

Dr. David L. Turner, The Gospel of John, Session 20, John 20:1-21:25, Podcast Audio Overview

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Welcome back to the Deep Dive. This time we're taking a deep dive into the resurrection narrative and Jesus's post-resurrection appearances as they're laid out in John chapters 20 and 21. We're going to be pulling some fascinating insights from Dr. David Turner's analysis, so get ready to discover things you may have missed in this familiar story.

Yeah, these chapters are packed with intriguing details, and Dr. Turner really brings them to life. I'm excited to dig in. Me too.

And we're starting right off the bat with a question that never occurred to me before. Dr. Turner asks, "Was the stone rolled away from Jesus's tomb to let him out or to let others in to see that he was gone? It really makes you think about the nature of the resurrection miracle, doesn't it? If the resurrection was a physical act that needed a way out, the stone makes sense. But if the resurrection transcended the physical realm entirely, the stone takes on a whole new meaning.

It becomes a sign, an invitation for those seeking Jesus to see for themselves that he was no longer there. It's almost like a stage set for the grand reveal of the resurrection. And speaking of revealing, Mary Magdalene's initial reaction to the empty tomb is so interesting.

She immediately assumes that the body has been stolen. You would think that after all Jesus had taught, resurrection would be the first thing that came to mind. But I think it's important to consider the historical and cultural context.

The idea of someone rising from the dead was a radical concept at the time. It was far more common for bodies to go missing, whether due to grave robbing or other circumstances. So in a way, her assumption, while ultimately incorrect, was perfectly reasonable.

It highlights just how revolutionary and unexpected the resurrection truly was. But then we have the incredible moment where Jesus appears to Mary. This scene is so layered with meaning.

Mary initially mistakes Jesus for a gardener, which Dr. Turner points out is a beautiful foreshadowing of the new creation theme of the resurrection. Jesus, as the gardener of life, brings forth new life from the barren ground of death. It's like she's standing face to face with the gardener of life himself, but she doesn't even recognize him.

And then there's that incredibly powerful moment where Jesus speaks to her using that phrase, my father and your father, my God and your God. Those words perfectly capture the tension between Jesus's divine nature and his human connection to his followers. They share the same source, the same ultimate relationship with God, but Jesus's role is unique.

He is both God and man, both the son of God and the brother of all who believe. Moving on from that incredible interaction, things get even more interesting when Jesus appears to the disciples and bestows upon them the gift of the Holy Spirit. We find the disciples hiding behind locked doors, absolutely terrified.

It's a powerful image of the world's fear and confusion in the face of this unimaginable event, the resurrection. But then, just like that, Jesus appears among them, offering peace, showing them his wounds. It's a moment that brings both comfort and a call to action.

And then he utters those powerful words, as the Father has sent me, I am sending you. It's as though the mission, the purpose, is being passed on, empowered by the Holy Spirit. Dr. Turner points out that this passing of the torch, so to speak, is intrinsically linked to the forgiveness of sins.

It's not just about doing good deeds or social work. It's about a spiritual transformation that begins with acknowledging our need for forgiveness and then extending that gift to others. It really sets apart the mission of Christians, doesn't it? It's not just about helping people in this life, but about connecting them to something infinitely greater.

And speaking of connecting, we can't move on without talking about Thomas, the disciple who has become synonymous with doubt. I find his inclusion in the story so refreshing. He's not afraid to voice his skepticism and his need for proof.

In a world that often demands tangible evidence, Thomas represents the struggle many of us have when it comes to matters of faith. He's so relatable. He needs to see the nail marks to touch Jesus' side.

He needs that physical confirmation to truly believe. But what's even more compelling is his reaction when he finally does encounter the risen Jesus. His declaration, My Lord and My God, isn't just an acknowledgment of Jesus' physical presence.

It's a profound confession of faith, echoing the very opening verses of John and bringing the book's central message full circle. It's the culmination of everything John has been building toward. It's like the climax of this grand theological symphony.

Dr. Turner's analysis of the Gospel's concluding verses provides some wonderful insight into its purpose and its intended audience. He emphasizes the evangelistic nature of the book, highlighting that it's not meant solely for believers, but for the world at large. John's Gospel is an invitation to encounter Jesus, to understand who he is and why he matters.

But even as the story seems to conclude, there's a sense that there's so much more to tell. It's like John is saying the world couldn't contain all the books that could be written about Jesus. He leaves us wanting more, even as the story comes to a close.

Shifting gears a bit, let's delve into a topic that often generates a lot of discussion, even debate: the geography of the resurrection. There are two primary sites that lay claim to the location of Jesus' crucifixion and burial. We have the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, which is steeped in tradition.

And then there is Gordon's Calvary and the Garden Tomb, both of which present their own intriguing details. The Church of the Holy Sepulcher, built on the very spot where tradition places these pivotal events, is undeniably powerful. But there's something visually compelling about the Garden Tomb, with its skull-like hill nearby.

