

Series: John (Easter)

Title: Hallelujah! Jesus is Alive.

Text: John 20:24-31

Hallelujah! Jesus is alive! He is risen! Let's all say it together. HALLELUJAH! JESUS IS ALIVE! One more time. HALLELUJAH! JESUS IS ALIVE.

Now, maybe you are having problems understanding or accepting the resurrection of Jesus. Well, I want to tell you that you are not alone. There is a man in the bible, a disciple of Jesus, who also had great trouble in accepting the fact that Jesus arose from the dead. His name is THOMAS. And I would like to look at the reaction of Thomas to the resurrection of Jesus.

Take your Bibles, please, and turn with me to the Gospel of John. The Gospel of John chapter 20, beginning with verse 24.

John chapter 20 is the story of the resurrection of Jesus and his appearance to various people. He appeared, first of all, to Mary Magdalene. Then he appeared to the disciples in the upper room. And then, finally, he appeared to Thomas who is often called the doubter.

John chapter 20 beginning with Vs. 24. Would you please stand for the reading of God's Word? (Read John 20:24-31)

(Prayer)

Our Father in heaven, we thank you for that day when Jesus arose from the dead. And we pray that you will speak to all of us about the importance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And we pray that those here who have been considering their commitment might understand that Christianity is build on the historical fact that Jesus actually arose from the dead. Our Father, we pray that you would clearly show that to people in this hour. That we would understands that without the resurrection of Christ there is no hope for anyone. Without the resurrection we are wasting our time. And as the Apostle Paul said: "our preaching is in vain. And we are still in our sins."

Dear Father in heaven, help us to see the importance of this encounter that Jesus had with Thomas. And may we learn from this experience concerning our encounter with you. For we ask this in the name of Jesus our savior. Amen.

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(4C) Now, I want to look at this appearance of Jesus to Thomas. You know, I like Thomas. I identify with this man. I identify with his problem of doubt and unbelief.

The name "Thomas" comes from the word "^{Greek}Didymus" which means "twin." Obviously Thomas had a twin brother somewhere. Or, this name could refer to his character. So, maybe the name is referring to his doubting nature.

But, anyway, Thomas was not in the upper room when Jesus first appeared to all of his disciples. And later on the disciples said to Thomas: "Hay! Thomas, you are not going to believe what happened."

Have you ever approached someone and said something like that? And while you are saying it, you just know they will not believe you. "You are not going to believe what we have just experienced." And they were right. Thomas didn't believe them.

“Well, I will tell you what,” said Thomas, “I will believe that Jesus is alive, when I see him.” You know, there is one things that Thomas forgot. And a lot of people forget it, also. I don’t know how many times people have said that to me. “If I could see Jesus standing right here, then I would believe in him.”

Oh! No! Dear friends, you misunderstand. Many people saw Jesus alive after His resurrection. Many people saw the miracles he performed when he was here on the earth. And yet, most people did not believe in Him. OH! NO! Even if he came back from heaven and stood in this pulpit, it doesn’t guarantee that you would believe in Him. Thomas had a very bad concept in his life. Some say he was from Missouri. SHOW ME! I have got to see him, then I will believe.

On one occasion Jesus told a story about a rich man and a poor man, name Lazarus. And both of these men died. The rich man was tormented in Hell, Jesus said. And the poor man, Lazarus, was in Abraham’s bosom. And according to Jesus the rich man could communicate with the poor man. And Lazarus heard the rich man cry: “Oh, if you could only relive this ~~pressure~~ ^{burn}. Dip the tip of your finger in water and cool my tongue for I am tormented in this flame.”

A little later in this story Jesus said that the rich man wanted him to send somebody to his brothers that are living and tell them. Send someone back from the dead and then they will believe. And the answer Jesus gave to that man is so true. Jesus said: “if they don’t believe Moses and the prophets, if they will not believe God’s Word, then they will not believe even through someone comes back from the dead.”

