

Easter Sunday Talk

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Preacher: Andy Meadows/Ben Jones

[0 : 00] Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, We've seen the Lord.

But 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, see my hands, and put out your hand and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.

Thomas answered him, My Lord and my God. Jesus said to him, Have you believed because you've seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.

[1 : 04] 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.

Good morning. Well, while I read out the words of Andy, it is of course God that we want to hear. And that's what we're going to pray just before we begin.

So let's bow our heads again. Heavenly Father, we thank you on this Easter morning that we remember Jesus' return from the dead. And we pray, Lord Jesus, as we hear your words from the Bible this morning, that you change us, that we recognize the truth of that wonderful news on that Easter Sunday, and that today we leave church excited with news of eternal life ringing between our ears.

Amen. Right, I do need a volunteer before we start. Callum, you shouted the loudest. So you come to the front. Now, Callum, you come.

Come on. Come on. I've become, don't be shy. I've never known Callum to be shy, but there we go. Now, Callum, I want you to have a look in a box for me. Now, no one in the room can see what's inside this box.

[2 : 18] Callum is going to see what's inside it, and he's then going to explain to you what is in it. You need to decide whether you believe him or not. Okay. So, Callum. So, it's jelly with a frog in it, and a silver one.

A silver one. What? It's a car. It's a car. It's a car. Now, can you put your hands up? If you believe...

That sounds like utter nonsense to me. Can you put your hands up if you believe what Callum has just said? He thinks there is jelly with a frog in it and a car. So, it would be less than half.

Callum. Oh, my God. I'm quite a bit of a physical now. Pathetic, Callum. You managed to convince less than half people sitting here.

What would it take, do you think, for people here to believe what you've just said? Or, you could throw it on everyone. You could throw it on them. You could throw it on them. Or, in a less potentially messy way, what could we do?

- [3 : 22] Show it to them. We could show it to them. The people here could ask to have a look at themselves. And, sure enough, here is jelly with a frog in the car and very other...
- Wait a minute. That's a car. There are various other things inside. I have to say, at this stage, my plans for this were very much different. I expect that this is a beautifully moulded jelly. Anyway, this is what I've said this morning.
- Callum, thank you very much for doing. And it's great. You can hope to service that later on. Well, some of you believed. Here, some of us doubted what Callum just said.
- But if we had doubts, what might we ask? We'd want to see it for ourselves, wouldn't we? Well, this morning, we're thinking about the Easter story. And we're going to be looking at a disciple called Thomas. Thomas is known as the patron saint of scepticism.
- We sometimes call him Doubting Thomas, don't we? And some of you refused to believe Callum here unless you saw it for yourself. Well, Thomas refused to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead unless he'd seen it for himself.
- [4 : 30] And the first thing we're going to see from the verses that we've had read to us already this morning is this. Jesus really did rise from the dead. Believe the eyewitnesses.
- Jesus really did rise from the dead. Believe the eyewitnesses. So if you could turn back to the passage. If you close the Bible, it would be great to open it on page 1093 again.
- And we're looking at John chapter 20, verse 24. Verse 24. Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the twin, was not with them when Jesus came.
- So the other disciples told him, we've seen the Lord. But he said to them, unless I see in 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.
- The disciples tell Thomas about how they saw Jesus. But poor Thomas, he wasn't there. He missed it. Maybe he was held up at a meeting or perhaps his hockey match overran.
- [5 : 35] Maybe he fell over at a football match and broke his collarbone. Who knows what it was. But in effect, Thomas lays down a test. He says, no matter what my ten friends say, I want to touch the evidence with my ten fingers.
- Otherwise I just won't believe. And we may know some people ourselves, might we, who think along the same lines. We're only colleagues at work or friends at school. People in our family who say they won't believe unless, I don't know, unless Jesus was to appear in front of them.
- If Jesus came down and stood in front of me, then I will believe. Now Thomas refuses to believe the disciples. But then he's given extremely persuasive evidence.
- Have a look down at verse 26. Eight days later, his disciples are 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 disbelieve, but believe.
- [6 : 42] Jesus says, Thomas, I am here. Perform all the tests you like. And how did Thomas react? Verse 28.
- My Lord and my God. My Lord and my God. Thomas saw the evidence for himself. A real, physical Jesus in front of him.
- Raised from the dead. And he's left with no uncertainty. Jesus is alive. Jesus is God himself. And what does he do? He worships him. This is the thing.
- Was it right for Thomas to not believe his friends, the disciples? Well, Jesus says, no, he should have believed. And he gives Thomas a little telling off. Look down at verse 29.

Jesus says to him, have you believed because you've seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. In other words, Thomas, you believe I'm alive again because you've seen me.

[7 : 44] But really, you shouldn't have needed to because you already had all the evidence you needed. Now, in law courts around the country, if someone sees a crime taking place and comes to court as an eyewitness, people have to think about whether that eyewitness can be trusted.

Likewise, whether you believe that Callum, when he said that there was some bowl of jelly with a frog in it, the only way you were able to trust Callum, those of you who did, those six of you who did, was if he was there, if he was trustworthy.

Now, Callum, those of us who know him, is obviously a trustworthy person, isn't he? Isn't he? And we should trust what Callum says he saw.

Well, Thomas should have believed Jesus rose from the dead because the eyewitnesses were completely trustworthy. Thomas knew these people really well. He'd spent three years with them.

He knew they were honest men. They had Jesus' authority to start churches. And in a court, they would have been credible eyewitnesses. Now, for us today, we're in a similar position to Thomas.

[8 : 54] Just like Thomas, we haven't seen the risen Jesus with our own eyes. But also like Thomas, we have the eyewitness evidence of trustworthy people who did.

Thomas heard it in the flesh. We read it today in the Bible. Facebook has recently released tips for spotting fake news online.

And among them is this piece of advice. They say, check the evidence and investigate the source. Ensure that the story is written by a source you trust with a reputation for accuracy.

Well, when it comes to Jesus rising from the dead, Thomas should have trusted his source. And so should we. Because in our hands, those of us who are holding a Bible, we have access to the same accurate eyewitness testimony.

So if you wouldn't consider yourself a follower of Jesus here this morning, would you check the evidence? Have a look at the source? Because this is not fake news.

[9 : 58] The disciples are trustworthy eyewitnesses and accurate reporters. Jesus really did rise from the dead. Jesus did really rise from the dead.

Believe the eyewitness testimony. But why does that even matter? So what if Jesus did rise from the dead? Well, the second thing to grasp in these verses is that Jesus really did rise from the dead so we can have life.

Jesus really did rise from the dead so that we can have life. John has written an eyewitness account about Jesus for a very specific purpose.

Have a look down at verse 30. 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.

That seems a rather odd thing to say, doesn't it? By believing in Jesus we have life in his name. And you might be thinking, well, hold on, why do I need someone to give me life? I'm alive, I'm living and breathing, I'm moving, I can move my arms.

[11 : 12] But the truth is, if we're not a follower of Jesus, we are, well, we're no more alive than this branch, which I chopped off a tree earlier this morning.

I'm sorry about that, Katie. I do indeed. You see, is this branch alive? Well, yes and no. It's green. It's blossoming. It's vibrant.

It leaves sticky stuff on my jacket as I got into the car this morning. Cells are whizzing and whirring around the leaves. Maybe even the leaves are growing. But no, cut this from the tree.

Cut it from its source of life. And this branch isn't really living at all. It's just going to slowly wither to death. And it's the same with us and God.

Because our sin has cut us off from God. You see, all of us have wanted to live with ourselves in charge, instead of living with God in charge.

[12 : 13] We may not have said it out loud, but that is how the world lives. And being cut off from God means that we're cut off from the source of life. Our cells are whizzing around and whirring.

We're moving and growing. But without a trust in Jesus, we're not really living. Not living at all. And one day we will live no more. But the amazing message of Easter is that through putting our trust in Jesus' death and resurrection, we have new life now, as it should be lived.

Our sin is taken away. Today we live with Jesus in charge, with an amazing eternal life, to come with God himself. If we're not following Jesus this morning, humanly speaking, we may have everything.

We may be healthy and wealthy. We may get the top grades. We may have a bright future, a steady job. We might be blossoming and vibrant, but without Jesus, really, we've got nothing.

But Jesus died and rose again, so that we can have life. By believing in the reliable, accurate eyewitnesses, and putting our trust in Jesus, we have eternal life in his name.

[13 : 29] Jesus really did rise from the dead. Believe the eyewitness testimony. Jesus really did rise from the dead. We can have life. When Thomas became convinced that Jesus really did rise from the dead, he responded in joyful worship to Jesus as God himself.

Well, this Easter, may we do the same. May we do the same, to come to believe that Jesus really did rise from the dead, and that by believing, we have eternal life in his name.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you again for the resurrection of Jesus, and that promise, that through believing, we may have life in his name.

Lord, please help us to respond to this great news today, with words like those of Thomas' my Lord and my God. Amen. Let's pray.

Bible author, while we're wrong with his name, let's pray on God, we laugh for the beautiful Sh consume. Let's pray.

[14 : 43] We love you. Let's pray. Let's pray. Pray on God. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Amen. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. And sincer please, let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray back now.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.