

Doubt, Deliverance and Declaration

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Date: 21 July 2024

Preacher: Mr Scott Macleod

[0 : 0 0] And also there's a notice there about the vacancy and the appointment of a vacancy committee and I'll just read that notice through. The Kirk session met on Monday the 15th of July and agreed to follow the practice previously adopted during a vacancy by taking on the role of the vacancy committee.

The purpose of the vacancy committee is to arrange for the pulpit to be supplied with ministers who are considered suitable to fill the vacancy. But the final choice belongs to your communicant membership.

The vacancy committee would like to stress that they are seeking to secure the full scope of congregational interest so that the process of contacting ministers and arranging dates for them to preach can begin.

The initial meeting of the vacancy committee is scheduled for Monday the 26th of August. And over the next five weeks as we pray to the Lord for guidance, the elders would like to encourage everyone in the congregation to speak to their own elder or any elders or any of the elders and inform them of who you would like to be invited to preach in Stornoway.

Please bear in mind that certain procedural steps are required, namely the completion of a financial schedule as well as a congregational development plan.

[1 : 2 8] It is hoped that both these items will be presented to the congregation in September before being sent to the Presbytery and the Mission Board for approval.

All these intimations are, of course, God willing. We'll now join together in our worship of God by singing to his praise in Psalm 1 in the Scottish Psalter version that you'll find on page 200.

Psalm 1. The opening psalm to the book of Psalms, a psalm that speaks about two ways to live.

The words there are, And that man has perfect blessedness, who walketh not astray, in counsel of ungodly men, nor stands in sinners' way, nor sitteth in the scornish chair, but platheth his delight upon God's law, and meditates on his law day and night.

He shall be like a tree that grows near planted by a river, which in his season yields his fruit, and his leaf fadeth never, and all he doth shall prosper well.

[2 : 4 4] The wicked are not so, but like they are unto the chaff, which wind drives to and fro. We'll sing this whole psalm down to the end, verse Mark 6, to God's praise, and the tune is Denfield.

We'll stand to sing, That Man Has Perfect Blessedness. That man has perfect blessedness.

The man has perfect blessedness.

That man has perfect blessedness. It was the man that God has perfect blessedness. That man has perfect blessedness. It was always a love. The man has perfect blessedness.

The man has perfect blessedness. The man has perfect blessedness.

- [4 : 14] ■ R winger crawly Dutchmen therefore shall not stand such as the God we are.
 Glory to the Savior of the just shall we give in the year.
 For by the way of God we may come to the Lord his throne.
 Great as the way of wicked name shall quite be overcome.
 Let us now join together in prayer. Let us pray. Our Father in heaven, we thank you that we can be joined again this evening now to return praise and thanks to you.
- [6 : 15] And as we sing these words we are mindful of the separation that is made, of the divisions that is made between the chaff and the wheat, between the righteous and the wicked, between the believer and the unbeliever.
 So Lord, we pray as we gather that we would be set before your feet this evening. That we would see ourselves in light of your word.
 That you would illuminate who we are before God. That we would draw near to you with reverence and fear.
 Saying and announcing, proclaiming that you are holy, holy, holy. Lord, our God, we pray that you would have mercy upon us.
 That we would know the full extent of your everlasting mercy and love that has been shown to us in Christ Jesus. And it is in Christ Jesus that we have confidence to draw near to you.
- [7 : 23] For we look at ourselves and we see so many failures. We see the sinfulness of our hearts. We see the desires of the flesh. Leading us in ways contrary to your word.
 But Christ saw us in our affliction. In our great need of a saviour. And Christ chose us before we chose him.
 Christ loved us before we loved him. And so Christ came in his abundance of compassion. To alleviate us from our great suffering of sin.
 To take that burden of condemnation away from our backs. A burden that we cannot carry. A burden that leaves us guilty before God.
 You take it from us. You part us. You part us from the sins. So that those who believe in you have no more condemnation before God.
- [8 : 31] We wonder that Christ would ever love us. But let us stand with all that he does. Let us come before the cross and see the riches that are immeasurable.
 In his love that he died for his friends. No greater love is this that anyone can show to another. That he would give up his life.
 And so he did for all his people. So let us have understanding of this. Let us see Christ.
 In a way that we have never seen him before. In his beauty. In his beauty. In wonder. In ways that we cannot fully comprehend.
 Lord, by the power of your spirit. Open our eyes and unblock our ears. To see Christ. To understand the gospel.
- [9 : 36] To receive Jesus Christ. And to believe in him. To trust in the resurrected and risen Lord Jesus. And we pray that this gospel message would go out with power across our nation.
 To all lands and all countries. And we pray for Labourish to go with it. We pray that you would raise up people to bring your message to the world.
 To our nation. To our towns. To our villages. To the people that have no word of Jesus Christ. Who have forgotten Jesus Christ.
 Who do not know what the cross means. Lord, we pray that you would bring understanding to our people. And that we would have a concern for souls that are lost.

