

John 20:27

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Date: 23 September 2012

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[0 : 0 0] in John's Gospel, chapter 20. And read from verse 27. John 20, verse 27.

Then he, that is Jesus, 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.

And while we're going to look at this incident with Thomas and Jesus, it's particularly these words that we'll eventually focus on. Verse 28. Thomas answered him, My Lord and my God.

Now at one level, there is nothing, I suppose you could say, really commendable about doubting in the Christian life. It's not really a virtue, it's not a quality that you would say, Well, you know, it's a great thing to doubt.

[1 : 1 3] And yet, I suppose it's true to say, because we are human, because we have sin within our heart, that it is something of our very nature that we do sometimes doubt.

This man, Thomas, this is where we get the name Doubting Thomas from, was a person who was filled with these kind of doubts. He was the kind of person who, I suppose, looked on the gloomy side of life.

He was the type of person for whom, you know, used the expression that a bottle is either half full or half empty. Well, for Thomas, it was always half empty. He tended to see the dark picture.

And while in the Bible, we have our Daniels, men who were just exemplary believers, believers, men whose commitment were just total to the Lord, people who seem to have a single-minded focus.

And when you read about their life, you say to yourself, it is a life I know, we all know that Daniel was a sinner, same as anybody else, but it just seemed to have this, almost, you say to yourself, Daniel is at another level.

[2 : 3 3] Daniel is somebody whose life consistently shone and he lived in this incredible way before the Lord. But then we have our Thomases and people who maybe struggled a little as they went through their life following the Lord.

And as I said, I suppose all of us at one level or another, some of us, maybe because of our very nature, maybe something to do with the type of character we have. And we all know we have different personalities, different ways of looking at things.

And some people by nature tend to be more despondent and they have a darker way of looking at life. There tends to be a lot of negativity in their thinking.

And there are other people who are extremely positive. And these things, what we are by nature, do affect us even within our spiritual life because it's very hard sometimes to separate body, mind and soul.

Sometimes we've seen it happen that people who are unwell, who are really ill, that it affects their spirituality, that their concentration, that their mind for spiritual things, their spiritual energy is being drained through these very things.

[3 : 50] So we've always got to recognize that. And I'm sure there are very, very few. I'd be very surprised if there is any person in here tonight who has never had any form of doubt or any form of anxiety or any form of fear within their Christian life who have always, every moment, been absolutely and altogether filled with full assurance with not the slightest hesitation at any point that there is nothing that has ever shaken or troubled their faith in any way or in any form.

I'd be very surprised if there was anybody at the end who could say, I have never, ever experienced any of these things. And so we find that here's Thomas and I suppose we've looked at Thomas before on other occasions, but just to sort of set the picture, we've got to remember that here's this man, Thomas, who was very much a disciple of the Lord Jesus.

And one of the things that characterized Thomas' life was that he had a deep love and commitment to Jesus. He might not have been at the forefront of the three, the Peter, James, and John, but he was still a disciple who loved Jesus.

And one of the times where that really came to the fore was when Jesus said that he was going to go up to Bethany when word had come that Lazarus was ill.

And remember how Jesus stayed until Lazarus had died. And he told them, the disciples, about Lazarus' death. And he told them that he was going to go up to Jerusalem.

[5 : 42] And straight away, the alarm bells went off with the disciples. And they said to him, Master, do you not remember that the Jews are trying to stone you? And that he was really putting his life at risk by going up to Jerusalem.

And straight away, Thomas, he came in and he said, let us go with him that we may die there. And so you see the twofold nature of Thomas coming to the fore.

On the one hand, straight away, it's the worst possible scenario. Ah yes, we're going up to Jerusalem and we're all going to die. You see, there it was, the picture, the gloomy picture.

But the other side, the great side is, if Jesus is going to die, I'm going with him. We're all in this together. And you see this love and this commitment with this trembling disciple, with this disciple who struggles sometimes with an element of unbelief, this disciple who is filled with his doubts, yet he says, I'm going to go up to Jerusalem with Jesus, even if it means death.

I'm going there too. And so we see the commitment of this man, Thomas. And I'm sure there are times that we too have experienced something of these things as well, the two sides of it.

[7 : 06] But you know, the wonderful thing is that love, love won't let go. That's what was in Thomas' heart. Even although he was fearing death, love wouldn't let go. And that's what love does.

Love doesn't let go. And tonight, you're following the Lord Jesus. And you've gone through a lot of troubles and difficulties. There's been a lot of things that could have made shipwreck of your soul.

There's a lot of times, humanly speaking, that you should have stopped following the Lord. Things that have happened in your life, battles with temptations, with struggles, with trials, a lot of things that have shaken your faith, but you're still following.

Why? Is it your strength? No. Is it just that you're somebody who grits their teeth and gets on with it? No. It's because of this deep-rooted love.

