

# John 20:24-29

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Date: 11 August 2024

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[0:00] Good morning. Today's scripture comes from John 20, 24 to 29.

! Eight days later, the 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 and 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 have seen me?

Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. Christ, this is the word of the Lord. Amen. Good morning, everyone.

[1:33] My name is Jim Gancars. I'm a member here at Shoreline. I have the privilege of diving into God's word with you today as we look at the story of Thomas, of doubt, a doubt of faith, a doubt of the resurrection of Christ Jesus.

And there's a lot here in these five verses that we're going to get to take a look at. So let's open in prayer that God would illuminate his word this morning. Father, we ask that you would give us eyes to see, Lord, spiritual eyes to see you alone, to see you, God, high and lifted up on your throne, to see Christ Jesus raised from the dead, to understand from your word, Lord, and would you illuminate to it something that's applicable to us today on August 18, 2024.

Father, would you speak to us, Lord, through this text, that you would receive glory and honor through that, that we would be lifted up and encouraged by it. Father, convict us in areas where our lives have been contrary to what you would have us do and what your law requires.

And Lord, would that lead us into repentance and to cast our cares and concerns upon the cross that Jesus Christ died upon and then radically was resurrected. And finally, Lord, we ask for your perfect presence, Lord, here today.

And we thank you for your Holy Spirit that indwells in us, those of us who believe in Christ Jesus and have accepted the Holy Spirit. And would he be fully present here today. We pray this in Christ's perfect name. Amen.

[3:03] So, question. Question for everyone. This is just something to ponder on while we go through this text here. Have you ever thought of your faith as a blessing? Right? As a blessing.

Even more so, a gift. Have you thought of your faith as a gift? Or perhaps are you thinking of it more as something that you exercise and work and do? Scripture says, contrary to that, Scripture says that we have been saved by faith alone, and that is by grace it is a gift and not by our own doing. And Christ is going to confirm that here in today's text, that it is, in fact, a blessing. But it's crazy when you think that our belief is something that we can't attain in our own power.

We're living 2,000 years after the death and resurrection of Christ, so we don't have the incarnate Jesus in front of us. We live in a world that's suffering and dying, and there's war going on and famine and sin and death.

So all these things you think would be pushing us down to saying, how could we have faith in it? Where is he? Where's God? Where's Jesus? And yet here you stand this morning, brothers and sisters in Christ, divinely inspired and personally blessed by the Holy Spirit, to come in and worship a God, the author and creator and perfecter of our faith.

[4:09] What? Why? Why? What is this? What is this faith? Is it of, again, is it of our own doing? Scripture says otherwise. And it is not. It is the work and person of Jesus Christ that has then led you by the power of

the Holy Spirit to be convicted into having a faith in who he is.

A faith that can be sure, that has a count in the word, which we'll look at, and one that we can rest and treasure in mightily. So we're going to recap where we're at.

Pastor Mike gave us an awesome sermon last Sunday about Jesus coming. He is resurrected. He revealed himself to Mary Magdalene. And the disciples, they're locked in their room.

They're fearful of the Jewish leaders who might come and arrest them, possibly crucify them, just like they did to Jesus. And there's fear. There's definitely fear here right now, right?

Until the presence of Christ comes. And I like this because, I mean, who doesn't? It's Jesus. He's resurrected. Hallelujah. But the dude comes through without opening a locked door.

[5:10] He enters in. Are you kidding me? Jesus enters into this room through a locked door. It just says he appears and stands before them. And the first thing he says is, peace be with you. Peace.

Now, there had to have been fear. Anyone ever seen Jesus walking on you, maybe making pancakes, something like that? He said, I have not. I wish. That'd be awesome. But I would think initially there'd be a little like, I didn't even see you on the Arlo.

How did you get in here? Like, that's radical. But then he enters in. So that happens. He says, peace be with you. He then breathes on them, which is a reference to the power of God, of the Holy Spirit, and then re-emphasizes the commission and the mission that he has for them, which is to go and to prepare and share this gospel.

And so they stay in the room. And we know that because that's what happens next. So they stay in this room. And we're going to find that the very presence of Christ Jesus is a blessing to the disciples.

And it's a blessing that Thomas missed out on, unfortunately, at least this initial one. So we look at this first verse. It says, now Thomas. Now I'm going to stop right there. I know this is like a little nerdy, right? But whenever you see that word now or but in the scriptures, it's worth taking a pause and being like, whoa, okay, what's going on here?

[6:21] Because many times if it's with God, but God, it's going to be something of high supernatural power or something just of worth resting your mind on. Here's a couple examples.

Peter said, you killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. Paul says, but God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise. Notice these are always these radical things that God can only supernaturally break through, that man could never on their own power.

This last one, Paul said, I planted, Apollos watered, and this is applicable to today's sermon, but God gave the increase. It was God who has done a work in the heart of a believer to come to a maturation of faith.

But here we see, now Thomas, again, but Thomas. And when we see with those kind of words, with man, it tends to be of like a bit of a low state. Not necessarily always a bad behavior or action by that person's behalf, but recognize the context.

And here's some examples. But Simon Peter, it said, while warming himself, would deny Jesus three times. Right? We read that just a few chapters before. But Mary was weeping at the tomb. That was Mary Magdalene, right?

[7:24] So again, in a low state. And then here we see, but Thomas was not with them when Jesus came. That is a low, that's a bummer. Where was Thomas? Where was Tom? What was he doing? We don't know.

Short answer, Scripture doesn't say. Scripture doesn't say. Now, it's kind of interesting, though, because what are some things we can infer by that? Well, the rest of the disciples were afraid. They were kind of in hiding.

They were in a locked room. And Thomas left that room. So that's kind of interesting. It makes you wonder, like, was he not afraid? We don't know. Scripture doesn't say that, okay? I'm not trying to add, but it does make you wonder, where were you?

You didn't have a buddy, man, a buddy system. There's 11 of you. You could have brought some. Nope, by himself. Scripture doesn't say. There's some scholars that believe that it is perhaps he was intentionally not there. Doesn't say that, though.

Let's be clear. It does not say that. But that's just an interesting thing to try to think of. Why wasn't Tom there? Where was Thomas at? Was he downcast? Was he sullen? Was he angry? I know for

one thing, it's in here for a reason, and that's going to be preached on the next week by Matt.

[8:23] Yeah, brother. It's so that we may believe. Believe it or not, the absence of someone here is going to be for the bolstering of the faith of those who would read this beautiful gospel message. This isn't the first time we've seen an absence of a person be an important element and aspect of the raising and building of one's faith.

Most predominantly, think of Jesus' absence, so to speak, at the death of Lazarus, right? Mary and Martha. If you were just here, Jesus, he would have lived. And what does he say?

It's better that I wasn't here. It's actually better for you that I wasn't here, because you're about to see the glory of God on full display. Check this out, and then we know what happens there. Raises him from the dead. Hmm. Same situation.

So Thomas is not there, and yet we're going to look at three points of a blessing that Jesus' very presence brings. Okay, one of them is a little bit of a past. What's already happened?

And that's the first one. If you're taking notes, number one, the blessing of a testimony. This is something we share with, by the way. A blessing of a testimony. With a joy-filled testimony, the other disciples would have shared with Thomas, hey, you missed it.

[9:28] I can't believe you missed it, man. You missed it. Jesus is raised from the dead. He came in here. He stood with us. By the way, the door was locked. Door was locked. He came in. He stood with us. He brought peace to us.

He breathed on us. Man, you missed it, brother. And that presence, it said, I don't want to say unfortunately, but our translation, like Mike said, it's too low, where it says, and they were glad. How would you feel? I was very glad, Lord Jesus. Thank you for coming in. This is wonderful. I think it was joy. This is someone they've been walking with and listening to, and they have been getting in the mud and getting dirty with, who has died on the cross.

They wept for this guy. They scattered when he was arrested. And now he's come back to them. And with his presence saying, peace be with you. I am alive. Conquered death. Conquered death. I told you this.

I told you. Three days. Ain't no grave keeping me down. Right? And he comes back. And so with this joyful testimony, they would share this with Thomas. Now, remember, I just talked about that whole, now Thomas, but Thomas, what's happened later in here?

[10:30] Because we've seen the Lord, is what the disciples said. But he, Thomas, but Thomas said, unless I see the marks of his hands and the marks of the nails and place my finger in the marks of the nails and place my hand in his side, I will never believe.

Now, I know there's a lot of engineers in this room, software coders, right? This is a logic statement, okay? We're going to get a little nerdy here, okay? This is a straight up logic statement. If X and Y and Z, then potato.

We can write our own variables here. So, this is what a radical requirement, ultimatum, that our man Tom here is giving. He says, basically, unless these things happen, I will never believe. I find it almost interesting, and I definitely don't want to bash Thomas here, okay? Because a beauty of this is that, again, this is for our faith, and this is us. This is absolutely us. I don't know about you guys. I cannot say with full conviction, if I missed out on Jesus coming in and ten guys that I rolled with for a while told me that, I can't say with full conviction that I would be like, well, right on. I believe it. I don't know. And I don't know about you guys, but I'll tell you so much for me, that would be hard. I can understand that. We could relate to Thomas here, but he gives a radical proclamation. He doesn't keep this in his head where he's like, hmm, okay.

[11:44] He says to them, unless these things happen, I'll never, never believe. An absolute word. He could have phrased it, well, if I saw him, then I believe. So, to me, and to some Bible scholars, we got a spiritual battle going on here.

We're in the heart and mind of Thomas, do we not? Where he, he's doing a lot more than just, unfortunately, renouncing that what these guys said was true.

There's actually a lot more to that when we look at the context or the suppositions that are happening here. One of them is, he is in verbalizing this and saying this, he's not heeding the words

of Christ that Christ told the disciples.

Right? He said, the Son of Man will be crucified and die and he will be raised in three days. And there are definitely some contexts in Scripture where it says the disciples are confused by that.

Like, what do you, what do you mean?

That's kind of one of the first things Christ came rolling out of the gate with, if you recall, at the, at the temple. When he says, you tear down this temple, we'll rebuild it in three days. And again, at the time, the Jews are confused by that.

[12:45] But he went and then would explain what, what that meant. He meant himself, his body, he would be resurrected to life in three days. And Thomas was, was not heeding that. So that's, that's kind of one supposition we can glean from this.

A second one is that he's not respecting a testimony from ten close and dear brothers. So close, so tight, so together that Jesus said, you are now clean when Judas left of them.

Remember that? I mean, they said, you are now clean. So the eleven of these guys, there was a clean, a cleanliness, there was a tightness, a bonding between these eleven men who had seen the raising of the dead and Lazarus, who had seen the healing of the blind, who had seen the lame walk, who had seen all these radical things that only Christ Jesus had and could do, things that they knew were, were not the power of man and were the power of God.

And, and unfortunately, in this, in this moment and hearing this testimony, the Lord was here, we saw him, he showed us his hand. I knew I was going to drop that. Sorry, the windscreen, gone.

Look at my hands, look at my side.

He showed this to him. They would convey this back. And instead, what we kind of have here is, who's familiar with Chronicles of Narnia? Right? If you're not, oh, come on, all hands should be, oh, no, I'm kidding. Highly recommend if you haven't read it.

[13:58] Yeah, James, all right. Highly recommend if you haven't read those awesome books by C.S. Lewis. My son's going through them right now. We just finished going through the book, The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe. Now, why am I saying all this?

Thomas is having kind of a moment here that's reminding me and maybe some of you of an element in that book. Do you remember when Lucy comes back from the wardrobe, right? She's entered Narnia. And she tells them of this and what happens later.

Okay, so, wow, I'm blanking on all their names. The oldest two. The oldest two go and they see the professor who's Diggory, all right? So if you guys read the next book, sorry, 70-year book, I think I can spoiler alert here.

That's Diggory, really cool, okay? He says, he goes, well, why are you not believing her? If she's trustworthy, right? Logically, she must be telling the truth. And Thomas is kind of having that where he's either saying that they're telling lies, they're mad, or they're telling the truth.

And in this moment, he's deciding to believe that they're telling lies or they're mad, right? We know that just based off his response. Really? These 10 guys, again, that you've known and shared and eaten with and slept alongside, like they have been places.

[15:05] They've seen some stuff, right? And unfortunately, in this moment, we can glean that Thomas' response is to not respect this testimony. What else? What else can we suppose and realize from this?

Well, he's essentially putting the Lord to his test, to the test. Thomas is saying with those words, with this strong, I will never believe, that there are conditions for his faith to be in the resurrection of Christ.

To believe that Christ has actually been resurrected from the grave, it requires these conditions, and he gives that ultimatum that we talked about. And he says never. Pretty radical.

I can't think of time, I mean, I don't know about you guys, right? You read through the scriptures, and there are times and moments where you read someone speaking honestly, maybe a little too honestly, at least it feels that way, to God. Where were you?

Why, Lord, why have you done this? You read like through Job and some of the Psalms, and you're like, ooh, who are you talking to? Be careful. And that kind of, I get that vibe here. I don't know if you guys do. Get that vibe.

[16:03] I will never believe he says ardently. Well, I think this would lead to a fourth and final supposition here, just as a realization. This

has got to be a discouragement to the ten other brothers in Christ.

Right? They, I've said this before, but they have to be thinking, hey man, you know us. We're telling the truth. There's ten of us. Ten of us saw him. He showed us his hands inside.

Again, we lived together, we ate together, we prayed together. And you don't believe us? You know, I was reminded of, this is a dumb reference, man.

Kelly's Heroes. You ever seen that movie, right? From the 70s? There's a line in there, Sergeant Aubal says, here you go with those negative waves. Have a little faith, baby. Have a little faith. Is that what some of these guys, is that what they're saying?

You know, come on. Thomas, you know us. You know what we've seen. Why would we lie about this? And I think we can glean something heavy from this. Have you ever been in the presence of a brother or a sister or a friend?

[17:05] It doesn't have to be spiritual. It could be quite honestly anything. And they're not believing what you're sharing with them. That could hurt. Right? That could hurt, can't it? Especially if they're family. That could hurt. That could be divisive.