And then we have the archaeological evidence, which adds a layer of complexity to the Garden Tomb's claim. Dr. Turner highlights evidence suggesting that the tomb there could actually date back to the First Temple period, not the time of Jesus. On the other hand, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher contains first-century tombs that align with the descriptions we have of Jesus' burial site.

It's a fascinating puzzle. Whether we can pinpoint the exact location or not, just imagining these scenes play out brings the story to life in a whole new way. Speaking of scenes, let's move on to Jesus' return to Galilee and the miraculous catch of fish.

It's fascinating that he chooses to appear to his disciples by the Sea of Galilee, a place so closely tied to their early ministry. There's a sense of coming full circle here. It's as if Jesus is taking them back to where it all began, back to the place where they first encountered him and where their lives were irrevocably changed.

It's a place of comfort, familiarity, and the promise of new beginnings. It feels like a reset button, doesn't it? After the trauma and confusion of the crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus brings them back to this familiar place, a place that holds so much meaning for them. Absolutely.

And then we have Peter deciding to go fishing. Some scholars interpret this as a sign of him giving up on being a disciple, but I think Dr. Turner makes a valid point when he suggests a simpler explanation. Perhaps Peter was simply trying to provide for himself and the others.

It's a basic human need even amidst these extraordinary events. It's a great reminder that even in the midst of these grand theological narratives, the disciples were still human beings with human needs and concerns. But this seemingly ordinary act of going fishing actually sets the stage for a profound encounter with the risen Jesus, one that leads to Peter's reinstatement.

It's such a poignant scene, isn't it? Three times Jesus asks Peter, "Do you love me? And it's impossible to ignore the connection to Peter's threefold denial of Jesus during the events leading up to the crucifixion. It's almost as if Jesus is offering Peter a chance to undo that betrayal, to reaffirm his love and commitment in an even deeper way. And this scene also sparks a lot of debate about the different Greek words for love used in the passage, *agapao* and *phileo*.

Yes, *agapau* is often associated with a more selfless, unconditional love, while *phileo* is seen as more of a brotherly or affectionate love. But I find Dr. Turner's perspective on this debate really helpful. He suggests that perhaps we're overthinking the distinction between these words.

He points out that John uses these terms somewhat interchangeably throughout his gospel, and that focusing too much on a subtle difference in meaning might actually distract us from

the heart of the story. Exactly. The emphasis isn't on parsing out the precise definition of each word, but on the fact that Jesus is offering Peter a chance to publicly declare his love and receive a renewed mission: feed my sheep.

And that instruction, feed my sheep, speaks volumes about the nature of true love for Jesus, doesn't it? It's not just about feelings or words. It's about action, about caring for those whom Jesus loves. It's a call to follow in his footsteps, to love and serve others.

It's a call to discipleship, to embody the love of Christ in tangible ways. And of course, we can't talk about this scene without addressing Peter's question about the beloved disciple. What about him? Even in this moment of restoration and recommissioning, Peter can't help but compare himself to the other disciple.

It's such a human moment, and one that I think a lot of us can relate to. Even in the face of incredible spiritual experiences, we can still get caught up in comparison and competition. And Jesus's response is so insightful. What is that to you? You must follow me.

It's a reminder to focus on our own path, our own calling, and to trust that Jesus has a unique plan for each of us. We don't need to worry about what other people are doing or how their journeys are unfolding. It's about surrendering to Jesus's leadership, no matter where it leads.

And speaking of leadership, I think it's fascinating how John's gospel subtly portrays the relationship between Peter and the beloved disciple. They're both prominent figures in Jesus's inner circle, but their personalities and approaches are quite distinct. Peter is impulsive, outspoken, and action-oriented.

He's often the first one to speak or act, even if it means making mistakes. Whereas the beloved disciple is more contemplative, introspective, and perhaps more inclined to observe and reflect. And yet they both deeply love Jesus and are committed to following him.

And their different gifts and perspectives complement each other, enriching the ministry of the early church. Absolutely. Their differences become strengths, highlighting the diversity within the body of Christ.

And then we have that intriguing passage where the beloved disciple seems to identify himself as the author of the gospel. He writes, This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. It's a subtle but powerful claim of authorship, adding a layer of authenticity and authority to the entire narrative.

It's like we're hearing directly from someone who was there, who walked with Jesus, who witnessed these incredible events firsthand. It strengthens the impact of the story, connecting us to those early eyewitnesses. And then, as we approach the end of the gospel, John leaves us with that thought-provoking statement, The world couldn't contain all the books that could be written about Jesus.

It's like he's saying, this is just the beginning. There's so much more to discover, so much more to explore. It's an invitation to keep digging deeper, to keep seeking, to keep following.

And it's a beautiful reminder that the story of Jesus, the story of faith never truly ends. There are always new layers to uncover, new insights to glean, and new ways to apply these ancient truths to our modern lives. But amidst all of this, we also see how Dr. Turner highlights the importance of Peter's role, especially within the context of the whole New Testament.