A love that has been born in your heart from above. A love that God in Christ has placed in your heart. And a love that will not let go.

[8 : 14] He won't let go of you and you won't let go of him. And there is nothing that can break or sever that love. even though there are things that shake your faith, even though you might get up some days and you might be filled with doubts and anxieties, you might be plagued with temptations at the one level to doubt everything that God does.

And yet, deeper down than the thoughts that go through your mind and the temptations that may attack you is a love that will not let go. And that's why Paul was able to say in Romans that he was persuaded that neither life nor death nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come that there was nothing anywhere that could separate the believer from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

And so, we find something of this in this man, Thomas. But again, we find Thomas in the upper room and we, one of the things that we realize is, again, Thomas is filled with despondency because Jesus has told them that he's going to go away.

And Jesus was telling them how he was going to go and he was going to come again for them and take them to be with him. And that's a great promise that he's given to the church that he goes, remember he's talking about the house of many mansions, I go to prepare a place for you and I will come again and take you to be with myself so where I am you will be also.

And Thomas is sitting there and he's listening and he says, Lord, he asks this question, we do not know where you are going and how can we know the way?

[9 : 58] If we don't know where you're going, how can we know the way? So Thomas again is showing us that he's, while he's a committed follower of Jesus, somebody who loves Jesus, he's slow of understanding.

He's been with Jesus, remember, for three years, everywhere Jesus went, Thomas was there, he heard all Jesus' great sermons and he's still struggling to grasp some fundamental truths.

And we're like that sometimes. If you're here tonight as somebody who's following the Lord and you hear, you might be here tonight following the Lord and you say to yourself, you know, everybody in this church is spiritually cleverer than I am.

And you look around and you think, I'm a spiritual dunce. Have you ever felt like that? And you say to yourself, oh, all these other people, they know this and they know that. Sometimes you want to ask people questions, but you're afraid to in case you'll be made to look stupid.

There might be something in your soul and you say, I would love to ask somebody, but it looks so stupid. No, it won't.

[11 : 14] And that's one of the beauties about the Bible that it shows us the disciples and all their different levels. Here is a man, he's three years with Jesus everywhere and he still hasn't grasped that Jesus is going the way of the cross and through the cross he is to prepare, he is gaining the salvation.

This is the whole purpose and plan of God and Thomas just hasn't managed to get it. And of course, the beauty of it is that in response to Thomas' question, Jesus gives one of the great gospel truths that we know.

When Thomas says, I don't know where you're going and how can I know the way? Jesus said, I am the way, the truth and the life. So here we find Thomas and we find him being riddled again by the doubts, by the fears.

The doubting Thomas is here. And let us say that unbelief is a massive hindrance to our development and growth in the Christian faith.

And Satan is a master at bringing us to doubt things because he knows how destructive it is, how it spoils our enjoyment of Christian things when we're doubting and we're saying, I'm just not sure.

[12 : 43] The day we're saying, I'm not sure Satan is rubbing his hands because he knows that we're not deriving the full joy and benefit that we can in the liberty that is in Jesus Christ.

And so we find that Thomas is here refusing to believe the testimony of the other disciples. On the resurrection day in the evening, they were all gathered together in one place and Jesus appeared.

They were all there, of course, bar Thomas. And I don't know why he wasn't there, we were not told, but his being absent from that gathering, he ended up missing this great blessing.

And I think there's something very important there of the importance of God's people coming together. And anyway, the disciples told Thomas that Jesus had appeared.

And we find that Thomas just, he cannot believe it. And we find that expression in verse 25. So the other disciples told him, we have seen the Lord.

[13 : 53] And Thomas 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.

So Thomas is really saying, look, I don't believe you. the only way that I will believe is if I see. No, no, he said.

Actually, it goes further than that. I'm not going to be even satisfied with seeing. It has to go further than that. I have actually got to feel. I've got to see and I've got to feel.

I've got to reach out my hand. I've got to touch the nail pins. I've got to touch the huge gash in his side. If I see these things and I feel these things, then I'll believe.

But I just don't believe you. And, you know, there are people who, you know what Thomas is looking for here. Thomas is a person who is saying, we know Thomas has faith.

[14 : 56] But Thomas is looking for faith plus. And, you know, there are people within the church and that's exactly where they are. Maybe you're there tonight. You're a believer and maybe you don't know it.

Maybe you're looking for something extra. You believe the truth. You believe what the Word says. You believe every revelation that is given to us in the Bible concerning the Lord Jesus Christ.

You have actually come to a point and a place in your life where you have bowed before Him and asked Him to be Lord of your life. You want Him.

You want to follow Him. Deep down, you know there's nobody else that you want for your life. And yet, you say, oh, there must be more than that. I've got to see something.