Whether they be in our nation or in our families. We pray that you would give us wisdom in these things that are so difficult. We wish that we could make them understand.

[10 : 46] We wish that we could open their eyes to see Christ Jesus in all his beauty. But we pray that you would give us words according to your will and according to your ways.

Aligned with your providence. That you may open their eyes to the power of your spirit. And Lord, we give thanks for faithful ministries from this pulpit.

We give thanks for the ministry of James McKeever. We thank you for him and Donna being here. We pray that we would be mindful of him in his retirement.

And likewise, Kenny I. We pray that we would be mindful of him also. And we pray for Calum Mordo. We pray for Johan and the family.

We pray that you would uphold them and strengthen them for the time ahead. The time of vacancy. Time of uncertainty. A time of changes. Lord, we pray that we would be prayerful as a people.

[11 : 54] That we would be considerate of one another. That we would be asking you to show us and direct us in your ways. And lead us to someone whom you have chosen.

To be our under-shepherd. To direct us and to guide us. Lord, we pray for the Lord. We pray for congregations who are likewise in vacancy. We pray for Graver.

We pray for Shobost. We remember the two congregations in use. We pray likewise that you would give them one mind together. Lead them to a man that is suitable for them.

To teach and instruct them. To show them Jesus Christ. Lord, we acknowledge that it is not of our own strength.

Nor any man's strength. That we can open eyes. But we fully rely upon the power of your spirit. God, we pray for the Lord. God, we pray for the Lord.

[12 : 55] God, we pray for the Lord. God, we pray for the Lord. So as we turn to your words this evening. As we sing your praises. As we consider it. Instruct us.

Guide us. Teach us. Forgive us if we say anything on this. Lord, just turn us towards you.

Show us your paths, we pray. Meet us at our own need. Whatever it is. For you are a God that hears our prayers.

You are a God that hears the cries of our souls. The anxieties and anguish that we feel. The cries and pains of life.

You know them. But you are a loving heavenly Father that knows what is best to give to his children. And so we wait faithfully upon you.

[13 : 54] To instruct us and guide us. We pray for those who do have worries. We pray that you would be a wonderful counsellor to them.

We pray for those who are born. We pray that you would be their comfort. For you are the God of all comfort. We pray that you would be near to those that are broken hearted.

For we know that the scars of loss can last many years. And often never go away. And remain with us. Comfort your people, we pray.

Lord, we ask that you would feed our souls. Enrich us as we join together here. May we know the blessing of being together as your people.

Speak to us through your word. Encourage us. Enrich us. Guide us. And keep us.

[14 : 57] We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. We'll continue in our praise of God by singing in Psalm 4.

Psalm 4 in the Sing Psalms version. Find that on page 4. Singing from verse 3.

Down to the end of that psalm again. Psalm 4. Sing Psalms. Singing from verse 3. Know that the Lord has set apart the godly as his own.

The Lord will hear me when I call. And my request make known. In anger do not break God's law.

Consider and be still. Present a righteous sacrifice. And wait upon his will. Oh, who can show us any good? I hear so many say.

[16 : 01] Oh, Lord, shine on us with your light. Show us your face, I pray. You filled my heart with greater joy than others may have found.

As they rejoiced at harvest time. When grain and wine abound. I will lie down and sleep in peace. My heart will rest secure.

For you alone, oh gracious Lord. Will keep me safe and sure. We'll sing these words to the tune. We'll stand to sing.

