his presence, his experience, his eloquence.

Jesus put a little word there at verse 29. Jesus says unto him, Thomas, Because thou hast seen me, and the fact that the Lord is laying the emphasis on the word seen, because thou hast seen me, it would make me believe that Thomas never reached his finger forward at all. The thing that really assured Thomas was just the vision of the Lord.

Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed. Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. If you go to Matthew's gospel sometime, you'll read all of the attitudes.

Blessed are they, blessed are they, blessed are they. Well, here's the last beatitude in the book. This is Jesus talking.

Blessed are they which have believed and have not seen. So your heart and soul tonight, do you believe that God's Son came from the glory and went to the cross and died an atoning death and bore your sins and his own body to the tree and rose again to be your own Savior. Tell me, do you believe? Man, if you do, you're blessed.

Blessed are they which believe and have not seen. Now, we come to the last two verses in the chapter, a very wonderful one. I must be honest with you about these verses.

I'll read them over to you and see if you can see the problem. And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book, but these are written that he might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing he might have life through his neck. Now, there are a great many scholars in the world and they believe that the gospel of John ends at chapter 20.

And they believe the gospel of John ends at chapter 20 because John is talking about the things which are written in this book. There's a problem there, isn't there? Some of them say that John 21's not in the book at all. That John 21 was written by somebody else.

But I shall prove to you next week without any doubt that John was the writer and that chapter 21 belongs to John's gospel. You see, all that he is saying is this. These signs are written in this book that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his neck.

What I believe about the problem is this. That John took twenty long, wonderful, thrilling chapters to tell us who Jesus is. The Christ, the Son of God, and what Jesus brings, life.

When you believe. He not only tells us who he is and what he does, but he put a postscript to the book. Did you ever write the letter and then put a postscript to it after you had your name signed? He put a postscript to the book to let us see how Jesus pulls for his saints.

And that makes 21 one of the greatest thrilling chapters in John. That's what I'll be out next week. The tenderness of our Lord for his thrilling saints.

It's the best chapter in the book. And I'll take time to finish the whole chapter with you next week. John took twenty chapters to tell you that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that ye got life through believing.

Took twenty chapters to do that. But when he had signed the book, he put a postscript to let you see how the Lord feels for his thrilling saints. And what a thrilling chapter it is.

Well, there are no problems. But look at this. He didn't write these twenty chapters just for historical information.

Oh, not at all. First and foremost, he wrote these twenty chapters for national confirmation. He's proved in this book time and time and time again that Jesus is the Christ.

There are no doubts. And you know, if I ever had a real tussle with a Jew, and I've had many of them, I would always come to some of these great thrilling, wonderful chapters in John's gospel. And you can fire them up every time.

Because it's here that you can prove that Jesus is the Christ. No doubts about that. I would have no doubt, none whatsoever.

But it is written not only for national confirmation, but it is written for a testimonial revelation. You see, this book, twenty chapters, are revealing in a wonderful, unique testimony that Jesus is the Son of God. No doubts about that.

Why that's what John wanted to do in the beginning was the worst. He began with. And right through all these chapters, he's been bringing wonderful details, wonderful miracles, wonderful messages.

He's been bringing all these wonderful signs in these wonderful twenty chapters. And he has been beyond a single doubt to an honest mind that Jesus, my Jesus, when I look at John's blood-stained cross, I'm always compelled to say, the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. That's what the book was written for.

But watch again. It's written for just something more. Not only for national confirmation and testimonial revelation, but it's written for eternal consolation.

You young believers, snap this up. These twenty chapters are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life. I was a capital L through his name.

You know, John's a great writer. It was John, the same John, in 1 John, who put it clear as still. He says, He that hath the Son hath life.

Twenty chapters, he proves that Jesus is the Son. He says, Man, if you put the arms of your faith round Him, you'll get life. Don't tell me that heaven anywhere, don't tell me that infant sprinkled, don't tell me you can be sprinkled by every man of the land.

Put the arms of your faith in the mouth of Solomon God, and you'll have life. He that hath the Son hath life. He that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

Don't tell me your name's on the road. Don't tell me the struggle of the earth. The only thing I want you to tell me is this.

Have you seen Him as the Son, dying on the cross? Have you put the arms of your faith round Him? If you have, you've got life. If you haven't, you haven't life. Is it plain? Will you take the text, if you'll not take my shouting? He that hath the Son hath life.

He that hath not the Son of God You've got the Son? Can you say, My Saviour? My Jesus? My Lord? My Shepherd? My Friend? My God? Ten thousand tongues around Him shine, but best of all I know He's mine. Is that powerful? Now that will do for those two verses. Now we must set the scene for next week's reading, because I do want to wish to turn next week in setting the scene.

I want you to notice this. Verse one of chapter twenty-one. After these things, after these things, and I'm taking it that it's a good while after these things that happened in chapter twenty.

