



John: The Great "I AM" Gospel
John 20:19-31
From Sermon 6.22.25

Read *John 20:19-31*

Overview from Sunday's sermon: After making His initial appearances to Mary Magdelene and the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, Jesus appears Sunday evening to 10 of the 11 Apostles. This is the start of 40 days of final resurrection teaching to get them ready to start the Church and fulfill the Great Commission. The encounter contains some powerful and profound words and exchanges. Man has both distorted and dismissed the vital truths here. We must get the meanings right.

1. Jesus makes the profound statement": *If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained.*" Does that grant a special power to the Apostles? (And, therefore, a transfer of succession power? The bishop of Rome?) Or, is it instead their (the local Church's) ability to *declare* forgiveness or retention of sin, based on Scripture, Christ's work, and repentance? Clearly the latter. The Church has the tools, blueprint, and authority to forgive and restore, not a single human being or an office. We line up with God's Word...God is not forced to line up with ours.

[Note: A huge issue in the Reformation. The translation of the word "repent" vs. "penance". It's based on individual faith vs individual works/merit.]

2. Thomas declares he won't believe the testimony of the others until he sees and touches a physical, tangible Jesus. Although Jesus grants his request, what are the dangers of signs/wonders? They can be counterfeited...and are. The devil knows human gullibility and subjectivism.

2a. Where do we see this most prevalently in today's church? In the Charismatics. As a protection and blessing, God made it very easy to spot a false prophet, a phony healer, or a counterfeit miracle worker = Anyone who prophecies, heals, or claims miracles.

2b. We don't need signs and wonders to believe and confirm faith or salvation. We have the enduring Word of God. Read and discuss the Lazarus story in *Luke 16:22-31*.

3. What powerful statement does Thomas make about Jesus' identity? "My Lord and My God."

[Important note: Jesus doesn't correct him. Thomas has come to the full truth reality that Jesus is Yahweh—the I AM.]

4. How does Jesus, again, mention you and me in Scripture? Blessed are those who haven't seen, yet believe. How is that a blessing? We then know the Holy Spirit is present to reveal Scripture.

5. How is it possible we can come to the same conclusion as Thomas but 2000 years later? 1) God's sovereign election. 2) Indwelling of the Holy Spirit. 3) The generational transfer of Gospel. Faithful men first wrote the Gospels. Their disciples accepted, learned, and transferred that sound teaching to their disciples. See also *2 Timothy 2:2*

5a. What then is *our* great commission. See *Matthew 28:18-20*
Generational transfer of the Gospel