Know that the Lord has set apart the godly as his own. The Lord will hear me when I call.

And my request may know. In anger do not break God's law.

[17 : 26] Consider and be still. Present and be still. Present and be still.

Present and be still. And wait upon his will. Or who can show us any good?

I hear so many say. O Lord, shine on us with your light, show us your grace, I pray.

You fill my heart with greater joy, another may have found.

As they rejoice at harvest time, when rain and wine are.

[19 : 03] I will lie down and sleep in peace, my heart will rest, Savior.

Are you alone, O gracious Lord, will keep me safe and sure.

Let us turn now to a reading in Scripture, and we'll find that in the Gospel of John. John chapter 11, from the beginning of that chapter. And again this evening we'll have two readings from the Gospel of John.

After reading in John 11, we'll turn to John chapter 20. John chapter 11, the beginning, down to verse 27.

The account of Lazarus' death. Let us hear God's word. Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.

[20 : 32] It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. So the sister sent to him, saying, Lord, he whom you love is ill.

But when Jesus heard it, he said, this illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.

Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

Then after this, he said to the disciples, let us go to Judea again. The disciples said to him, Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?

Jesus answered, are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world.

[21 : 41] But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him. After saying these things, he said to them, our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him.

The disciples said to him, Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover. Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest and sleep.

Then Jesus told them plainly, Lazarus has died, and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe.

But let us go to him. So Thomas called the twin, said to his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother.

[22 : 52] So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. Martha said to Jesus, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you. Jesus said to her, your brother will rise again.

Martha said to him, I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day. Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life.

Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live. And everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?

She said to him, yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world. Now, we turn to John chapter 20.

[23 : 56] And we read there from verse 24. This is Jesus' resurrection appearance to Thomas. We'll read down to the end of the chapter.

Now, Thomas, one of the twelve called the twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, we have 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, and see my hands, and put out your hand and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.

[25 : 07] 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.

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.

Amen. May the reading of God's word be a blessing to those who have heard it. We'll continue in our praise now by singing in Psalm 147 in the Sing Psalms version.

You'll find that on page 193 of the Blue Praise Book, singing from verse 14. Sing down to verse marked 18.

Psalm 147 in verse 14. The Lord will grant you peace within the borders of your land, and finest wheat will fill your fields from his sustaining hand.

[26 : 36] To all the corners of the earth the Lord's commands proceeds, for when he speaks his word goes forth through all the world with speed.

He spreads the snow as wool, the frost like ashes on the land. He hurls forth icy hail like stones. Who can such cold withstand?

But when he sends his mighty word and makes the warm winds blow, the frozen waters start to melt and once again to flow.

May the Lord break down the coldness of our heart and make the warmth of his spirit flow in us. Let us stand to sing this Psalm 14 to 18, the tune is Torwood.

The Lord will grant you peace within the borders of your land. The Lord will grant you peace within the borders of your land, and kindness we will fill your fields from his casting hand.

[28 : 07] To all the corners of the earth the Lord's commands proceed.

For when he speaks his word goes forth through all the world with speed.

He spreads the snow as wool, the frost like ashes on the land.

He earns for price in him like stones. Who can such cold withstand?

He earns for price in him like stones. But when he sends his mighty word and makes the warm wind blow, the frozen waters start to melt and once again to the wind.

[29 : 42] Let us stand back. To ■■■ life. Now we turn back to the passage that we read there in John chapter 20.

As you read it, verse 29. Jesus said to him, Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.

Now if you were with us in the morning, we thought about Jesus' resurrection appearance to the fearful disciples within the locked room.

Now it took place on the evening of Jesus' first appearance to Mary. Jesus appeared to Mary at sunrise. He appears to the disciples at the evening hour.

And now we come to this account with Thomas. We're eight days later in the storyline, but it doesn't seem like we've progressed very far, does it?

[30 : 57] We're still in a locked room, which we believe is the same. Locked room. And this third resurrection appearance, it seems to be the subsequent resurrection appearance that Christ has made.

We noted in the morning that John didn't include every resurrection appearance, but when we consider all that we have, it seems like this is the next appearance of Christ.

But there is a focus here in this appearance. There is a significance in this appearance because it is focused on one man, Thomas.