I'll tell you for why in a moment. After these things Jesus shows himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias. That's just the Roman name for the Sea of Galilee.

That was the Jewish word. The same place. So don't get mixed up.

Now in the last chapter, they were in the upper room at Jerusalem. At Jerusalem. I hope you've got that.

But in the beginning of the next chapter, they're away seventieth miles of the land. They're at the Sea of Galilee. Almost eighty miles.

So they've gone up there. So it's a day or two after, all right. Is it possible that it was a week or two? No, I think that if we would go too much as gospel, I don't think you need to, but you'll take this from me, that when the woman met him, you remember I read this to you last week, when the woman met the Lord Jesus on resurrection morning, he said, I'll heal.

Go and tell my brethren that I go before them and to Galilee, and there shall they see me. You remember that Matthew 28, the last chapter, almost the last word said that he appeared unto them in a mountain in Galilee where he had appointed them. So that the Lord Jesus had given direction on command to his disciples to go up the country right to a mountain in Galilee.

Only some of the boys did as they always do. Do as they like for the world. Instead of going to the mountain, they go to the sea.

That's only half a billion. Oh, there's a whole lot to play at this, you know. They're wonderful fellows.

They say, oh, we're all right, we're in Galilee. Well, he never told you to go to the sea of Galilee. Happens to be that he told them to go to a mountain in Galilee.

So you see the crowd we're dealing with. They're very like ourselves. They do as the like and try to bluff it off as obedience.

Now, I want you to watch this. Setting the stage, you see. Now, it says in verse 1, After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberius, and then it adds another word, and on this wise showed he himself.

You see, this is a very special revelation. It's not just a revelation to let the disciples see that he's really alive. They already know that.

Oh, no, no, no, no, that's not what this is for. This is not to let them see that he's the son of God by power with resurrection from the dead. This is to let them see the tender sympathy that's in his heart for even boys who don't do as they're told.

It's on this wise. And I'll prove that that's exactly what happens in the chapter. It's the tender sympathy of a wonderful Lord for a crowd of boys who won't do as they're told and who will do as they're told.

What a Savior. What a glorious Savior. I hope you don't miss next week.

Now, watch this. I want you to put an underline on some things. I think you need to underline the disciples.

Now, I want you to watch the crowd that's together. There were together Simon, Peter, he's the first one, and Thomas, and Nathaniel. Now, before I read any further, let me say this.

Did you ever see these names together before in your New Testament, in the Gospels, just in that order? Oh, no, you never did. Well, it's given you the names of the Apostles. It's always Peter, James, and John, and then it goes on and on, doesn't it? You never saw this crowd bunched together before, did you? You wonder how Thomas shoved up against Peter, wouldn't you? And you wonder how Nathaniel came away from the background and caused these crowds to get together.

How does the thing be jumbled up here? Now, you just take a good look at the boys that's here. First of all, he's the one who stood yonder at the world's fire un-denied. The Lord, that's who he is.

And there's Thomas. He's the fellow who a day or two back, a week or two back, was so sceptical that he said, Oh, Lordy, I will not believe. That's who he is.

And Nathaniel is the boy who said at the very beginning, Can any good thing come out of Galilee? Yes, that's the crowd that's getting bunched up together now. That's the crowd. And remember when we underlined their denial and their unbelief and their terrible remarks that we are not very much better.

Oh, man of all sad things we should never have said and done things we should never have done and been places we should never have been and we're not very much. The crowd that's bunched up together here. The Holy Ghost is very particular, you know, when he gets the crowd together.

He's giving us the details. You should never run over them. Here they are.

Simon Peter and Thomas called him and Nathaniel of Canaan, Galilee and the two sons of Zechariah. See them fellow boys. They're the boys that fought for the place on the right hand and on the left.

That's who they are. And David just very wonderfully said, I'm too other of his disciples. I'll tell you who they are.

And there is no use guessing. I've seen all the commentators today. I read about a dozen of them.

They're all guessing. They're like me. They don't know.

No, they don't. What's the use of guessing when you don't know? So you could say it was Andrew and you could say it was anybody, but so you could be wrong. I believe when the Holy Ghost left this just as it is, it might be possible that any two in this meeting will fit in when we get into the details of the chapter.

Why any two of you might fit in very well. And you'll see the tender sympathy that the Lord has for you. So you'll put a line under the disciples won't you? And then you'll notice this.

Verse 3 Simon Peter saith unto them, I go official. Now that was a decision that he made for himself. I go official.

There's a tremendous lesson here for me of course. And there's a tremendous lesson here for any other man in the meeting who may be a leader among God's people. Because the personal decisions that you make, very important.

There's a whole lot of breakers for you men. You have to be very careful. I wonder you fellows can do a whole lot of things that I can't do.

Because I'm one of the leaders in this place, only one of them remember. We've got a plurality of leaders. And when a leader makes a decision for himself, you can be perfectly sure there's a crowd going to follow.

