

# Hanging Out with Jesus

## Jesus' Faithfulness to His Friends

Unedited Transcript

*1 Corinthians 15:5, John 20:24-31*

Brett Clemmer

Good Morning, Men. That was awesome. It's great to see you guys this morning. Glad to be with you. If you have a Bible, turn to 1st Corinthians Chapter 15, because we're talking about hanging out with Jesus so we're looking at Paul's letter to the Corinthians. Turn to 1st Corinthians Chapter 15 and let me pray for us and then we'll jump into this this morning. Father, thank you so much for bringing us together to day, Lord, to look in your word. Lord, it's an amazing thing to trace the life of Jesus as we've been doing. As we see the impact that He had on his disciples and on His followers, we want that same impact to be in our hearts and in our minds, that we would follow You more closely. That we would obey your Your teachings and Your commands. Lord Jesus, that we would allow the work of the Spirit to be visible in our lives so that when other people see us, they know that there's something different. They understand that we follow a Risen Savior. Be with us this morning, speak into our very souls, we pray, in Jesus' Name, amen.

Why would we turn to 1st Corinthians 15? Paul in this passage gives a great overview of the Resurrection of Jesus in 1st Corinthians 15 in the first few verses. What I just, in verse 5, he's giving the sequence of events here. In verse 5, he says, "And then He appeared to Cephus and then to the Twelve." This is as Paul's progressing through the story, he's really making the case for Jesus' Resurrection. Why would he do that? If Jesus didn't rise from the dead, then everything else doesn't really matter. If Jesus isn't a physically resurrected savior, then all the power that we're assuming, the teaching that He gave us, it really adds up to nothing. We need to worship a Resurrected Jesus. The Gospel Writers are very careful, very intentional all the way even to Paul, very careful about presenting us with a Resurrected Jesus. A physical, a physically present man, Jesus the Rabbi who walked around Palestine in those days and then died, physically, and then rose from the dead. Illustrating His power over death and paying the penalty for our sins.

Now that we've seen Paul's little introduction there, let's go back to John 20 and verse 24 to 31. John 20, versus 24 to 31. Let's read about Thomas. Y'all remember Thomas. "Now Thomas," verses 24, "one of the Twelve called 'The Twin,' was not with them when Jesus came." Just before this is a story about Jesus coming in and speaking to the Twelve. They call them the Twelve even though at this point there's only eleven. When Jesus appeared there were only ten, apparently, because Thomas wasn't there. The other disciples told him. Can you imagine how excited they are. "We have seen the Lord!" He said to them, "Unless I see His hands, the mark of the nails and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into His side, I will never believe."

"Eight days later his disciples were inside again and Thomas was with them. Although 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 and see my hands and put out your hand and place it in my side. Do not believe,'"

excuse me, "'Do not disbelieve but believe.' Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Have you ever, have you believed because you have seen Me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have yet believed.'" Then John goes on to say in the next few verses, "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book, but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in His name."

When we talk about Thomas, what is he often called? Doubting Thomas. Doubting Thomas. We're going to talk about Thomas and the impact of this interaction with Jesus and what we learn from it. Here's what we're going to cover today. We're going to talk about Jesus being faithful to His friends. Thomas was His friend. He was faithful even to Thomas, even though Thomas missed the first time. We're going to talk about how Thomas was really maybe a lot more standup guy than you realize that he was. Then we'll talk about how does Jesus treat his friends, how does he treat us, and then finally we'll talk about moving from unbelief to belief.

When we talk about Thomas it's really not fair to call him Doubting Thomas. It's not a fair critique of who he was. If you think about it, just start it from this passage. All Thomas wanted was what everybody had already gotten. The other guys were all there when Jesus appeared the first time and Thomas wasn't there. He just wants the same experience that they had. He wants to talk to Jesus, he wants to see Jesus. Thomas, this is probably a little bit of Thomas' temperament. "I want to touch Him. I want to put my fingers in His side. I want to know that this isn't a ... Maybe you guys were hallucinating. Or maybe it was a ghost." If it was a ghost, maybe you really did see the spirit of Jesus come back to talk to you. That's what one of the heresies was that was floating around in the first and second centuries, was that it was the spirit of Jesus that reappeared.