And this appearance tells us that Thomas was not present with them on the first day of the week with the rest of the disciples. Why we're not sure?

I wish we did know. It would fill out the story for us with more detail. But we don't know. Thomas wasn't there. Thomas missed out on the appearance of Jesus Christ.

[32 : 02] And I'm sure that's a feeling that we can all relate to, that we've missed out on something. There's surely some point in our lives where we've missed out on something that we really wanted to see.

And it can be made all the worse by our friends and our families telling us how amazing it was, how inspiring it was, how special it was to see this thing take place.

I suppose in many ways it's been lost with the advances in technology. Things can be captured in video. Things can be photographed. You can re-watch TV programs you've missed.

You can see goals that you've missed. You can see pictures of the northern lights that you missed. In fact, it's swung so far now that technology has advanced.

When you see these things, you're not actually sure if it's true now because they can be recreated and edited in such a way. And I believe that if there was that sort of evidence of Jesus in his resurrected state, I don't think it would help us much.

[33 : 13] There would still be doubted. There would still be people sceptical of it. And you can have these moments replayed. You can have these photos to re-look at.

But it doesn't quite capture what people call the magic of the moment. You feel it like you've missed out by not being there.

And it leaves you saying, I wish I had been there. I wish I had seen it. I wish I had that experience that my friends and family are telling me about it.

And I believe Thomas would have been saying the exact same words. I wish I had seen the Lord. I wish I had seen him appear.

All his friends as the ten disciples were telling him, we have seen the Lord. Jesus is alive. But it doesn't quite capture the magic of the moment for him.

[34 : 18] He doesn't believe them fully. And you know yourself that when we experience something in our lives, it's not quite the same as someone telling us about it.

Now there are many people in this building, there are many believers in this world that have had amazing experiences where the Lord Jesus has revealed himself to them.

And they want to tell people about it. It's a natural thing for you to tell someone about something spectacular that has happened in your life. Something unbelievable.

You want to tell them about it. You want them to believe. You wish that they would have experienced it as well. But it's often true that when the believer tries to express their new understanding of who Jesus Christ is, that Jesus has revealed himself to them, when they tell their testimony about why they believe in Jesus Christ, doesn't quite have the same impact on people.

They can tell it with passion. They can tell it with excitement. They just... Something just doesn't click. Just don't get it. The disciples here are telling Thomas, we've seen the Lord.

[35 : 49] He's alive. But it doesn't have an effect until he experiences it himself. We can be told something a hundred times over.

It doesn't quite hit home until we experience it. And you hear people who have recently been converted echo something like, why did no one tell me?

And it's like, we did. We did tell you. It just... You didn't get it. It just didn't... It just didn't... Your eyes hadn't been opened to understand. You didn't see Jesus fully when I spoke. Jesus had to reveal himself to you.

And we can have doubts. We can feel like we've missed out on things. And I believe there are many of us here who are just like Thomas, who see what the Christian has.

And they say in the secrecy of their own hearts, I wish I had what they have. I wish I could say the same thing that the believer says.

[37 : 02] I wish the Lord would show himself to me so that I could say to everyone, I am a Christian. So that I could have the assurance to give my life to Jesus Christ.

But I just don't have it. I hope as we continue looking through the resurrection appearances of Jesus Christ.

And as we turn to Thomas, the man that doubted, I hope that we will get to see Jesus, that he will reveal himself to us, that he would displace all our doubts, that we would not miss out on Christ.

And as we look at Thomas, I firstly want to consider Thomas and his doubt. Thomas and his doubt.

Thomas has become known as Doubting Thomas. It may not be the most fairest name to give him.

[38 : 07] I don't know if we can build a true character of Thomas by what we have from him in Scripture. We don't have a lot about him in Scripture.

There's a few occurrences where he appears. He actually appeared in the first reading that we had. Jesus is there.

He hears about Lazarus having died, well, having been ill. He waits two days. He knows that Lazarus has died. He says, we must return to Judea.

We must return because I will give him life. And the disciples are going, no, no, no, hold on. You can't go there. The Jews are ready to kill you.

They're going to stone you. Why are we going to go there? Jesus says, we must go. The disciples see a problem with it.