You know, Paul was very particular about this. In the days when Paul preached, you know, down at Corinth, they offered meat in the markets to the idols. Oh, they've got big stone idols down there, and they offered meat to them.

Great big pieces of meat were left before these idols. They sat there for a day or two, and then they removed it because there were other offerings coming. And they took it to the market and they sold it.

Oh, they weren't going to lose that. They sold it. And some of the Christians said to Paul, is it right to eat it? Paul said, sure, the thing that's sitting up there is only a big stone.

What does it matter? He says, I can eat it rightly. He says, I know that's not a God nerve. There's nothing wrong with the meat.

But then he said this, but if my eating it would cause my brothers to stumble, I will eat no meat while the world lasts. He was very careful. Some of you boys that are leaders, you know, you're not just as careful as all that.

You just do the thing if it pleases you. And you might run a wee fella into something that'll do him. So be careful.

You know, I think that Peter was just sitting on the sand at the seashore and he's getting towards even. And you know, he was always a discontented sort of creature. He couldn't be very often in the one place.

And he's just sitting, you know, and the shadows are falling and the Lord hasn't turned up. And no wonder the Lord hasn't turned up the church. And he's sitting at the seashore and all of a sudden he gets up and says, I'll do a thing.

Did he ask anybody to go with him? No, no he didn't. No, not at all. He says, I'll do the thing.

Well, he hadn't right got up till the other fella said, we'll do it. Now that's the damage. That's the damage.

Did you see the decision? See the damage? Oh, let us leaders be very careful. Sometimes I'm tempted to do things and I know it would be all right for me to do them. But when I consider this class in the flock, I know I can't do it.

Well, I would understand what I would be doing all right. But I know that some of the wee lads and lasses wouldn't. So I can't do it.

And I won't do it while the world laughs. We leaders learn it. You see, these fellas went with him.

Now the Lord wasn't directing here at all. My, it's just something that Peter's took into his mind and he's going to go through with it. How terrible it was.

Oh, look friends, do you see where he's at? He's at the Sea of Galilee. Do you see the spot he's at? I'm visiting Palestine probably in May. And I'll be going down to this very spot.

I'll take a real look at it. Because it was on that very spot just where the boat was tied that the Lord came along three years before this. And he looked at Peter and he said, follow me.

And I will make you fishers of men. And Peter took a big deep breath of Galilean air and threw the neck down. Lord, I'll leave it all and I'll follow you.

And he's going back to it now. And the trouble is he's taken a lot of brazen back whistles. And some of them probably were never at it before.

Thinking about Nathanael. And who the other two might have been. Taken some back.

Ah, there could be damage done. Let's get on with this. Now, watch this little bit, because this is the beauty of reading your word slowly.

They went forth and entered into a ship immediately. See that word put in for the Holy Ghost. You know, when you're going to go out of the paths of righteousness and do what you shouldn't do, you have never any bother doing it.

Or when Joshua was going into the promised land. Going into Jesus' possession. Going into fight for God.

There were high walls and giants. Oh, he had a lot of bother getting in. You start living for God, dear, and you'll have bother.

You want to go with the devil, you'll have none. No bother signing a book. No, and Jonah made up his mind to go away from the Lord.

Watch. My own master party found a ship that took him to Tarsus. You'll never have any bother getting away from the Lord.

The devil will supply you well, really. Get you away. Aye, immediately.

Immediately. There's no scrimmaging around to get at you. You see that? Read your Bible slowly now.

Watch again. You saw the disciples and the decision and the damage and the departure. Now they went forth and entered into a ship immediately, and that night Ah, you know, it's night, isn't it? Dear friend, it's always night when you're going away from the Lord.

Always night. When Judas got up and turned his back on Christ and went out, it was night. It's darker as you go away.

It was a night of disappointment. It was a night of defeat. It was a night of disaster.

It was a night of discouragement. What a night it was. Ah, there's some of you put in a lot of nights like this.

No wonder, because you went away from the Lord. Oh, you've got dark nights, haven't you? Went away from the Lord, you did. You see it? Dark nights, they cost nothing.

Defeat. Oh, what a lot of boys there were. What a terrible night it was.

What an awful defeat it was. It was just then the Lord came along to show them just who He was. That's what we'll get into next week.

God bless you. Let us pray. Lord, we thank thee that thou art the Christ, the eternal, unchangeable, immovable Son of the living God, and that the arms of our faith are round thee.

And this book says we've got life. We feel like shouting hallelujah. Lord, oh, we've got life and we've been called into thy service.

There are times we go to places we should never go. And there are times we make decisions we should never make. And there are times we take others where we should never take them.

Lord, the night gets dark and we're really doing nothing for thy glory. Oh, Lord, we just fall at thy feet again tonight and look into thy lovely face and we start all over again. We say my Lord and my God.

Lord Jesus, thou art all to me.

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