

Hi! My name is Jessica Hajek

The title of the passage is “Stop doubting and believe!”

The book of (John) Chapter (20): From verse (19) to verse (31)

The key verse of the passage is (27)

Part I: Summarize in writing the content and meaning of this passage.

In this passage, Jesus appears to his disciples shortly after the resurrection. Now his disciples believe that Jesus is risen. Jesus told his disciples, “Peace be with you!” which granted them grace, forgiveness, trust, and love. Jesus then showed his disciples his hands and side, with the wounds from the nails and spear. Jesus showed his disciples that he had suffered and died so that their sins might be forgiven. Jesus then breathed the Holy Spirit on his disciples so that they might be sent into the world as Jesus’ first missionaries. After being sent out, the disciples returned to tell Thomas of Jesus’ return. Much like the disciples earlier, Thomas did not believe that Jesus had risen. Thomas said, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my fingers where the nails were...I will not believe it” (25). One week later, Thomas and all the disciples were again in the house. Jesus appeared to his disciples and said, “Peace be with you!” Jesus commanded Thomas to see and touch his wounds and said “Stop doubting and believe!” This was a pivotal event in Thomas’ spiritual life and helped overcome his doubt in Jesus. Thomas fell to his knees and praised Jesus as his Lord and his God. Yet, Jesus reminds us that those who believe by faith are truly blessed. The end of the chapter reminds us that the Bible is not a record of all of Jesus’ miracles so that we may also believe without seeing and be granted everlasting l

Part II: Write about one thing you learned from this passage.

I learned that it is possible to believe in Jesus through faith alone. The disciples, and especially Thomas, needed to see and touch Jesus before they would believe that he had risen. By believing by faith alone, I am not doing God a favor, but instead that I am restoring myself into a right relationship with God.

Part III: Write about how today's passage applies to you in your own situation based on when, where, who, what, why, and how.

I learned that doubt and fear prevent me from restoring myself to a right relationship with God. These days, I spend a lot of time at school and I work very hard. This semester, I am taking 5 classes because I doubt that I will be able to write my dissertation before I know everything. This semester, I also work a part-time job 3 days a week in addition to my busy school schedule because I doubt that I will have enough money. This semester, I am resentful of my friends and family who have gotten married because I doubt that I will ever find an honorable man of my own. My whole life is consumed with doubt. My family asks me, "When will you graduate?" or "When will you get married?" Not only do I not know the answer, but I doubt they will ever happen because I do not see them in my life happening anytime soon. Sometimes, I doubt that God has a plan for my life or that there is anything to believe in at all. I think, maybe we are all just specks of dust floating around the universe without any purpose or direction. But, then my brother Jeremy and sister Susanna call me on the phone and remind me to come to Sunday service or Bible study. When I come to UBF, I hear God's message and see all that Jesus teaches in the Bible, and I do not doubt any more. I believe in God and his plan for my life. As I've learned to have faith in God's plans for my life, I've realized that all things happen according to God's schedule and not my own. But like Thomas, I want to see and touch all the things I want for my life. In John's Gospel, Jesus teaches us that those who believe without seeing are truly blessed. As Jesus tells Thomas, it is easy to see and believe but hard to believe without seeing. Why do I doubt my life just because I can't touch it or see it? With patience, I have actually already seen many of God's blessings in my life: I already have a loving family, I make enough money to have a good life that is safe from violence and hunger, and I have had many successes at school because of my hard work. Why do I doubt that God will bless me in the future if he has already blessed me so much? Why do I worry about what will happen in the future instead of believing in the present? If I can stop doubting and believe in God, I know I will continue to have more positive blessings when God is ready for me to see them. Through faith, I know I will graduate, and find a good job, and find a good husband, and live a righteous life helping other people as I have been helped along the way as well. I don't have to fear what God has in store for my life, even its eventual death. As Jesus tells us in John's Gospel, "Jesus is God. Believe and have life," which means that those who believe will not die but instead have everlasting life.

Part IV: Conclude by writing your own prayer based on today's passage.

I pray that we can all learn to stop doubting and believe that God sent his son Jesus to pay the debt for all sins of man. Although we all must continue to read the Bible in order to hear God's messages and learn Jesus' teachings, I also pray that we all learn to believe without seeing. I pray that God will touch all of our hearts so that we will not doubt his plan for our lives. I pray for everyone here who is struggling with school, family, friends, relationships, their job, or money to believe that God has a plan and remember that God's love surpasses all of life's daily problems. Just like the disciples, it is easy to doubt that bad times will ever end if we cannot see it. Look at the current economy: we all see a plunging stock market, people losing their houses and jobs, and people depressed and turning to violence. We all doubt that the recession will ever end. And yet, Jesus would tell us to "Stop doubting and believe!" However, unlike the economy, if we stop doubting and believe in God, we will be granted forgiveness, peace, grace, trust, and love. Through the love of God, all of our life's troubles are made into ash. In fact, our only real problem is not money, or a job, or our friends...but it is our sin problem. I may complain about school or my job, but Jesus was hung on a cross, suffered and died! How do my life's problems compare to that? I pray that the world can turn to God and Jesus in the Bible to learn that our sins are forgiven even if we did not see Jesus risen from the cross. I pray that it is possible to believe by faith alone. Through all of our struggles, I pray that our lives we be ultimately blessed through our faith in God and Jesus.

One decision of faith: To believe by faith and have life through God.