

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to the Gospel of John 20

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through the Gospel of John

And for the past couple of weeks, we have been looking at the portion of John's gospel that deals with Jesus' death and resurrection and these encounters that these individuals had with the Risen Christ

This morning, our text will feature the encounter that Jesus had with the individual that we have come to know as, "Doubting Thomas."

However, as we examine our text – one of the things that we can conclude about Thomas is that "doubting" was not at the heart of the matter.

Thomas didn't suffer from doubt.

Thomas had a deeper issue.

Thomas suffered from unbelief –

And the problem with unbelief is that according to the scripture's "unbelief" is a thief –

Unbelief takes away the peace that only He provides.

Unbelief takes away the joy that only He provides.

Unbelief is always trying to steal and rob those things that God is trying to do in our lives.

We can stop the work of God in our lives by unbelief.

So there is plenty of application for us through this encounter – because we can certainly identify with Thomas

Let's pray...

Paul in Romans Ch 4 –

Regarding Abraham – he writes

[Rom 4:20-25 NKJV] 20 He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, 21 and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. 22 And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness." 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, 24 but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.

[Rom 5:1-2 NKJV] 1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Hope in the resurrection, believing that God raised Him from the dead, confessing with our mouth that Jesus is Lord – we shall be saved, we will enter into that portion that was given to Abraham – “accounted to him for righteousness”

How do we become righteous in God’s eyes?

By believing, by faith

[Heb 11:6 NKJV] 6 But without faith [it is] impossible to please [Him], for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and [that] He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

So the question is – how do we get faith, how do we believe?

[Rom 10:17 NKJV] 17 So then faith [comes] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

[Jhn 20:24-31 NKJV] 24 Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.

Notice that Thomas was not with them when Jesus came -

Thomas wasn’t there in the earlier meeting that they had together – this is what we studied last week –

He failed to make that Sunday meeting

And because he failed to make the meeting – He missed the Lord in a big way.

Where was Thomas???

Some say he was disappointed, discouraged and defeated at having forsaken the Lord and at what happened on the cross – and therefore, he couldn't face the other 10 disciples.

Thomas had lost all hope for the future and didn't even want to be around his friends—so he isolated himself from everyone?

By the way, this is one of the tactics that the enemy uses – the enemy wants to isolate us from the brethren, the enemy wants us to pull away – and as we isolate ourselves, it only feeds and breeds discouragement and instead of making us better – we even become bitter.

Church,

We must seek His face, we must be in fellowship, even more so, as we see the day of the Lord approaching – we need to be here more and more

We need insulation – not isolation.

We need to come together and encourage one another.

We need to come together to minister to one another.

Some say that Thomas was afraid – that he feared for his life just like the other disciples and that is why he wasn't there that Sunday -

I don't think so –

Because is John 11

When Jesus gets word that His friend Lazarus is dead

Jesus tells His disciples that they are going to Judea

[Jhn 11:8 NKJV] 8 [The] disciples said to Him, "Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?"

The disciples knew how dangerous it would be to go back to Judea

But look at Thomas' response -

[Jhn 11:16 NKJV] 16 Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

In John 14 –

When Jesus is telling His disciples in the upper room that He is going to leave them – that He was going to go prepare a place for them (speaking about His death and resurrection)

[Jhn 14:5-6 NKJV] 5 Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?" 6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

How can we follow you?

Show us the way?

Again – shows that Thomas was fearful for his life

I believe that Thomas was not there because of his unbelief.

You see – doubt and unbelief are not the same.

Doubt is intellectual.

We want to believe but there are too many questions.

I want to believe but I doubt.

Unbelief – however, is not an intellectual problem. It is a moral problem – and that is what his problem was.

We will see later on in our text – that Jesus is not going to challenge Thomas on his doubt but on his unbelief.

BTW –

I had you make a note of

Look at verse 25 that Thomas is called the Twin –

This is something that only John brings up in his gospel – he does it three times.

Meaning that Thomas had a twin brother or a twin sister

However, the scriptures never mention who that twin is

I think the Holy Spirit did that on purpose—

I think if we want to know who Thomas' twin is—all we have to do is look in the mirror!

You see, all of us who are the brothers and sisters of 'doubting' Thomas (saved)—

We act like his twin at times!

Many of us have walked with Jesus for years as His disciples—and yet we still demand that God 'prove' Himself to us by first healing, or providing, or working in a given situation before we will believe His Word is true—

Like Thomas we cling to the motto, "Seeing is believing" which is blatant unbelief on display.

25 The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

Why wouldn't Thomas believe?

He had heard Jesus say over and over again that He was going to die and rise again.

He had already heard the testimony of witness after witness that Jesus had risen.

The phrase, the disciples said to him – in the Greek, it indicates that this is something they told Thomas over and over again.

The women at the tomb said, “He is alive – we have seen Him”

The two disciples on the road to Emmaus said, “He is a live – we have seen Him”

The 10 disciples said, “He is alive – we have seen Him”

And what is Thomas’ response to all of this?

Unless God does this – I will not believe.

In the Greek ‘I will not believe’ is in the double negative—

What he is saying here is - ‘I absolutely will not, no way will I believe.’

BTW – this is the result of not being there the previous Sunday evening

- He didn’t experience the presence of the Lord
- He didn’t experience peace with God and the peace of God
- He didn’t receive the commission – their purpose for living, their hope for living.

This is what it is all about – to go tell someone the good news. That they also might come to know the Lord

- He missed Jesus breathing upon them – the breath of life – when Jesus breathed on them and said, “receive the Holy Spirit”

For 8 days, Thomas endured grief and anguish.

