

Sermon Summary
2nd of Easter
7th April 2013

- John's gospel seems to end with the appearance of Jesus in which he challenges "doubting" Thomas to believe that he is risen.
- Chapter 21 appears to be an afterword or epilogue.
- If so, the main text of the gospel ends with the bold assertion that it is better to believe without seeing.
- John has particular reasons for doing this.
- His audience has never had a chance to see (too removed in time and geography) and may doubt its ability to believe.
- If John is identified as the Beloved Disciple he may also be advising him that he is not inferior to him in matters of belief.
- This startling claim, so necessary for the continued confidence of the church, is confirmed by looking back through the gospel.
- In John 6, eye-witnesses may not believe, or fail to have deep faith.
- John criticises those who believe only because their bellies are full
- Jesus' opponents see all that he has done, and heard his defence, but they have failed to listen.
- Even the disciples are shown to have been weak in faith, notably Peter.
- In stressing the quality of belief without seeing, John sends a message of hope to Christians which has lasted for almost 2000 years
- That people can believe without seeing, through God's gift of the Paraclete, the record of Scripture and the sacraments is a legacy from John which has sustained and will continue to sustain faith.

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