You know, dear friends, the important think about your faith in Christ is that you must believe the facts of this book. You have to believe the Bible. Many times people

say to me: "Bill , your faith is all based upon the a Bible." RIGHT! That is absolutely correct. A person is born again by his confidence and faith in God's Word. We believe that the things taught in this book are objective facts. They are not fantasies. They are not myths. They tell a true story. They tell exactly what happened in great detail. And these facts, God is asking you to believe. And the moment you believe them, you are saved. No matter whether you have ever seen Christ or not.

However, one day we are going to see Him. One day we will see those nail prints in his hands and in his feet. One day we will see that wound in his side where water and blood came forth proving that he died. It is going to be a great day. Praise the Lord!

Now, let me share a couple of things with you about the appearance of Jesus to Thomas.

(1D) Number one, Thomas indicates that he wasn't in the room when Jesus first appeared to the disciples. Vs 24 is very clear. Thomas wasn't there and that is why Jesus dealt with him personally. I have always wondered in my mind, why he wasn't there. But, I am going to leave that to your own ideas.

(2D) Secondly, notice the evidence Thomas wanted for himself. Maybe like you. You want certain evidence to convince you of the resurrection.

Vs 25, Thomas said, "Unless I shall see in His hands the imprints of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side." You see, if I can do that, ^{then} I will believe. But, If I can do that, I will not believe. That is the evidence Thomas wanted.

(3D) Third, notice, the entrance of Jesus.

You know, it is amazing to me how often a person says something like this, and "bang" there is Jesus. Often through the testimony of a friend.

Jesus was there immediately. I wonder what Thomas thought? "Listen, unless I see Him I willn't believe." And "bang" there He is...

Old Thomas was probably scared to death..That is why Jesus said.."PEACE".. You know, I believe Jesus made this appearance for one reason. And that is to minister to Thomas. I love my Saviour in this. He always cared for people as individuals. People who had problems and difficulties. He cared for each person. And I know that he cares for you and me. I believe He came, here for one reason....to see Thomas.

Vs 27, "Then he said to Thomas." ^{Notice} It doesn't say that He said to the disciples. It says.."He said to Thomas."

Jesus loved Thomas. Thomas with all his doubts and his disbelief. But Jesus loved Thomas. And isn't it great to know that ^{Jesus} He took the time to come to him personally? And I believe He will do the same for you. He loves you. He loves everyone and cares for everyone. And if you call upon his name, He will come to you just like He came to Thomas. *That is what happened in my life, when I first called upon the name of Jesus. He came to me*

(4) Fourth, I want you to see the extent to which Thomas was encouraged.

Vs 27,,,"Jesus said, reach here your finger, and see my hands; and reach here your hand, and put it into my side; and be not unbelieving, but believing."

The thing that I like, here, is that Jesus was willing to go the extra mile for this man to prove to him that He was alive. To encourage his heart.

"Be not unbelieving, but believing." "Touch me and see....."

People often say
~~Some~~ *say* that Thomas never touched Jesus. OH, YES, HE DID, dear friends....John tells us in I John that they handled Him and touched Him. And I believe that Thomas was no exception. For he was a part of that group. *of disciples*

Thomas, we are told, is the one who took the Gospel to India. And even today there is a group of christians who chart their whole history, completely from the time and ministry of Thomas. Thomas did find the answers to the doubts of his heart. He saw the resurrected Jesus. And he believed.

(5) Then, in the fiveth place, I would like you to see the praise and worship that came from Thomas....And I wander, "would we have done the same thing?.....Vs 28...."Thomas answered and said to Him, MY LORD AND MY GOD." What a fantastic confession.....*of faith*

Dear friends, who is Jesus?....He is God manifested in the flesh. And Thomas recognized it in that moment. His resurrection had confirmed it. And he said, "MY LORD AND MY GOD."

MY LORD.....MY GOD.....You see, Jesus is Lord and God, regardless of what you and I do with Him. He is still LORD AND GOD. BUT when he is MY Lord....and MY God.....THAT IS SALVATION.

And Thomas knew in that moment who Jesus was. And he praised Jesus. I believe that the first note of confession of a believer is to recognize who Jesus is. The Bible says that if you confess Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.