[39 : 07] Jesus' account there is that Jesus tells him plainly, Lazarus has died. And for your sake, I am glad that I was not there so that you may believe.

Let us go to him. And then Thomas comes in and he says to his disciples, let us also go that we may die with him.

Thomas is ready to die with Christ. He's ready to go with Christ, whatever it means. And he encourages all the other disciples to be of the same mind.

But obviously, obviously highlights a zeal and a passion within Thomas to do what is right, to go with Jesus and to follow him wherever he goes. To encourage his friends to come as well.

But when the rubber hit the road and Jesus is captured, the threat of death comes to them. When Jesus has been taken to be crucified, they're nowhere to be seen.

[40 : 13] They're displaced. They're dispersed. The only other time we come across Thomas is actually in the chapter that we read in the morning as well, in John 14, though we didn't read this part.

Thomas said to Jesus when he says that, I am the way, the truth, and the life. When he says that, I have gone to prepare a place for you. Thomas asks, how do we know where you are going?

How can we know the way? Thomas wants to be with Jesus. Thomas wants to know where Jesus is going. And although we look at these few comments that we have, we can say, well, there's a bit of doubt in his comments.

He's doubting that, he's not saying that Jesus will resurrect Lazarus. He's questioning where Jesus is going and how can we know the way.

It's more pessimistic than doubtful. There's a negative sort of outlook in his life. But he's seeking an answer.

[41 : 27] He's asking, how can we know the way? Where are you going? Are you leaving us? It's hard to form a true character of Thomas to say for sure that we can call him doubting Thomas.

But it is worth noting that Thomas was not the only doubter in the Gospels. You go to Luke's Gospel and you read the account where Mary returns saying, I have seen the risen Lord Jesus.

She says these things to the apostles and Luke's Gospel tells us that all the apostles thought what she said was an idle tale. A story that was made up.

And it says that they did not believe him. Luke goes on to say that when they did see Jesus, the disciples disbelieved for joy and were marvelling.

They disbelieved. They couldn't believe that Jesus was actually alive. They couldn't believe it. They were marvelling that Jesus appeared before them in his resurrected body.

[42 : 46] So you can see, well, the disciples had doubts. Thomas had doubts. And it is true surely that we have our doubts as well in our experience.

we question the resurrected Lord Jesus. It's hard to grasp. It's difficult to understand. Thomas couldn't believe it.

And he said, unless I see his hands, the mark of his nails, I put my finger into these marks, place my hand in his side, I will never believe.

John's gospel, it's largely based on signs of Jesus Christ. But it's wrong to ask Jesus Christ and to place our salvation on a sign that we request of him.

because it's not signs, really. We see this account of Thomas.

[43 : 56] Jesus stands before him. He asks him to put his hand into his scars, but I don't think he did. It doesn't quite tell us if he did or not.

Seeing was enough for Thomas. And to see Jesus Christ is enough for us too. We ask for signs.

Sometimes the Lord can use signs. And sometimes the Lord will answer our requests. But it's not a good way, I don't think.

It's not a way in which we should be seeking the Lord Jesus. We should be seeking to see him. Seeking that he would reveal himself to us in his way, in his timing.

But anyway, we're in the locked room with the disciples here. Eight days later. And that period carries some significance about this so-called doubter.

[45 : 05] He wasn't there for the first revealing. And I'm sure he heard about it straight away. That first day, Jesus was there in the morning, Jesus was there in the afternoon with the two on the road to the mails.

Jesus appeared to the disciples at night. And I believe when he heard all of these accounts, he wouldn't dare depart from being with the people.

You can imagine him waiting the next day. Comes and goes. Nothing happens.

Third day, nothing. Fourth day, nothing. Fifth, sixth, nothing. Seventh, nothing.

But what he did do was he remained with the people. He remained with the disciples. He remained with the early church, expecting to see Jesus, that Jesus would reveal himself to him, faithfully, holding on, expecting to see Jesus.

[46 : 21] and he missed out, yes, in the first place. But he came back to where Jesus had revealed himself to the people. And that is true of all of everyone that is here today.

If you want to see Jesus, if you feel like you've missed out on what the Christian has, if you wanted to believe, come to where the Lord Jesus reveals himself to his people, come to the gathering of the church, to the believers.