He endured unbelief, misery and despair.

He forfeited peace and joy for not being there.

26 And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!"

So after 8 days, the disciples are once again locked in the room – however, Thomas is there with them.

And notice, just like the Sunday before – Jesus appears before them and stands in their midst and told them the same thing He told them the week before – “peace”

27 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand [here], and put [it] into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."

Remember what Thomas had told the disciples in verse 25 - "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

Do you think that Thomas was asking himself, “How did Jesus know what I had said?”

Because Jesus repeats Thomas’ words

“Here ya’ go, Tommy boy. You wanted to see and feel my wounds? Go for it.”

“See the evidence for yourself and then come to the conclusion that you said you were going to make – believe”

The Lord heard the conversation that Thomas had with the disciples earlier on in the week.

You see, slowly but surely – the Lord was trying to show His disciples that He is going to be gone and they are going to have a different relationship with Him

He wants them to try to understand the consciousness of His presence but not seeing Him

That He is there

Jesus makes a promise to His disciples and us at the end of the gospel of Matthew

I am with you – only on Sunday when you gather at church? No

I am with you – every time you pray? No

What He said was, “I am with you always”

Does that mean that He is the unseen guest at every meal? Yes.

Does that mean that the Lord hears and sees everything? Yes.

Jesus knew Thomas –

He knew what Thomas was going through

He knows what each one of us is going through

He knows our heart

He knows exactly what is happening

Notice - He doesn't condemn Thomas for his unbelief.

He doesn't shame him in front of the other disciples or put him down.

He is there to minister to Thomas – to meet him where he was at

And He does the same thing for you and me

And He does it in such a beautiful and graceful way – especially when He deals with our unbelief

[Heb 3:12 NKJV] 12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;

Unbelief causes us to depart from God, it causes us to depart from the Word of God, it causes us to depart from believing

Jesus is coming to Thomas and saying – “Thomas it is time for you to decide”

28 And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

The scriptures do not tell us whether or not Thomas accepted Jesus' invite and actually examined His hands or the piercing on His side –

In fact, the way it is written indicates that what Thomas saw was enough

"My Lord and my God!"

Unbelieving Thomas became believing Thomas

The evidence hasn't just led him to an intellectual conclusion; It's resulted in a personal choice. Thomas trusts IN Him for eternal life.

Thomas is the first one to worship Jesus as God

John's last mention here in his gospel, his last testimony of what the deity of Jesus Christ is all about, that Jesus is God!!!!

29 Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed.

Blessed [are] those who have not seen and [yet] have believed."

There are people that say, "You show me, you prove it to me and then I will believe – but the bible always says you must first believe and then, I will show you"

That makes all the difference

Because seeing was the requirement for faith Thomas set, Jesus met him there.

Jesus looks past Thomas and the disciples to all those they would carry their testimony to, and says the very same faith would be distilled in them without seeing.

It would not be sight, but hearing that would produce faith.

Notice that there is a blessing inherent in faith in Him

When the truth came into focus for Thomas, everything changed.

He went from despair & doubt to faith & hope.

Faith in Jesus brings confidence because we know death is not the end.

It's just the doorway to heaven.

Faith in Christ brings hope & purpose to our lives

It teaches us nothing can separate us from the love of God.

As Thomas recognized, the resurrection proves the deity of Christ.

And if Jesus is our God, then we can know that all things really are working together for our good.

30 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but **these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.**

John tells his readers here that the Holy Spirit inspired him to include seven signs or miracles that Jesus did during His earthly ministry.

And it is through these seven signs that we would believe that Jesus said who He said He is.

That these seven signs would reveal His deity and that by believing, we would have eternal life in His name.

You see, during Jesus earthly ministry – there were many people that believed –

But the question is – what did they place their belief of -

[Jhn 2:23-25 NKJV] 23 Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. 24 But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all [men], 25 and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.

So you will notice that here in John 2 – many believed in His name when they saw the signs that Jesus did – however, Jesus did not commit to them.

Why?

Because they only believed in the signs –

They didn't have the right belief.

they didn't believe in Him – they didn't believe in who Jesus is, Jesus knew their hearts.

He knew that they didn't commit themselves to Him, so He didn't commit themselves to them.

Then you get to Ch 6 –

Right before the feeding of the 5000

[Jhn 6:2 NKJV] 2 Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased.

Why did they follow?

Because they saw miracles

And notice the end result – toward the end of the chapter

[Jhn 6:66 NKJV] 66 From that [time] many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.

Why did these disciples stop walking with Jesus – because it wasn't a belief unto salvation.

It was just a belief in the miracles and the signs.

And that is the end result in that type of belief.

Faith in miracles will not save an individual.

Later on in John – we find that even the religious rulers believed in miracles

[Jhn 11:47 NKJV] 47 Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs.

They believed and how did they respond – by conspiring to kill Him.

[Jhn 5:24 NKJV] 24 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

John's point in His gospel is not only eternal life – it was so that our life would be changed.

He has promised us "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."

An Abundant life is life that keeps growing.

It's coming alive at ever deeper levels of who & what God created us to be.

No matter how deep our knowledge & experience of God, there's always more; much, much more!

As we continue to put our trust in Jesus, as we rely more completely on Him, we enter into ever increasing life

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Jhn 3:36 NKJV] 36 "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

Just like Thomas – we can cry out “My Lord and my God” or we can allow unbelief to rob us of it.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace!