Who is this Jesus who would make Thomas fall down and says "MY LORD AND MY GOD"? HE IS GOD....Jesus is more than we want to make him out to be.

"Great is the mystery of Godliness"...God was manifested in the flesh.

The Apostle John wrote: "The Word was with God, and the Word was God, And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."

In I John 5:20 John said: "This is the true God, Jesus Christ."

In Romans 9:5 Paul writes, "Christ is God blessed forever."

Over and over again the Bible declares the deity of Jesus Christ. And my friends, when you come to believe in Christ, the Bible says you must confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, and then you will be saved."

The reason a lot of people who know something about the Christian Gospel and yet have never gotten a whole of it, is because they never, like Thomas, have fallen down at His feet and said, "MY LORD, AND MY GOD." They have not recognized who He is. And a savior less than that cannot save you. Only God can forgive sins. Only God could have died on a Roman cross ²⁰⁰⁰ 1900 years ago and substituted his life for the sins of the whole world. Only God could have done that for everyone. DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHO JESUS IS?

(6) ~~Finally~~ In the sixth place, notice the effect of Thomas on all of us.

WHAT SHOULD WE LEARN FROM THIS STORY? Vs 29.. "Jesus said to him, because you have seen me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believe." *wow!*

Dear friends, that is us. I have never seen Jesus Christ in His physical body. I have never been able to touch His wounds. I have never seen that spear wound in His side. BUT I BELIEVE IT. I believe it so strongly that I find it controlling my life. It controls my ambitions..my goals..my desires..my dreams.

And I say this with all sincerity. I believe it just as surely as if the Apostle Paul was speaking here today. Just as Paul said long ago to the church of Corinth: "if Jesus did not arise from the dead, this preaching is a waste of time. And we are yet in our sins. And faith is nothing."

Listen, dear friends, all Christian belief and hope is based upon one simple thing: THAT JESUS LITERALLY, BODILY, AROSE FROM THE DEAD. He is alive. (7D) And I notice, one final thing. There is a message to all people at the end of Chapter 20. Look at it.

Vs 30. "Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book."

Listen, don't think the Bible records all that Jesus did. NO, WAY. It would be impossible to record all that Jesus did in his life. And ~~Vs 31~~ ^{CH 20:25} makes that clear. "I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books which were written."

But, Vs 31 is a blessed verse. "these have been written, that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name."

There are two things, here, that I want you to see about your belief. (1E) Number one, is to believe His person. Who is Jesus? You must believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

You say, "if Jesus is the Son of God, how can he be God?" People often ask that question. Listen, dear friends, the word "son" meaning "little born one"..like: "being born in a family...is never used of Jesus Christ. Not once in all of the Bible. The Bible never says that Jesus is the little born one of God. It is a different Greek word.

The word "son", here, is referring to "hier". It is the word of Adoption. When a Roman adopted a slave or anyone into his family, he then became the "heir" having the right to the throne. Jesus is that kind of a son. He is the unquic son. Because he is the heir of all things. He has the inheritance that God has. So, you must believe his person. HE IS THE CHRIST.

(2E) Secondly, you must believe His power. What *Can He* do? He can give you eternal life, by believing in Him. Eternal life through His name.

Acts 4:12 says, "and there is salvation in no one else. For there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved."

and following

In Philippians chapter 2 verses 9 ~~and following~~ we read, "God has highly exalted him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every ~~man~~ *knee* should bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the father."

Dear friends, you give glory to the Father when you give glory to the son. And I am asking you, not as a friend of mine puts it, "WILL YOU CONFESS JESUS AS LORD." But, I ask you, "When will you confess Jesus as Lord?"

Because the Bible teaches that if you do not confess him as Lord in this life, one day you will be resurrected to stand before God at the Great judgment, and at that moment you will confess Him as Lord. But, then it will be too late. Because Jesus will say, "Depart from me, for I never knew you."

So, dear friends, why not make that confession now, in this life, rather than in judgment? Why not, right now, receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? Claim Him as YOUR LORD, AND YOUR GOD!

Let us close with prayer