

Doubting God's Resurrection Power Thomas in The Upper Room (John 20:19-29)

We should never forget that God gave up his Son for us on the cross. And we should never forget that God brought him back from the grave by the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is not dead but alive! His resurrection is the source of God's life-renewing work in our souls, even when death causes us to doubt his saving power.

1. Doubting Thomas.

A. Sometimes it is hard for us to believe in life after death.

B. Think about this picture.

Verse 25 "'Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.'

C. Thomas was not the only one who doubted.

Most of the disciples had trouble believing in the resurrection of the body. This is at least true of the men. Luke tells us that three days after Jesus was crucified, the eleven original disciples gathered in Jerusalem with other followers of Jesus. They were discussing the testimony of some that Jesus "had risen indeed" (24:34). Suddenly Jesus was there, standing among them. According to Luke they were "startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit (34:37).

Jesus exposed their spiritual skepticism when he said: "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?" (24:38). They all had their doubts. Matthew tells us that later on, when the disciples met Jesus in Galilee, "they worshipped him, but some doubted" (Mt. 28:17).

The first disciples had this inner conflict at the very moment Jesus commanded them to go into all the world and preach the gospel. The Great Commission was given to "doubter-believers." They worshipped Jesus but also struggled to have faith, even when they were in the physical presence of the risen Christ.

2. Believing Thomas.

A. Thomas came to faith.

Thomas did say he wouldn't believe unless he could put his fingers in the nail marks or his hand in the Jesus' wounded side. Jesus did invite Thomas to "put your finger here" and "put your hand in my side." And Thomas may have done so — (27). However, the Bible never says whether Thomas took Jesus up on his invitation and touched his wounds. What it does tell us is:

Verse 28 "My Lord and my God!"

B. Notice the response of Jesus.

He didn't blame Thomas for his lack of faith or condemn him for his disbelief. He did not hold himself back until Thomas showed more trust. Jesus moved toward Thomas in love and said, "Peace be to you." He held out his hands and invited his friend to step forward in faith.

Verse 27 "do not continue in disbelief, but be a believer."

C. Jesus is always moving toward us, especially if we have our doubts.

In the face of everything fearful, he says, “Peace be with you.” He holds out his hands to welcome us—hands that were pierced with sharp nails for the payment of our sins.

Did you know that Thomas is the apostle who carried the gospel all the way to India?

3. Reasons to Believe.

A. "Because you have seen Me, have you now believed? (29)

“Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.” Jesus brings us into the picture.

Was it easier for Thomas to believe than it is for you and me? What is certain is that no matter how many doubts we have, if we believe in Jesus, we will be blessed.

B. Why believe the resurrection?

Because of the empty tomb, a problem even Pontius Pilate struggled to solve. The first eyewitnesses were women—a fact no one in the first century was likely to invent. Nearly all of the apostles sealed their testimony in blood, which they hardly would have done for a hoax. Consider the testimony of sober-minded fishermen, shrewd tax-collectors and observant doctors who tell us their stories in the biblical Gospels.

4. Blessings for Believers.

A. The meaning of our lives.

B. How will we respond to this good news?

Thomas believed and responded in faith. When he acknowledged the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, it was more than intellectual assent to a historical fact. He received Jesus as Savior and surrendered to him as Lord.

Are you ready to say, “My Lord and my God.” Are you ready to believe and surrender to the Lordship of Christ? Too often we simply don’t want to submit to His authority. We are unwilling to humble our pride, abandon our prejudice, give up our greed or surrender our sexuality.

C. How are we blessed?

We are blessed because we know the Savior, who alone has the power to forgive all our sins. We are blessed because to know him is to know the Father, who loves us and cares for us. We are blessed because the risen Lord has sent us the Holy Spirit to break the bondage of everything that holds us back from being morally pure and spiritually free. We are blessed because we have a reason to live and a message to proclaim. We are blessed because we have an unshakable hope in our own coming resurrection from the dead. We too will rise again.

Important questions:

1. What faith do I have in the resurrection of the body?

2. Do I trust God for my own resurrection from the grave?

3. Will I believe this for the people I love and one day will lose—the family and friends who die in Christ?

