

BELIEVE

John 20:1-9

Pastor Dennis Clanton

Woodland Church

Easter Sunday, April 21, 2019

“Early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. She said, “They have taken the Lord’s body out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!” Peter and the other disciple started out for the tomb. They were both running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He stooped and looked in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he didn’t go in. Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there, while the cloth that had covered Jesus’ head was folded up and lying apart from the other wrappings. Then the disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in, and he saw and believed—for until then they still hadn’t understood the Scriptures that said Jesus must rise from the dead.” (John 20:1–9, NLT)

For all its peculiarities and unevenness, the Bible has a simple story. God made man. Man rejected God. God won’t give up until he wins him back.

God will whisper. He will shout. He will touch and tug. He will take away our burdens; he’ll even take away our blessings. If there are a thousand steps between us and him, he will take all but one. But he will leave the final one for us. The choice is ours.

Please understand. His goal is not to make you happy. His goal is to make you his. His goal is not to get you what you want; it is to get you what you need.

Max Lucado, Gentle Thunder

1. **Believe God forgives all my sins.**

“He is the one all the prophets testified about, saying that everyone who believes in him will have their sins forgiven through his name.”
(Acts 10:43, NLT)

“We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are.”
(Romans 3:22, NLT)

Redemption means we are free from sin’s power.
Forgiveness means the slate is wiped clean.

2. **Believe God has a purpose for me.**

“Everything got started in him [Jesus] and finds its purpose in him.”
(Colossians 1:16, Message)

“It’s in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. Long before we first heard of Christ and got our hopes up, he had his eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living,” (Ephesians 1:11, Message)

As a follower of Christ, time is on my side because God has a purpose for me.

“When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.” (John 15:8, NLT)

3. **Believe God empowers me for everything in life.**

“He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless.”
(Isaiah 40:29, NLT)

“I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God’s power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God’s right hand in the heavenly realms.” (Ephesians 1:19–20, NLT)

“If we let Him...He will make the feeblest and filthiest of us into a ... a dazzling, radiant, immortal creature, pulsating all through with such energy and joy and wisdom and love as we cannot now imagine, a bright stainless mirror which reflects back to God perfectly (though, of course, on a smaller scale) His own boundless power and delight and goodness. The process will be long and in parts very painful, but that is what we are in for. Nothing less. He meant what He said.”

C. S. Lewis. Mere Christianity

4. **Believe God gives me eternal life.**

“Jesus told her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?” (John 11:25–26, NLT)

“Apart from Christ, there is no explanation for such a life.”

William Borden’s Tombstone

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16, NKJV)

“You will be saved, if you honestly say, “Jesus is Lord,” and if you believe with all your heart that God raised him from death.” (Romans 10:9, CEV)

“Nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:38–39, NLT)

“Give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God.” (Romans 6:13, NLT)

“God has made us what we are, and in our union with Christ Jesus he has created us for a life of good deeds, which he has already prepared for us to do.”
(Ephesians 2:10, GN)

“For you have been given not only the privilege of trusting in Christ but also the privilege of suffering for him.” (Philippians 1:29, NLT)

“But even if you suffer for doing what is right, God will reward you for it. So don’t worry or be afraid of their threats.” (1 Peter 3:14, NLT)

“For the word of the LORD holds true, and we can trust everything he does.”
(Psalm 33:4, NLT)

“God can’t break his word. And because his word cannot change, the promise is likewise unchangeable. We who have run for our very lives to God have every reason to grab the promised hope with both hands and never let go.”
(Hebrews 6:18, The Message)

“But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.” (John 1:12, NLT)