Thomas says, "No, I want to touch Him. I want to know that this Man that I followed around for three years is physically back from the dead. You guys saw it, I want to see it too." If you look at Thomas' history, what you really see. I want to replace the phrase Doubting Thomas in your head with the phrase Honorable Thomas, because Thomas was an honorable man. We know this from a couple of other instances of Thomas. This is not the first time that we hear about Thomas. If you flip over in your Bibles to John Chapter 11, we're going to see the story of Jesus when he goes and raises Lazarus from the dead. He's just been in a situation right before this where some of the teaching that he's done has been considered blasphemous by the Pharisees. You know what they did to the blasphemers? They stoned them. Stoning, by the way, is not just people picking up pebbles and throwing them at you. They toss you off a cliff and then when you're incapacitated at the bottom and you're easier to hit, they throw rocks at you. Usually until you're dead.

This was a very violent thing that the people wanted to do to Jesus just before this. Jesus, this is back in Jerusalem, so Jesus is back up in Galilee and He's with the disciples. He gets word that Lazarus is ill and Lazarus and Mary and Martha were brothers and sisters. You've probably heard all of those names at different times. Mary and Martha and they lived in Bethany. In fact Lazarus and Mary and Martha were also Jesus' friends and their business may have helped to support Jesus in His ministry. They lived in Bethany which was just outside of Jerusalem and it was at Lazarus and Mary and Martha's house that Jesus lived during the Passion Week.

He was staying in Bethany and then the triumphal entry. They found Him a donkey and He rode in and then at the end of the day, He went back and couch surfed at Mary and Martha's house, and Lazarus' house. That's who they are to Him. They're His friends. He hears that Lazarus is ill and he's like, "Well we

got to go see Him." The disciples are like, "Jesus, you remember we were just there a while ago and they tried to stone you. I don't think we should go back there." He says, "No. No guys, we're really going to go back," and then He says an interesting thing. He says, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep and I go to awaken him." Then a little bit farther down He says, "Lazarus has died and for your sake I am glad I was not there so that you may believe, but let us go to him."

Then Thomas says, to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go so that we may die with Him." This, I think this was almost maybe a little sarcastic of a comment. Thomas is like, "All right, if Jesus is going to go get killed, I guess we'll just go die with Him. If that's what He wants." I think Thomas probably tended a little bit toward the negative. Jesus is basically saying, "We're going to be okay if we go," and Thomas was like, "That's nice Jesus, but we're going to go, we're probably all going to die. But hey! You're the Rabbi. We're going to go with You." Thomas just steps out and I think he's a little bit like Peter. Just like, "All right let's go. Let's do it." Then if you look up, turn over another couple pages to John 14, and they're in the upper room.

Jesus has declared that someone's going to betray Him, he's given them the new commandment, He said Peter's going to deny Him. Then, He says in John 14, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in Me." Then he talks about His Father's house. "In My Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you what I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself that where I am, you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going." Thomas is the one that says, "Lord, we don't know where you're going, so how can we know the way?"

Then probably one of the most famous things that Jesus has ever said is in response to Thomas. He says, "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. Knowing that in My Father's house, the way you get there, you get there through Me. No one goes to the Father except through Me." It's Thomas. He's engaged with Jesus. He wants to know. He's not afraid to speak up. He wants to find things out and in response to Thomas, we get this great piece of theological truth from Jesus about Who He is and What He is. Then you look at John 20. I want you to think about what do we have as a result of Thomas' questions. I want to see Jesus, I want to touch Him, I want to talk to Him. What do we have because of those questions?

Well what we have is we have an eyewitness testimony. We have the Gospel Writers went out of their way to show that Jesus rose bodily. He ate with them. He talked with them. They saw Him, but Thomas touched him. If it wasn't for Thomas, if it wasn't for those questions that Thomas asked, we would not have the testimony in Scripture of Jesus, of one of the disciples touching Jesus. He was physically there. It was not a ghost. It was not an apparition. It was not a hallucination. Because of Thomas, we know that. John, the way that John wrote this Gospel, the commentators will tell you, is that He basically looked in Jesus' life and he pulled out about nine situations, nine or ten situations, that he used to basically tell the story of Jesus giving you the pieces that you needed to know.

These stories that I'm going to ... It's not the complete biography of Jesus. He pulled nine stories out that he thought did the best job of helping us understand who Jesus was. Then he tells us this story. This is in John's mind, this is one of the critical events in the history of Jesus and the life of Jesus, that helps us understand who Jesus was. He was a physical man who physically died and physically rose from the dead, and Thomas touched him. Think about this. What do we learn even about resurrection from this? You notice that in a lot of the times when Jesus appeared, they didn't recognize Him at first. Why is that? He had a resurrected body. When I think this is a picture of what even for us, our resurrected bodies will be like in the new heavens and the new earth.

I don't know if we'll have eighteen year old abs like Tim Hawkins' son. I don't know that we'll have that, but there's something about the resurrected body that is both recognizable and unrecognizable. Jesus still had the scars, and yet, He didn't look quite the same. The effects of the Fall had been removed from Him. What could he do? Well it says the door was locked. How cool would it be if we could walk through walls in our resurrected bodies? That'd be cool, huh? We know about what life is even going to be like for us as we look at Jesus post-Resurrection, we begin to see what life will be like when we are resurrected as well at the Second Coming.

Thomas is not a cynic. Thomas is not a doubter. I thought about using the word skeptic, he's just a little skeptic. He's not really even a skeptic. He just wants to be sure. He just wants to be sure. He's a loyal follower of Jesus. Out of his loyalty, he asks these questions. Because of his loyalty, we have the answers that we get. That's Honorable Thomas. We're not going to call him Doubting Thomas anymore, we're going to call him Honorable Thomas. Loyal Thomas. Thomas was a standup guy. Let's look at Jesus and his friends. We talked about how the Gospel writers are so interested in making sure that we understand Jesus' humanity. Think about it. We witness a physical birth, we witness a story from His upbringing, we hear about His baptism, His temptations. We hear about His love for children. His love for storytelling, how good a storyteller He was. Great at telling parables. He's a great teacher.

Think about Jesus. He could stand in the temple courts and in the temple courts, realize who would be there. You would have, especially during Passover, you would have people that had come in from the countryside, because everybody wanted to make that pilgrimage to Jerusalem for Passover. You would have the people that had come in from the countryside all the way, at this schooling level and education level, all the way up to the most learned people -the Pharisees and the priests. And He would stand in the temple courts, we see in the Bible, and He would teach them. From the country bumpkin to the seminary-educated professor, He would be able to communicate with them. He would be able to teach them in a way that everybody understood. It's an amazing, amazing ability that Jesus had to be able to communicate so clearly.

You remember in John 11, Jesus called Lazarus. He said, "Lazarus, our friend, is sick." "Lazarus, our friend, is sick." What does that mean? First of all, it's a very familiar reference. Basically, "Hey guys, our buddy, our buddy back in Jerusalem's sick. We got to go see him." Now Jesus also knew that Lazarus was dead or was going to be dead four days by the time He got there, but there's this familiarity about Lazarus. Even a familiarity in the way that Jesus talks to the disciples about it. I was thinking the other day about this. Jesus built the disciples as a group of friends. What's the first thing they did? The first miracle that Jesus did was where? At a what?

At a wedding. It was a party. It was a party. Jesus brought the good wine. These guys hung out together. Yes, Jesus was a great rabbi. Yes, Jesus is the Son of God walking on Earth, but He treated these guys as friends and it shows us how Jesus looks at not just the disciples, but even how He looks at us. He looks at us as friends. In John 26, we see the doors are still locked. The doors are still locked. His buddy Thomas, he missed out the first time that Jesus was there. He's frustrated. He's a little bit concerned about ... Thomas is a little bit concerned about the other disciples. "I'm not really sure you saw what you think you saw." The interesting thing is that Thomas says his, expresses his doubts, his frustrations, and then Jesus shows up and answers those questions.

Jesus wasn't in the room when Thomas expressed those frustrations. Jesus showed up after Thomas expressed that and then He goes right to Thomas. He doesn't put His hands on His hips and say, "Oh ye

of little faith." First, what He first says is, "Come here, man." Pulls up his tunic. We had a friend that worked with us at Man In The Mirror and he got injured in Viet Nam and he got shrapnel all down the back of his legs. If there were no women around, he was happy to show you his scars. You ever know guys like that? Look at that. You been around guys that like something happens, they get a gash or they get a wound of some kind, what do we all want to do? We're all like, "Hey, look. Look at that."

Then what does somebody else do? "Whoa man, you should see the scar that I have for my surgery." We like to do that. We're guys. Jesus does that. He's like, "Hey man, come here. Look at that. Clean through. You should see my feet, man. They are messed up. Took a sword in the side. Bet you couldn't take a sword in the side." Thomas looks at it and then he gets the conviction of Who Jesus is. The way Jesus treats him shows us, to me, shows us the Nature of God. What does God do? God pursues us. He could've left Thomas like, "Thomas, you just got to believe the other guys." He didn't do that. He went right. He had a personal interaction with Thomas. Thomas is going to see Him again after this. This isn't his only shot, but Jesus, because Thomas was on the inner circle, He goes to him. He takes care of him. He takes care of him emotionally so that he can see Jesus resurrected.

Jesus does this for his disciples. He just keeps showing up. Honestly, if He showed up two or three times, He walks with the guys to Emmaus, He appears in the room a couple times. That should be enough for us to know that Jesus is alive, but Jesus doesn't do that. He keeps showing up. This is what Jesus does. He keeps showing up. The disciples are scared. They're locked behind a closed door. They're not really sure what's going on. They don't know if they're next. Jesus shows up. Finally, later on we're going to read about Peter getting frustrated and say, "Well I'm going fishing. I don't know about you guys, but I'm going." Jesus shows up. Jesus keeps showing up. We probably all had, or most of us I hope, have had that experience. That in our darkest times, in our most frustrating times, what does Jesus do? He keeps showing up. He doesn't abandon you.

When your relationships are falling apart, you may feel all alone but you're not. When you lose your job or you have problems with your kids, you may feel all alone but you're not. I'm telling you you're not. Jesus is going to keep showing up, and so that's, I'm calling it a big idea because I have a couple of them this morning. This is a big idea that Jesus is going to keep showing up. That's what He does. It's part of His Nature. Why? We're His friends. If you look at John 15:15, Jesus says, "I no longer call you servants. I call you friends because I've told you everything that the Father has told Me to tell you." Well you know what? He's told us everything the Father told Him to tell us too, though the Scriptures we share that same level of knowledge with the disciples. We know what we need to know. We are in that same level of friendship with Jesus.

We didn't walk with Him personally, but we will. We will see Jesus. We will be able to do exactly what Thomas did. Now let me tell you this, when Jesus shows you His scars, please don't show Him yours. Don't get into a contest of who's scars are cooler. His scars are way cooler. We're going to have that conversation. Jesus shows up, He keeps showing up. It's what He does. Then let's look at this interaction then that Jesus says, so He says, "Put your finger here," verse 27. "Put your finger here and see My hands. Put out your hand and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve but believe." "Do not disbelieve but believe." When He says this, what He's really saying, the way, the language here is really more in the sense of, "Stop becoming an unbeliever and become a believer."

This gives us a really interesting picture of what belief is. Belief is movement. Believe is movement. It's either towards something or away from something. When you believe something, you move towards it, and when you don't believe it, when you're an unbeliever, you move away from it. Jesus is saying to

Thomas, "Become more of a believer. Become less of an unbeliever. Move towards Me. Don't move away from Me." Then He says this. He says, Thomas says, "My Lord and my God!" Why would Thomas say, "My Lord and my God"? Well think about what, this is a very important theological statement here. My Lord is that's what you would call the rabbi. My Lord. You're the one I follow. You're the man. A lord is a man in this case, that I follow. They called Caesar is Lord. That's why saying Jesus was Lord was such a big thing in those days. The phrase was, "Caesar is Lord."

The disciples wouldn't say, "Caesar is Lord," because Jesus was Lord. Jesus was their Master. Jesus was who they were following. Thomas is saying, "I recognize You, my Lord." Then he says, "and my God." Thomas gets it. Jesus is not just a man, He's God. Thomas understands and he gives us this testimony. Thomas' belief becomes, moves more towards belief than he was a few minutes ago before he had seen Jesus. Look what Jesus says this. "Have you believed because you've seen Me? Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have believed." Who's that? That's us. That's us. We have believed even though we haven't seen Him. Jesus talks right to us.

This reminds me a little bit, this idea of moving towards belief, reminds me of a guy that I knew about ten or twelve years ago. There was a group of younger guys and we were in a small group together. We met at my house every week or two and we were doing Bible study and a couple of guys were mature in their faith, but most of the guys were early in their faith. I had one guy, his name was Bill, and he was a skeptic. We would talk about something in the group and he would go, "Yeah, but ..." In my mind, I never told him this, but I'd call him "Yeah-but Bill." Everything was "yeah, but." I'd say, we'd talk about something, he'd go, "Yeah, but," and then he'd have this skeptic's question.

I was patient. Those of you that know me find that amazing, but I was patient. Week after week, he would ask these questions. He would ask these questions. Finally I had it. One day I just looked at him and I said, "Bill, you own your own business, right?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "Look, Bill. Everyday you make decisions in your business with fifty-one percent of the information. Everyday. I'm telling you man, you have way more than fifty-one percent of the information, so you either need to ... believe or not believe, but this thing of walking on the fence and just using all these questions that you have, all these doubts that you have, you're just using them as an excuse to hold God at arm's length. The more you do that, you're not pushing God away, you're backing away. God's not going anywhere, but you're backing away. Dude, seriously, I'll answer every question you have but I just want you to know that I know that you're stalling. You're just stalling. Make the call, man. I just challenge you to make the call."

He's like, "All right fair enough." This is front of the group of guys, so there was a little tension in the room when I did that. We had the group. We took about six weeks off and then I said, "Hey guys, why don't we go to the Man In The Mirror Bible study for a little while? We could do that for a season." They said, "Yeah." I remember they didn't have enough round tables, so we were actually in, they used to do oblong tables over here. That last row was oblong tables. We were sitting in one of the oblong tables and Pat had spoken. We were sitting around the table and we're all sitting around the table. A bunch of young guys, so everybody's got their hands behind their head and arms folded. We're doing the discussion time.

Bill starts telling this story. He says, "Yeah I was meeting with a guy in my business and it was weird he said something religious, so I said something religious back. Then he said something else religious, so I said something else religious back, and then he said this ... He asked me this question. He said, the guy asked me, 'Are you a Christian?'" We're all like, "What did you say Bill?" We're ready for this skeptic's answer. He goes, "Well I just told him that if, I didn't really know what he meant by Christian, but if he

meant that I believe in the Bible and I believe that Jesus was real and then He died and rose again, and paid for my sins, yeah. I believe that. I was a Christian."

You never saw eight guys go from this to this faster. We're all, and he just goes on with this story. It wasn't even with the story that he was talking about. It was just the prelude to the thing that he really wanted to talk about. We were like, "Whoa, time-out dude! What are you talking about?" He's like, "Yeah." Afterwards I'm talking to him in the parking lot and I said, "I don't understand. You always, you were such a skeptic. How did you come to this point?" He's like, "You know, it was what you said to me. You told me that all the time, I make decisions with fifty-one percent of the information and you were right. I realized I had probably ninety percent of the information. I decided to decide if I was going to believe or not believe, and I just decided it was pretty stupid not to believe based on everything I knew."

He had moved towards belief. You remember, guys, belief is not a line you jump over. If it was just a line you jumped over, then you'd never have doubts. I have doubts. You have doubts? I have doubts. I have questions. I have things I struggle with. Belief is not something like, it's not this test. It's not this loyalty test that if you answer the questions right, boom, you believe and you're done. Belief was what helps you through the doubts. Belief is what helps you handle the dark times when you're not really sure where God is. You believe. Then a lot of times belief gives you perspective. You look back on everything that's happened. You realize that He was there with you the whole time. You realize maybe the thing that you didn't get that you really wanted, that was actually a protection. That was actually God's grace at work.

You can only see it because you are moving towards belief. Guys, that's my encouragement so as this morning we need to move towards belief. Jesus calls us to move towards belief. Then and move away from unbelief. The passage closes in John 20 with this. "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book, but these, the things that he's chosen, are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in His Name."

Guys, believing brings life. Disbelief, it brings darkness and death, honestly. I want to encourage us this morning that we would believe. Guys, if you're going to believe in Jesus, you have to know about Him. It's great that we come here on Friday mornings and we spend time in the Bible study together, but you got to be in the Word more than just once a week on a Friday morning. I don't know. I know what we do. We sit in church on Sunday mornings with our smartphones and we pull up the Bible app and Facebook and CNN. Rotate between them.

Jesus wants to talk to you personally. We need teaching, but he wants to talk to us personally and he wants to talk to us with our friends. I want to just encourage you guys to keep in the Word. Keep in relationship with other guys who are moving towards belief. That's the best way that I know of. That as we lock arms together as believers in this world, as we stand up to all the attacks that are happening, all of the frustrations that we have with how hard it is to walk as a Christian in a world that doesn't really honor a lot of the stuff that we hold to be true and dear.

If we do that together, we'll strengthen each other's belief. That's my prayer for all of us. Let me pray. Father, thank you so much for this morning. Thank you for Thomas. Thank you for a man who was willing to speak up. To not press his doubts down, Lord, but just to get them out there so that You, Lord, then, in a loving way, could come and answer all of his questions. Lord, thank you for Thomas. Thank you for a man who was willing to die with You. Thank you for a man who was willing to ask questions

when he didn't understand things. Thank you for a man who was willing to express his frustration and doubt when he had it, Lord.

Thank You that he kept moving towards You and thank You for that call in our lives as well. Father, be with us as we talk about these things in our group work but also as we leave here and go out into our lives. Father, would you call us towards Yourself. Call us towards belief. Lord, make us aware of what the Holy Spirit is doing in our lives and our hearts, Lord, that we are drawn to You so that we can walk in the way that You would have us walk in this world. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.