

What is the gospel? Pt 11: (Man's response) Assurance.  
Bible reading John 20.19-31 & 1 John 5.9-13

## Blank Title

Introduction, quick summary of what has gone before:

In this series we have spent the last couple of months looking at who Jesus is - his claims, his character, his death, resurrection & ascension. We then moved on to examine the problem of sin and how there was a **barrier** that separated us from **God**, in the process we have seen how the **cross** deals with every aspect of man's need, not only in removing the spiritual debt, but putting us in credit from Jesus' account, **the great exchange**.

But that is still not the full gospel: there needs to be a challenge and opportunity to respond and appropriate what God freely offers.

**Offering gift**, at what point does it become yours? Even though it is paid for, freely offered and intended for you; you still need to receive it, and hopefully say 'thank you'.

**Mans response**: is summed up in two important words, they were actually the message that Jesus preached from the very start of his ministry, to the very end of his ministry, Mark's gospel in vs. 14-15 says;

Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God.

**Mar 1:15** "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. **Repent and believe** the good news!"

And at the end of John's gospel we have the incident with Thomas that we heard in our reading we see an excellent illustration of what 'repent and believe' means

**John 20:24-31** Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it." A week later his disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may

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believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

**Repentance:** turn around, think again, and change one's mind and purpose. As the picture suggests it is a turning away from one thing and turning towards another.

We can see it here with Thomas, he thought one thing – dead men don't come back to life, then he met Jesus, and rather than go into denial, he changed his mind and his purpose 'my Lord and my God'. Repentance is a product of an open mind, a willingness to find things out which may change everything.

**Believe:** trusting – Jesus replies with the second definition, faith is trusting. Thomas was still only **trusting his eyes**, but Jesus said there was a **greater blessing** for those who didn't just trust their eyes, but trusted what they read / heard from the Bible.

**Faith:** the **purpose of John** writing his book is so that we can believe, even though we have not seen Jesus in the flesh. It is normal for us to believe what we read in books, magazines, even newspapers, we seldom question what we learned at school because we got it from 'textbooks', if we would approach the Bible with that same straightforward simplicity and trust, then we would find ourselves growing in faith.

Faith is taking God at his word, acting like he told you the truth – when we do this it pleases him, because it shows we trust his character and his ability. We are just the same, if we say a thing it upsets or offends us if people don't believe us, it makes us out to be a liar. If you want some homework, read Heb 11, which says 'without faith it is impossible to please God' and then gives loads of examples of people who, as frail and faulty as the rest of us, trusted God's word and did what he said.

So in the light of all that God has done for us and the offer of free, full and eternal life with him, what must we do? Repent – stop trusting ourselves, change our thinking; he really is there and he loves us, and our purpose; we want to follow Jesus in

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this adventure called life. And have faith; trust that his word is true,

One way we can demonstrate that trust is by **praying**: I often teach people that we should respond like polite children; we always teach them to say 'sorry, thank you and please'

We can pray and say Sorry for having sinned, lived our lives in our own way, thank you for loving us so much that Jesus died to completely remove the barrier and provide forgiveness and eternal life, and please come into my life, help me to follow and become the person you want me to be, living a life of love, joy and peace as a child of God.

One last thing that I struggled with when I first became a Christian was 'surely this is too good to be true, how do I know that if I pray to Jesus that I really will become his follower?'

#### Assurance:

You can know

1Jn 5:11-13 And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. **I write these things** to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

John 6.47, I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life.

John 5.24, "I tell you the truth; whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from **death to life**.

The basis for knowing is God's word which never changes.

So, I would like to give an **opportunity** to pray, to say 'sorry, thank you, please' or to simply say 'thank you' for the assurance that once we belong to him, he will never leave us, no-one can snatch us out of his care, and that we have a friend forever, and life eternal. Let's pray.