I've got to feel something. If I was to be given a vision, if I was to have some amazing experience, if I was to be over, find some overflowing joy and vision, then I'd believe.

[16 : 11] But Jesus at the end says, blessed are those who having not seen and yet have believed. It's by faith.

it's coming to rest in Jesus by faith. Accepting who He is. Accepting all that He is.

It is trusting your heart, your soul, your life, your everything to Him. And it's accepting what His Word says. Because so, I believe there are people who believe and they haven't grasped that they believe.

And I would ask you tonight to pray to the Lord to take you over that. Because until you get over that, you're never going to develop and grow.

You're going to be stuck, as it were, in the same place. Now we all, as I said, we have our problems with Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.

[17 : 17] But ask the Lord to take you over that. And may I say, if there's anybody in here tonight who has never come to faith in Jesus Christ, will you ask him tonight, Lord, open my eyes, that I may see just sufficient, just sufficient to see you as the Savior for me.

That's what you need to see. You need to see Jesus as the Savior for you. Anyway, eight days later, we read that the disciples were inside again, and this time, Thomas is with them.

And it's almost in a casual way, it's put there, it says to us in verse 20, 26, although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, peace be with you.

That's it. now, some people think that this is simply an appearance of Jesus and that after he rose from the dead, that he, as it were, left his human nature, that his human nature was only for the period in this world.

And there are a lot of people that have all kinds of issues with the resurrection. That is not true. This appearance of Jesus was not like the Old Testament appearances of what we term a theophany where he took the appearance of a man.

[18 : 52] This is the reality. This is the body. This is the same body that lay in the grave and he has risen from the dead.

Now we know of course that it is very obvious from the resurrection that the resurrected body has new aptitudes and is not governed by the dimensions that our life is governed by.

Obviously not governed by laws of gravity, not governed by the dimensions of this world because Jesus could appear and disappear. He just came through doors and appear and disappear from the very midst.

We cannot understand. We are bound in the dimensions we are in. We're bound by time. We cannot grasp these things. This is a wonderful thing about the Bible.

It brings us to see even although we cannot fully understand, faith lays hold upon them and believes them to be absolutely true, as persuaded as if we were there and would say, yes, it happened.

[19 : 58] Oh, yes, I didn't see it, but I believe it and on this occasion for Thomas, he sees.

Now, we know that, as we say, the human nature that Jesus took, he continues to have forever. And that's very important for the Christian church because it is at the very heartbeat of the Christian faith.

Some people were saying, well, the body was only for a time, and they talk about his spirit dying. Of course, the spirit never died. The moment that, and remember that when Jesus on the cross, and this is vital, it's important, when Jesus came to die, yes, he experienced total, complete death, but he was in control even in death.

The language is he dismissed the spirit. Would he give out that cry into thy hand, I commend or commit my spirit. And so there was then at that moment the severance of soul and body, which constituted death.

The soul went immediately to glory to be with the father, and the body, the human nature of Christ rested in the grave until the third day, and he rose from the dead.

[21 : 24] And he is a personal guarantee that what happened to him will happen to us also. that's the wonder of the grave, the wonder of the Christian life.

And you know, it's just so absurd why people turn their back on it. What else gives hope like the Christian faith?

When you go to the graveyard, what else can give any hope? what other hope can we offer people tonight?

Apart from the Christian faith, point to one who is able to deal not only with your life, but with your death, and with everything that follows on.

And that's why it's so vital to look to Christ, to believe in Christ, to trust in Christ. He is the only one. And anyway, move on here.

[22 : 27] we find that Thomas, when he sees Jesus, deals with Thomas in verse 27. And what I love is how gentle Jesus is in his dealing with Thomas.

There's no stare, there's no rebuke, he's not coming in with a heavy hand, none of this, Thomas, I'm so disappointed with you. I can't believe that you doubted me.

After all that I said to you before my death, and you weren't expecting a resurrection, there's nothing of that, there's no rebuke at all from Jesus. All he says to Thomas, focuses on Thomas, and he said to him, Thomas, put your finger here and see my hands, put out your hand and place it in my side, do not disbelieve, but believe.

see what Jesus is doing, he's, as it were, he's meeting every demand that Thomas had made. When we see back in verse 25, Thomas said, unless I see his hand really, and the mark of the nails, that's really what he's saying, and Jesus is saying, look Thomas, see the mark of the nails, and unless I put my finger into the place of the nails, Thomas, put out your finger, hand on the side, Thomas, put your hand on my side, I will not believe, and so Jesus says to him, do not disbelieve, but believe.

And I think at that moment Thomas is overwhelmed, that's all Jesus said to him, he answered his every problem, and Thomas is overwhelmed and he says very simply, my Lord, and my God.

[24 : 19] What is Thomas saying here? Well, I would say that in that moment Thomas is saying, Lord, you're my everything. This is one of the greatest moments in Thomas' life.

Yes, we know Thomas is a believer. Thomas has already come to faith, but here is this moment of absolute realization, total assurance.

Here's the doubting man. Thomas has been riddled with his fears, his anxieties, and his doubts. And this is a supreme moment. Oh, my Lord, and my God, you're my everything.

It's one of these absolutely wonderful moments. And I believe in that statement there is also a repentance. Repenting for his doubting.

I believe that Thomas in that is saying, oh, Lord, I can't believe that I doubted you. I can't believe that I didn't grasp and lay hold and accept all your teaching.

[25 : 27] I can't believe for a moment that I've been the kind of person I am, my Lord and my God. And I believe also that here is a great confession of faith.

And remember, that is important in the Christian faith. In our heart we believe and with our mouth we make confession. We're told that in Romans. And I believe there's also an exclamation of humility.

My Lord and my God. He's acknowledging at that moment his own, not just his unbelief, but his own arrogance.

Because he wouldn't accept the witness of all the other disciples. And he said, no, I don't believe you. I'm not going to accept them. Aye, aye, aye. Well, that changes.

And it doesn't tell us that Thomas fell down on his knees before, but he certainly fell down in his heart before Jesus. My Lord and my God.

[26 : 34] And so there's this wonderful persuasion that this is Jesus. And I believe there are times in our own lives when we make that exclamation as well. If you have come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, I believe that you made that exclamation.

Where you have, you may know plenty about the Lord from you've read, you've studied, you've heard, but there comes this time when you know the Lord is your God.

And you're able to say, Lord, my God. It's a wonderful moment. Are you able to say that tonight? Is Jesus yours?

Is he yours? Are you able to say, I know in whom I have believed. He is my Lord. We'll see that just in a moment. And I'm sure we've also said that in times of deliverance when we've been delivered from something and there's just this amazing sense of thankfulness we're able to say my Lord and my God.

Times maybe when we're reading or just maybe reading the Bible or studying or reading a devotional book, reading a book of doctrine, reading a book of whatever, something, a Christian reading, and maybe we've got a spirit of worship as we read.

[28 : 01] And then it's like, you know, sometimes it happens. There's just this, your heart begins to thrill. And there's this awareness of what you're reading, not only the reality of it, but the personalness of it.

And this awareness that the Lord is your God. And you're able to say, Lord, my God. Sometimes at the Lord's table, have we not said that?

Lord, my God. Lord. So really, what is Thomas saying here when he says, my Lord and my God? Well, Lord, with this we finish.

Lord is expressing lordship, authority, possession, ownership. The Bible speaks, for instance, the Lord of the vineyard, the Lord of the whole earth, who owns ownership, possession.

And Thomas is saying to Jesus, I'm yours. I know that you own me, and I'm happy for that. I want you to be king, to be lord of my life.

[29 : 14] And my friends, that's what Christianity is. And that's the problem why people push Jesus away.

And maybe there's somebody in here tonight and says, you know, I would love to be a Christian, but not quite yet. Because what I'm realizing is that if Jesus becomes mine, he becomes lord of my life, he owns me.

I no longer own myself. And I'm not ready for that. Because I want control of my life. I want, I want, that's a problem, I want.

And Jesus says, in order to be mine, it's not what you want, it's what I want for you.

And so there is this, we've got to, it's like breaking, this is the hardest thing to deal with. And that's why people keep Jesus away.

[30 : 27] They want him, yet they're scared. They want him, but they don't want to part. With kind of holding the reins of your own life.

But Thomas is saying, Lord, I'm happy for that. I'm all you, and that's what I want. So that's what it is as Lord.

Basically, that's it. My God, the one who is the object of my affections, my devotion, my worship, the one who is supreme in majesty and glory.

you know, this is a great exclamation and a testimony and a confession of the deity of Jesus Christ. God, Lord, the one who is over all.

And tonight, are you able to say, my Lord and my God? Jesus then goes on to say, in the end, it's, people have said it's his final beatitude.

[31 : 28] We know the beatitudes in Matthew chapter 5, blessed are the meek, blessed are the pure in heart, blessed are those who are poor in spirit and so on. Well, here is a blessing.

Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. It comes back to what I was saying earlier, maybe you're making obstacles for yourself and you're thinking this believing is too simple.

I've got to do more. and there are Christians tonight who are riddled and plagued with all kinds of doubts because they're looking to more than believing.

It can't be enough. Well, that's all that Jesus says. Blessed are those whom having not seen with the eye but yet have accepted, have seen sufficient with the eye of faith to seek me to be their Lord and their King.

Blessed are those whom having not seen-yet believe. Let us pray. Thank you.