Yes, he raises a point that I found quite thought-provoking. He suggests that in Protestant Christianity, we tend to elevate Paul and downplay Peter. It's true.

Paul is often seen as the great theologian, the missionary to the Gentiles. But Peter was the rock on whom Jesus built his church. He was the one who preached the first sermon at Pentecost, who opened the door to the Gentiles, who led the early church through its initial growth and challenges.

And yet his story is often overshadowed by Paul's. Dr. Turner encourages us to reexamine Peter's role, to see his significance in the larger biblical narrative. I think that's a really important challenge.

We often focus on individual heroes of the faith, but the reality is that God uses all sorts of people with all sorts of gifts and personalities to accomplish his purposes. And Peter, with all his flaws and failures, was clearly a key figure in those early days. His story reminds us that God can use even the most unlikely people to do amazing things.

Absolutely. And that even when we mess up, even when we betray Jesus, his grace is bigger than our mistakes. He can redeem us, forgive us, and use us for his glory.

It's a message of hope and encouragement for all of us, isn't it? Absolutely. And it's a reminder that the story of faith is never about perfection. It's about grace.

It's about surrendering to Jesus's leadership, even when we don't understand, even when we're afraid, even when we've messed up. It's about trusting that he can take our brokenness and make something beautiful out of it. And as we reflect on John chapters 20 and 21, we see that theme of grace woven throughout the narrative.

It's the grace that empowers Mary Magdalene to proclaim the good news. It's the grace that transforms the disciples from doubt to belief. It's the grace that restores Peter and sends him back out on mission.

It's a grace that extends to all of us, no matter where we are on our faith journey. It's a grace that can heal our wounds, empower our lives, and send us out into the world to share the love of Jesus. Beautifully said.

And with those thoughts in mind, we're going to take a short break, but when we come back, we'll delve further into the ending of John's gospel, exploring some key themes and insights that Dr. Turner raises in his commentary. Stay with us. Welcome back to the Deep Dive.

As we wrap up our exploration of John chapters 20 and 21, I'm struck by how Dr. Turner's insights have given me a fresh perspective on these passages. It's amazing how much depth and nuance we can uncover, even in stories we think we know so well. I completely agree.

It's a testament to the richness of scripture, isn't it? There's always more to learn, more to discover, more to be challenged by. One thing that keeps coming to mind is how John emphasizes the disciples' struggle to understand the resurrection, even after witnessing so much. It would be easy to see them as slow or even foolish, but I think there's a deeper lesson here.

I think so too. Remember, the idea of someone rising from the dead was completely foreign to their worldview. Death was the end, full stop.

So when confronted with the reality of the resurrection, their initial response was confusion, disbelief, even fear. It makes their journey of faith all the more relatable, doesn't it? They were ordinary people wrestling with an extraordinary event, something that shattered their understanding of the world. And in a way, aren't we all on a similar journey? Absolutely.

We may not be confronted with a physical resurrection, but we all face moments that challenge our beliefs, our assumptions, our understanding of how the world works. And in those moments, it's okay to question, to doubt, to wrestle with the unknown. It's in that wrestling, that grappling with faith, that we often find our faith deepened and strengthened.

And ultimately, the disciples' transformation is what prepares them to become witnesses, to go out and share the good news of the resurrection. Their struggle makes their testimony even more powerful, wouldn't you say? Without a doubt. They weren't simply reciting a creed.

They were proclaiming a truth that had transformed them at the deepest level. And that transformative power is what makes the message of the resurrection so compelling even today. It's a message that speaks to the deepest longings of the human heart.

The longing for hope, for healing, for life, that transcends the limitations of this world. And it's a message that calls us to action, to follow in the footsteps of those first disciples, to become witnesses to the love and grace we've experienced in Christ. Before we wrap up, I want to circle back to a point Dr. Turner raised that really resonated with me.

The idea that we, in Protestant tradition, might be overlooking the importance of Peter. It's a fascinating observation. We tend to elevate Paul with his profound theological writings and missionary journeys.

But Peter was, as Jesus declared, the rock upon whom the church was built. He was there from the beginning, a witness to Jesus's ministry, death, and resurrection. He was the one who boldly preached at Pentecost, who opened the door to the Gentiles, who led the early church through its formative years.

And yet his story is often overshadowed. He was impulsive. He made mistakes.

He even denied Jesus. But he was also deeply loved, forgiven, and restored. His story is a reminder that God can use anyone, even those who stumble and fall, to accomplish his purposes.

So as we end this deep dive, I want to leave you with a challenge. Revisit Peter's story. See him with fresh eyes, with all his complexities and contradictions.

What might a deeper understanding of his role reveal about the early church, and perhaps even about our own faith journeys today? Thanks for joining us on the Deep Dive.