This is the place where he pours out his blessings upon the people. And it is often the place where he has awakened many souls that have been in darkness.

Many of you here who are believers will have memories of sitting in pews and being awakened by the reading of scripture, feeling condemned by the words that were preached, feeling the psalms speaking to you as they were sung.

This is a place where Jesus meets with his people. If we isolate ourselves from the church, we cannot expect that Jesus will reveal himself to us.

[47 : 52] And I believe that if we are duly diligent in attending the means of grace and gathering with the Lord's people, he will reveal himself to us.

But it is true that the believer can also have many doubts as well. We can doubt whether he loves us, we can doubt at times whether we are truly saved, and the devil will play havoc with your doubts.

But you know that we are really filled with doubts when we look at ourselves. There is nothing within us that deserves salvation. There is nothing within us that deserves the redeeming power of Jesus Christ in our lives.

We look inwardly and we plague ourselves with doubts. It is said that never doubt in the dark what God told you in the light.

Never doubt in the dark what God told you in the light. What God says to you in scripture, we can go away with it and we can doubt it.

[49 : 15] when we are isolated from it. When we are in the dark we can doubt these things. We must come back to Christ. We must change our vision from looking at ourselves when we are doubting to looking at the Lord Jesus Christ.

As we are saying to the children to keep our eye on him, to keep our eye on the word. And if we do that we will be delivered from doubts. We will look at the love of Christ.

we will look at his compassion. We will look at his death. We will look at his eternal promises to his people and it will give us a hope. To displace the doubt the believer must turn from looking at himself and focus upon the Lord Jesus and his love for them.

We find here that we can be plagued with doubts. But also there is a deliverance from these doubts.

We have doubts but there is a deliverance. The radical difference in this man's life is the appearance of Christ again. Every appearance of Christ has made a radical difference of those who witnessed him.

[50 : 36] And he comes into this room and he says, peace be with you. Jesus speaks addressing Thomas in the words that he spoke to his disciples.

meaning that Christ hears every word that we utter. He did not have to be physically present to hear the doubts of Thomas.

He heard them. And when he appeared he addressed Thomas personally. said he needed to put his fingers into the scars of Jesus' hands which would have been more so his wrists.

then he says to touch him. But we don't know if he did or not. But Jesus adds there do not disbelieve but believe.

And we can struggle to believe at times. The resurrection is hard to grasp. The disciples struggle to understand it. We struggle to understand it.

[52 : 02] But we look at the evidence that we have here. We look at the gospel that John has written here. And we come to it again. The purpose was that we would believe. We have seen lives radically changed by the appearance of Christ.

And he wishes, he prays, he writes that you too would believe that when you come and consider the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ he would reveal himself to you.

The resurrection appearance as we said motivated them like nothing else could have. It was the match to the fire that ignited their hearts for the Lord Jesus, ignited them to turn the world upside down.

They went out with their own testimony. We have seen the Lord Jesus. Thomas could say the same thing in his life. I have seen the Lord Jesus.

and he declared it amongst the people. He had his doubts. He was delivered when he saw Jesus Christ but he went out declaring what he had seen.

[53 : 16] When you see Jesus, when Jesus reveals himself to you, it changes everything.

Thomas here had his own declaration. He says there, my Lord and my God in verse 28.

A personal declaration that Jesus Christ is his Lord and his God. In many ways it is so personal that Jesus speaks directly into his circumstance, directly to his heart, to his need, and yet it is so public.

Because he has been transformed. He has a new testimony to speak about. Something exceptional has happened in his life.

And he wants to tell people about it. He has to tell people about it. Jesus Christ is my Lord and my God. And that phrase highlights the divine deity of Jesus Christ.

[54 : 36] The title of God his Lord. And Jesus receives it because it is right.

If it was wrong Jesus would have said do not worship me. with such words. But Thomas is entirely right. And Jesus receives that declaration from Thomas.

The change that Christ brings to us is personal and public. God will God will speak.

He speaks to the depths of our needs. Yet we cannot but speak about it. We wish that others would likewise know who Jesus Christ is and the change that he has made in their lives.