That could make you feel like, man, I thought we had this common ground that we have shared. We were, that hurts. And I think this is a good reminder for us in our evangelism. That in spite of the most powerful, joy-filled testimony, that may not turn a hardened heart.

That may not turn a hardened heart. In fact, it won't. Remember that verse we read about, I watered Paul, and Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. Only God can change the hardened heart. Only the Lord God, only Jesus Christ can transform a heart that has been hardened to a spiritual truth and have it transformed into a radical heart of what we're going to see later is the explosion of the world seeing the gospel of Christ.

That these men would then, literally it says they flipped the world over. The world has been flipped on end. Now, there's a theme that's throughout this whole gospel, and that's of evangelism and apologetics.

[18:11] Again, I'm trying not to steal the thunder next week, but John, an eyewitness of all these things that has happened, has said that these things are written so that you might believe. And that's essentially what these ten guys are trying to convey to Thomas.

In this moment, we're talking specifically about the resurrected Christ, not who Jesus is per se, but right now he believes that Jesus is dead and gone. And despite of what Mary said, I don't know where his body is.

So I think we can relate to that too, right? But know that in your evangelism, your ardent faith and testimony may not, and probably will not, have the radical impact we may think it may have.

That doesn't mean a seed isn't planted, and that doesn't mean we should not go. Absolutely we should go. And absolutely what these brothers did was important and necessary, and we'll see that as we continue. It is kind of funny, right?

So John wrote those words, that this is written so that you might believe. Knowing what happens, knowing that Thomas will have a beautiful moment with the Lord, do you think later when John was writing this gospel, he said, Thomas said to John, like, don't put that in there.

[19:21] Don't put that in there. I know, I know. I know what I did. I know what I said. No one else needs to know that. I'm not saying they did, but it's kind of funny to chew on that, because they are there, and it's for our faith.

It's for us to believe. Seeing these real, real talk moments of the folly of man, those moments like when Peter, Peter, I don't know how to say anything else, when Peter's being Peter, are relatable, aren't they?

We've been through those kind of moments before. We're in our rashness. Well, Lord, we'll do this, right? Or out of fear, we ran and kept our mouth shut, and we're afraid to share the gospel of those moments.

It's so good that God has allowed us to see these weak moments in flesh to realize the great power of God, because that's exactly what this is. All right, so this is where we're at.

Thomas has just made this radical exclamation, one that has many suppositions to it, and what happens next? It says, eight days later, his disciples are still inside, so they're inside, even though

Christ had come before them, and they now know, and they have a testimony, that God has risen Jesus Christ from the dead.

[20:28] There is still a fear that has kept them inside. It's still a fear that's kept them inside. And it says, eight days later, Thomas was with them this time. Tommy's here. The doors are locked.

Once again, Jesus comes through and stands among them. Love that. Doors are locked. Thanks, John. Thanks for writing that, because again, it shows the supernatural power of God. Makes you wonder about our resurrected bodies.

Can we walk through physical things? I don't know. Right, but God is of spirit, and there's going to be a new heaven and a new earth, but I tell you, when I read that, I can't help but think, man, what's that going to be like? Jesus just shows into a rock locked room.

Wow. So this whole eight days, we don't know what happens. I'd be curious, and it's something to just think about. Do you think the disciples are probably trying to persuade Thomas? Man, I know what you said.

Eight days back. I know what you said yesterday. I know what you said five days ago. But brother, we saw him. There's ten of us. Come on, man. Really? So Christ shows his power. He comes in through locked doors, and once again, his entrance to them is, peace be with you.

[21:26] And this is going to be the second blessing we see here, the second point, if you can take a note. It's number two. It's a blessing of peace. All right? He brought a blessing of testimony to the ten other brothers who would tell Thomas what happened, and now he comes in and he brings peace, and it's more than just words.

He doesn't just say, peace be with you, because what does he do immediately after saying that? Scripture says that he turns to Thomas, and he says, put your finger here. See my hands? Put out your hand. Place it in my side. Don't disbelieve. Believe. How did he know what Thomas said? Scripture doesn't say that.

Scripture doesn't say that Jesus was, you're up to the door with a glass. I'll get you in eight. You just wait. Eight days, I'll be back, and I'll show you. I think this is cool because it's one of those little microchasm moments of seeing, again, the almighty power of God, that he is omniscient and omnipresent, omnipotent, and he hears our declarations.

Now, he could have come back and instead been like, hey, Tom, how dare you? He could have come in like wrath. Have I not told you in three days I would rise? What are you, and you're not believing in me?

[22:34] But he comes with this individual, personal, relatable moment to Thomas and gives him the opportunity. He didn't have to entertain Thomas' ultimatum, did he? But that's Jesus.

That's Jesus. And he brings this peace, again, a peace that we know from Scripture says it transcends all understanding. And it's aptly fitting that he has the title the Prince of Peace. He brings this peace in here in this turmoil. Right now, we've got ten on one almost, right? A disturbance in the brothers. And he comes in and he says these words to the contrarian heart of Thomas.

Now, is Thomas in a peaceful state right now? I think we'd say no. I think we would agree that, no, he's not. He's in a contrarian state towards his brothers in a contrarian state towards Jesus Christ. And some Bible scholars believe that, well, let me take a step back, we have very little to glean from the Bible about who Thomas is. We know that his Aramaic name is Thomas and his Greek name, Didymus, means twin.

[23:38] All right? So we know he's a twin. We don't know what a twin of, or who his brother or sister is, but he's called Twin. We also have him recalled in the Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, just his name, that he's named as one of the disciples.

But in John, we get three instances where he's shown. And so some Bible scholars glean from what he says here, that is it possible that Thomas may have been quick-tempered? Maybe. Doesn't say that, so this is a supposition, okay?

It's not sure. But let's look at the other two moments that are talked about with Thomas. One of them is John 11, when he exclaims, well, let's go and die with him. Let's go with Jesus and die with

him.

Kind of showing it's Peter there, right? Kind of showing off the brusque, exclamatory nature that Peter has sometimes. The other example we have is in John 14, when Jesus says, where I'm going, you cannot come.

And he goes, well, we don't know where you're going. How do we know the way? How do we know the way to come with you and follow you? Is it possible? And then we have this third one, this declaration of a lack of, I will never believe.

[24:45] Never believe. That word never is huge. So I think absolutely, he's in a place of irritation and turmoil and conflict with God. He's contrary with Jesus right here and definitely with his 10 brothers.

And so what happens is Christ comes in and there's in this immediate, awesome peace that happens. And that's seen in the next verse. All right? So Christ enters. He brings this blessing of peace into the room to be like a salve and to heal and to reunite.

And you can only imagine that maybe the disciples are thinking, told you. Tom, look. Look. T-dog. Check it out. I, I, I, I'm glad you're here now.

Right? I can only imagine. I, I, we don't know. Right? And I, I jest, but I, but in all seriousness, think, think about practically if you were in the room with Thomas. Would you not want to be like, buddy, buddy, get over here.

Look, it's Jesus, man. He's alive. He's alive. And Jesus would speak directly to Thomas. Speak directly to him and he'd address his thoughts and his ultimatum. Again, he would entertain that. We're going to get to Thomas' response in a bit, but I think we have a parallel here.

[25:54] A parallel to another disciple that's worth like just like camping out on for a second. And that's Nathanael. Guys, remember how Jesus met Nathanael? Right? Philip, Philip came to Nathanael and said, hey, man, you got to come, come with me.

We're going to see this guy. And he goes, nothing good can come out of, out of Nazareth. Are you, this guy? Okay, we'll see. Right? Kind of makes this glib comment of like, meh, meh, meh, meh. Right? We'll see.

And he comes along and Jesus says, look, here is a man of no, a Jew of no deceit. And he goes, do you know me? Right? And Nathanael says, do you know me? How do you, how do you know that? And he goes, yeah, when you were sitting under the, under the fig tree talking to Philip, I saw you.

Now we know just from like the walk and from, et cetera, in scripture, like this, this isn't just a physical seeing. This is a knowing that is the supernatural Jesus Christ. It is the, it is, it is the power of God in Jesus that he knew and saw Nathanael.

And what is Nathanael's response? You are the son of God, the son of man. He declares him as Lord, my master. You are the son of man. And that's really cool to see this radical transformation, which very much so parallels here to what Thomas is about to say.

[26:59] Right? This huge, huge change, this bringing of peace in the, like a foregoing of a, wait, where, you're from that neck of the woods? I don't think anything good comes from there. That's, that's not what Nathanael says. No, he declares him as the son of God.

Now, this bringing of peace, this, this, this peace that Christ Jesus brings into the room with the brothers. How can we apply that to ourselves? How, how can we, how, what does this, what does this mean to us today here?

Well, I, I think we can do that by, by asking some practical questions. In your life, is there a lack of peace? You have a lack of peace? I know some, some of you do.

I know, you know, at times my, my family certainly does. Right? Whether it's a conflict between my spouse, between my kids, between my, you know, extracurricular family, whatever you want to call it. Um, you know, the ones like arts and math.

No. Um, sorry. Um, but, but is there, is there conflict there? Perhaps? Is there conflict even between you and God? Maybe there's bitterness there. Right? Um, if anyone's gone through a loss of a child, that is an opportunity for bitterness.

[28:03] I could speak, I could speak to that. So I'm, I'm with you. That's a painful time, isn't it? Lord, why, why is he or she taken? That's hard. So, so then ask that question. Is there, is there a lack of

peace somewhere in my life?

And how can the presence of Christ quell that? How can, because it can, first off, that's, that's the promise. It can. But how can, how, how can he do so?

Well, guys, here in, in 2024, we have the amazing blessing of living in a time where the word can be on a phone, but the Holy Spirit can be in your heart.

The Holy Spirit can be living in your heart. So the very spirit that, that God is spirit, the very spirit of God, which is of Christ, Jesus is with you and in you. And scriptures talks of how he is around us, before us, beside us, beneath us.

He loves us and cares for us. So that presence of Christ is very here. The, the, the question now is, will we let him quell this and how will we respond? And what about, not just for ourselves, how can we bring this same peace to others?

[29:03] If we have that blessing of a testimony that we talked about in the first one, just like the other 10 did, how can we bring that peace to areas where we are present? Right? So maybe in the workplace, is there a lack of peace in your workplace?

Perhaps, perhaps a, a pit of sarcasm or gossip or filthy language, right? Perhaps there's a lack of peace, like I said, between, between family members, maybe ones that, um, you haven't seen for a while and there's, there's been a turning, you know, and, and, and a lack of communication.

Um, how can you bring the Christ, the, the peace of Christ Jesus to that situation? So be, be praying about that and thinking about that. Lord God, you did give me a blessing of peace by your presence, by your resurrection.

And giving me a testimony to share with others, how can I therefore quell the, the, the, the turmoil by being a mini Christ where you have me now? So something, something to be thinking about.

All right, now here's the, here's the, here's the, here's an exciting part. What does Tom say? What does Tom say? Verse 28, Thomas answered him, my Lord and my God. My Lord and my God.

[30:09] What does that mean? My Lord, that's the, it would be the word Adonai. And he's calling him my master, my foundation, my stay, my Lord and my God. My God would be Elohim.

Literally, my God, my creator, the author. So Thomas, just like Nathaniel, has this radical dropping of chains, right? He's holding onto these, these, these fists.

I don't know about you guys, but I can picture him just angry or upset or, or, or holding onto in resentment. I will never believe unless I put my hands and my fingers on his side. I will never believe. I will never believe.

And he releases them in this moment and says, my Lord and my God. Hallelujah, you guys. You got to have your heart stirred when you read this because you realize that this is and can be us or your brother and sister in Christ.

When they are going through a hard time, you know the disciples in this moment, we're looking at Thomas going, praise you, Jesus. Yes, my brother knows. He believes. And we are now united as 11 brothers in Christ that you are resurrected, Lord Jesus.

[31:08] And boy, are we going to start declaring this. Wait till you read the book of Acts, is what they're saying. The presence of Christ has broken through a hardening of Thomas' heart.

Man can't do that. We saw that before, right? Man cannot break a heart. As good as a testimony sounds, as awesome as the worship music may sound, you get the elements right, you talk really slow, man. No, only the power of God could break through a hardened heart like that.

And so now we come to this final blessing. This is point number three. The blessing of belief. The blessing of belief. So Jesus doesn't just say, come and put your hands in here, which again, amazing.

He entertains that ultimatum. But he tells him, don't disbelieve. Belief. Jesus wants Thomas to believe. Okay? And he wants us to believe.

Jesus wants Thomas to believe. I just think it's important to rest on that for a second. Because sometimes we can get it in our thick minds that it's like this formula or this behavior and action, which again speaks to sometimes how we can rest on a works-based faith.

[32:22] Right? But there can be these thoughts of like, well, I'm not holy enough today. I didn't collect enough holy points to demonstrate my

faith. Or with Thomas, well, you know, he just said those words.

Did he really believe it? We'll get there. There's a cool quote here about the, do not disbelieve. This is from the theologian Matthew Henry. He said that this verse is a good reminder and warning for us.

Be not faithless. For if we're faithless, then we are Christless and graceless, hopeless and joyless. And so instead, we ought to parrot the words, I believe, but Lord, help my unbelief.

There are areas in my heart, Lord, that I'm struggling with, whether it's knowledge or relational or actually trusting in something that you're telling me, God, I'm struggling with that.

So help me with my unbelief, Lord. Because our God, a broken and contrite heart, he will not turn away. Scripture says that. Scripture says that. He will not turn away, a broken and contrite heart.

[33:25] So when we approach him with an honest, not narcissistic, not man-centric, not gym-focused heart and pray, Lord, help my unbelief, he hears and answers that.

I think it's also cool that it can be a reminder for us here of the forgiving nature of Christ Jesus. He doesn't even say, oh, now you believe, Tom.

There's no calling him out. Instead, he simply confirms Thomas' faith. Jesus said to him, have you believed because you have seen me?

So what's the supposition there? He has believed. He didn't just give lip service. He didn't just say, my Lord and my God. He has believed. He has believed in the resurrected Christ Jesus.

Without even touching, by the way. It's simply that he had seen Jesus and declared through his mouth that he believed. You are my Lord and my God. And so Jesus confirms Thomas' faith. He didn't say, too late.

[34:22] Too late, man. You missed that faith opportunity. You missed seeing me the first time, but also this time, you failed my test. Right? When I came in, you failed. So no. No, he confirms it. And he identifies Thomas as a believer, as one with faith.

And then he goes further and he gives a beatitude. Right? Remember the beatitudes? Blessed are the meek, blessed are the poor in spirit. Look at this one. He goes, blessed are those who have not seen and yet believed.

Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe. For us here in 2024, isn't that what faith is? Isn't that what faith is? To have not seen but to still believe.

Hebrews 11.1. Faith is assurance of things hoped for and an evidence of things not seen. And we fix our eyes, Paul says, on things that are unseen. And because they are unseen, they are eternal. So Christ Jesus gives this beatitude, this blessing to us. He's literally talking about us. Everyone in this room who is a believer in Christ Jesus, you guys, Jesus is talking about you. You are blessed, it says.

[35:23] That is why belief is a blessing. He says, blessed are you. Are you in this room who have not seen and yet believed? Peter confirms this in his first epistle when he says, although you do not know him, you love him.

Can you relate to that? I don't know, I have not seen Jesus. I don't know how tall he was, the color of his skin, what kind of sandals he wore. I don't know any of that. But I believe him and I love him. And I pray that you do too, guys. I pray that we as a body of believers love Jesus Christ with all our heart and all our mind and all our soul and all our spirit. And Paul confirms this same faith that is based on something we don't see in 2 Corinthians, that famous verse, right?

For we walk by faith and not by sight. Walk by faith and not by sight. And so those are underscores of what Jesus is saying here when he says, blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.

So how do we believe then? Perhaps you're in this room and you're like, we said the word faith and belief like a ton. But what does that even mean? What does that mean to you as a believer?

Because there are, that's a question that's been wrestled by so many who have gone before us, that there was actually a hard effort taken to say, how does one be saved by faith?

[36:43] What is faith? We know first off that our faith is not of our own doing, right? It is by the Holy Spirit illuminating and taking the scales from our eyes and accepting this.

But is it just in word? Is it just in the speech we say? Is it in how much we know about the Bible? Like if I can say all the books in the Bible in order, is that faith? Like does that give me some good God points today? Yeah, I'll win at Sunday school.

What does this mean? What makes up a saving faith? Well, our brothers who have gone before in the Reformation, like Martin Luther, they and many other Christian forerunners before us had taken time to break down what they believe in.

And many of us in a Reformed church still believe this today. We have three elements to a saving faith. Three elements. We're going to use the Latin words, so that's always fun to say those. One is notitia, and that is a belief in the information.

It actually, like that Latin word means like data, right? So that's one element, is the belief in like the actual, like the facts, right? You didn't have to do anything about those, but I can say them, right?

[37:44] I can say the facts. I know that Jesus died. I could parrot the words of the Nicene Creed, but if I don't have these other elements too, I don't know if that's a faith. Right? That is more of a knowledge. But that's number one, notitia, the understanding of the content, the data.

Number two is the census. This is cool. This is where we get our word assent. I assent to that. I agree to that. I actually, it's an intellectual assent of the truthfulness of that data.

So not only does the data exist, but I find it to be true. So that's a second element. And we see this actually best of these two elements being maintained by the demons, actually, in Scripture.

Right? They're the first ones who declared Jesus as like, you are the Son of God. Right? So they declared it and they knew it was true. They declared it and knew it was true. Ended there, though. Right? Ended there. But they knew that. They had those two elements.

So if we pause right here before we get into this third element, it's important to know that like, faith is more than knowledge and intellectual assent, but it is not less.

[38:46] It is more than that, but it is not less of that. In other words, we do not have a saving faith that is blind. What do you believe in? Something. And, right?

That would sound ridiculous, would it not? Like, what kind of testimony would that be? It's not, frankly. We don't see that in Scripture. We don't see the testimony of Christ Jesus being this missing knowledge and ascending to the truthfulness of it.

But here's the third part. Right? So it's more than intellectual assent and knowledge, not less. This other part, the Latin word is fiducia, where we get the word like fiduciary, right?

In like banking and legal terms. And you usually use that when you talk about trust. Trust. Trust. Now, a simple example.

Right now, we are all exercising this trust. Maybe not as like actively thinking about this, but we are all actively doing this right now with your chairs. You're sitting in a chair.

[39:46] You trust this chair ain't going to break, right? Right? There's a trust there, but it's further than that in that it is a personal trust. A leading on our own, not on our own understanding, in all our ways acknowledging God.

And in all our ways acknowledging him and his paths are good and right and true. And so faith, again, more than knowledge and that it's true, but that we personally trust in that.

And Christ wants us to personally trust in him. So Thomas did that. Friends, you are, maybe, have the opportunity to, if you're not, can do that.

Christ wants you to believe. He wants us to believe. I like to think in the scripture of the shortest Christian in the Bible. You guys know who it was?

Who's the shortest Christian? Oh, you're guys talking height? That was good. Thief on the cross. There it is. I like that though. That was a good one. A little Zach.

[40:48] Zacharius, tell us. No. Great. Think of the shortest duration of the thief on the cross who says, this man is being punished wrongfully.

Be quiet, you who is saying, if you're the son of God, get yourself down. He says to him, be quiet. This man is unjustly and unrighteously being punished. Jesus, when you enter your kingdom, remember me.

That's all he said. Now, again, is that just lip service? Well, Christ confirms his faith by saying to him, what does he say? Today.

Today. You will be with me in paradise. Hallelujah. Yeah, brother. Right? That's awesome. This guy didn't go to VBS or Sunday school. Right?

He didn't go to seminary, catechism. Right? But what he did do is he recognized, just from the scripture, just so we can glean from the scripture, he recognized him as God. He recognized him as sinless.

[41:49] And he recognized him as king because he has a kingdom. He recognized that when Jesus Christ, the king of kings, would enter into his kingdom, he asked him, Lord, would you remember me when you're in that kingdom? And Christ proclaimed and promised him that you're going to be with me in paradise, man.

That's powerful. And so Jesus here had a message directly for us here in August 11, 2024, that we have a, because of our faith, that is a blessing.

Let's not take that for granted. Remember before I asked y'all, if you think of your faith as a blessing, I pray moving forward you will. If you haven't, do so. Because that is a gift. And it is a gift that was not of our own doing.

And it is a gift and a blessing that we can then go and bless others with. We can bless others with the presence of Christ, the Holy Spirit within us, by bringing peace, by bringing love and forgiveness, by pointing them to the Lord Jesus Christ, who wants them to believe.

How cool is that, you guys? All of that from five verses we get to glean, that Christ wants us to believe in him. He wants our faith. And he tells us, do not disbelieve, but believe.

[42:58] So, in closing, if you're here this morning, and you do not have a saving faith in Christ Jesus, I pray that you would consider the knowledge of the scriptures, of what happened here, what he has done, what he is continuing to do.

I pray that you would assent to the truthfulness of it, but more so, trust in it. Because it was bought with blood. It was bought with blood on a cross.

A sinless, perfect, spotless lamb was slain on your behalf. Because he loves you and wants you to believe and wants you to have faith in him. And he gives you that faith as a gift, guys.

As a gift. And you know, even more, even more than that, which it's not more than in terms of value, but even in addition to that, he brings this peace that once was not present between yourself and God.

Scriptures say to be friends of the world is to be an enemy with God. And in our state, our fallen state, apart from Christ, we are children of wrath. We are children of judgment. But God, there it is, but God, who is rich in mercy, sent Jesus Christ to die for us, to die on our behalf, to establish a peace in our minds, in the personal, and between us and God, in the corporate, so that you may have eternal life and life abundantly, Scripture says.

[44:24] Abundantly. Eternal. Good. And we can share that with others. So, again, if you do not have a personal faith in Christ, I'm praying that for you right now, that you would accept the gospel of Jesus Christ. And if you are a believer here this morning, I pray that this would be an encouragement to you to realize these kind of slips happen.

These kind of dark moments of doubt happen. And the best thing we can do as brothers and sisters in Christ is bear each other's burdens, be in prayer, be in God's word, and be transparent about this with God.

Scripture says, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. So this is a God who, again, wants our faith, who is for us, who is on our side, who loves us, who by Christ has established a way to him, not through just communication, but to physically be with him and to send his presence into our hearts.

Hallelujah. Amen? Yeah, let's close in prayer. Wow, God, your word is living and active, sharper than any double-edged sword.

It is perfect. It does not wither. It does not fade. And as we rest upon it this morning and realize that this truth that happened 2,000 years ago is still as applicable today as ever, that we need to have a faith in you, Lord Jesus, that is saving, one that is not based on physical seeing or physical touch or knowledge of information, Lord Jesus, but a personal trust in who you are, a personal reclining on who you are and what you have done and in your perfect name, Jesus.

[46:01] Lord Jesus, I pray your name over chains, may they be broken by the perfect name of Jesus Christ. I pray that hearts would be healed and Lord, I pray that souls would be saved by the perfect atonement for the righteous wrath of God.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for sending your son to die on our behalf and to bring us home. Jesus, would you come? You are our hope and stay. We pray this morning that you would come and bring us home to you, but until that day, may we be little Christ here on this earth and may we share your gospel to others.

We love you, Jesus. We trust in you, Jesus. Pray this in your name. Amen.