It's a true feeling that we too can't doubt.

[56 : 08] Thomas was set never to believe. That's what his words unless he had seen him himself which adds a huge credibility to the fact that Jesus appeared to him.

the one that said never turns around and says my Lord and my God.

Thomas' experience delivered him from all doubts and I pray that the Lord Jesus would reveal himself to you in scripture in his word in the singing of his psalms in the proclamation of his word whether it's in three days time and eight days time and three years time and eight years times do not disbelieve that he can do it.

Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Believe that he will reveal himself to you. Do not doubt the resurrection.

Thomas went on with his declaration and tradition suggests that Thomas travelled as far as India with the gospel where it is reported that he was martyred with a spear killed by someone with a spear.

[57 : 39] With the assurance of Christ's resurrection in his life he went out declaring the wonderful gospel of Jesus. and his earlier declaration where he said to his disciples let us go so that we may die with him became a truthful reality in his life.

He put his life on his line this time. He didn't run away. He put his life on his line on the line because he had absolutely no doubts that Jesus was alive.

Thomas makes a declaration but there is another declaration made here in this passage. The risen Lord Jesus pronounces a blessing upon everyone who believes in Jesus Christ without having to see him.

And it is a blessing because it was the Lord delights to see men, women, boys and girls turning to the Lord Jesus and trusting in the resurrected Lord.

Believing what the gospel of John has written about him. With the result is that you may have life in his name.

[59 : 16] God yes doubting Thomas is a lesson to each of us to faithfully trust in the Lord Jesus Christ but it's maybe significant that it follows after what we consider in the morning.

Jesus came to them with a work he was handing over his work to them and it's funny that they're still in the locked room at this point.

Eight days later they haven't moved even after Jesus came with his peace his purpose and his power to them. I think the disciples see themselves in Thomas.

they haven't moved from where they have been after Jesus has said to them I'm sending you. Are they doubting that they are able to do the work and continue the work that Jesus has asked of them that we considered in the morning?

It's hard to see but I think there's a measure of something there a lesson for the disciples also not to doubt believe what the Lord Jesus has said to them that he has sent them and that he has sent them with a helper to go with them into this world.

[60 : 51] So what about us tonight? What about each or one of us tonight? Do we feel like we've missed out on the proclamation of the gospel?

Do we feel like we've missed out on seeing Jesus? Well if we do come to where he reveals himself with the people and keep coming faithfully.

Do not disbelieve. Believe that he will show himself to you and I believe that he will if you do it with diligence and a heart that is seeking and longing to know him.

What will you be declaring for all eternity? Yes we have doubts. Jesus promises to deliver us but what will be our declaration?

Will it be my Lord and my God? will it be I wish I had received what the Christian has.

[61 : 56] I wish I had joined with the people of God. I wish I had received his blessing. I pray that we have understanding of these things and that he would help us in our doubts and help us in our disbelief.

I pray these thoughts blessed to each of us. We'll conclude by singing in Psalm 133 in the Scottish Psalter version that you'll find on page 424.

Psalm 133 you'll find out on page 424 of the blue praise book. A psalm that speaks about the blessing of the Lord pouring down upon the people as they gather together.

The Lord's people, the brethren, behold how good a thing it is and how becoming well. Together such as brethren are in unity to dwell. Like precious ointment on the head that down the beard did flow, even Aaron's beard and to the skirts did off his garments go, as Herman's Jew, the Jew that doth on Zion hill descends, for there the blessing God commands, life that shall never end.

We'll stand to sing these words to God's praise, behold how good thing thing it is and how becoming well. Behold how good a thing is and how become we well he joy Like precious ointment on the head, that devil here did go.

[64 : 24] He made us dear and to the stars, give up his charred soul.

How terrible to the dew that dove, on side of hills we sang.

For there the blessing of all man, my path shall never end.

We conclude with prayer. Our Lord and our God, we pray that we would keep our focus on you. That we would not be distracted by the doubts of our hearts.

That you would help us in our doubts and unbelief. And that we would see the risen Lord Jesus. That you would reveal yourself to us. And that we may proclaim, my Lord and my God.

[65 : 47] Be with us as we part. Watch over us in the wake ahead. Go before us, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen.