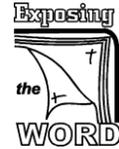




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46- From Doubt to Assurance John 20:24-31

Could you have imagined the scene when Jesus appeared to them in the upper room at the end of the day on resurrection Sunday? He had previously appeared to the Mary Magdalene women at the tomb, to the two on the road to Emmaus, to now word has come that Peter had seen the risen Lord. Then He stepped into their midst.

I- Rejection of the Testimony:

Joh 20:24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

What does it take for someone to believe? Not just believe what we say but truly believe with their heart. I had a man tell me one time that he knew I believed what I was saying about Christ but he did not believe the same thing.

When Jesus appears to the disciples here the absence of Thomas is noted. We often here him referred to as doubting Thomas. Did Thomas deserve the reputation that time has lain upon him? Thomas was simply not with them when Jesus appeared. We only need to look and seen that the others were doubters and unbelievers as well. Such as in ***Mat 28:17 And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.***

Finis Dake says, "He lost by not being faithful to gather with the rest, and so it is today." Then he gives a reference of ***Heb 10:25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.***

Thomas was not exposed to the same experience as the others. Notice however the testimony of the others as they tried to convince him that Christ was alive.

Joh 20:25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord.

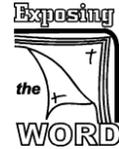
This gives us a simply principle of witnessing sharing our testimony. They simply told what they had seen and experienced. They had seen Jesus and told that. This is the same thing that our personal testimony is to others. We tell them what Christ has done for us. They may be able to argue with our theology but they cannot deny what we have experience. They may reject it but they cannot deny it.

Still we hesitate and claim we are busy. Listen to the following poem.

Forgive Me God, I Had No Time
*The year slipped by and time was spent,
And all the good things that I meant
To do were left undone because...
I had no time to stop and pause;
But rushed about, went here and there,
Did this and that, was everywhere.
I had no time to meditate
On things worthwhile. No time to wait
Upon the Lord and hear Him say,
"Well done, My child, you have shown the way."
And so I wonder, after all,
When life is o'er and I am called
To meet my Savior in the sky,
Where saints live on and never die,
If I can find one soul I have won
To Christ by some small deed I have done.
Or will I hang my head and whine,
"Forgive me, God, I had no time"?*

Thomas simply says that he will not believe until he experiences it himself by touching the hands and side.

Joh 20:25b ...But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.



This is the way many people approach believing in Christ and God. They remind me of the Georgia farmer.

A Georgia farmer, ragged and barefooted, was standing on the steps of his tumbledown shack. A stranger stopped for a drink of water. "How is your cotton coming along?" he asked. "Ain't got none," replied the farmer. "Did you plant any?" asked the stranger. "Nope," was the reply, "afraid of bollweevils."

"Well," continued the stranger, "how is your corn?" "Didn't plant none," came the answer, "'fraid there weren't gonna to be no rain."

The visitor persevered: "Well, how are your potatoes?" "Ain't got none. Scairt of potato bugs."

"Really, what did you plant?" pressed the stranger. "Nothin'," was the calm reply, "I jest played safe."

Many have excuses why they cannot believe, but not a good reason.

II- From Doubt to Assurance:

Now, having said that people have no good reason for not believing I want to disagree. I am reminded that the night that Jesus was arrested that Peter cut the ear off of the servant. Jesus healed the man and in spite of this they did not believe. Why? I submit to you it is because of blindness. The Bible says in **2 Corinthians 4:3-4** *But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

Thomas is blind to the resurrection. He needs his eyes open. Remember Jesus said about why He used parables? **Mat 13:13**

Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

Thomas would not listen to the testimony. We can speculate they talked with him for a week. He still refused to believe. Then Jesus appears again.

Joh 20:26 *And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.*

Jesus again appears in their midst. He speaks peace again. **Joh 20:27** *Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.*

He tells Thomas to put his finger in the scars of His hand and in hand in His side.

Notice Jesus knew of the conversation of Thomas and the others? He knew what it would take for Thomas to believe.

Joh 20:28 *And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.*

Thomas moves from doubt to assurance. His answer affirms that he knew that Christ was both Lord of his life and God of the universe. He has full verification of the Messiah in his heart.

What will it take to reach someone you love for Christ, or the one you witness to at work or as a friend? May I say beloved that the Master knows. He hears our efforts to witness to them and knows what it takes for them to come to faith. He knows what it will take to move them from doubt to assurance.

III- We Walk By Faith:

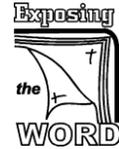
Paul said in **2 Corinthians 5:6-9** *Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: 7 (For*



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we walk by faith, not by sight:) **8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. 9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.**

The writer of Habakkuk said it this way in **Hab 2:4 Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.**

Paul quoted this verse in the New Testament in **Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11** and it is used again in **Hebrews 10:38**. Jesus said it this way in **Joh 20:29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.**

The faith of Thomas was a sight faith, Jesus said we who have believed without seeing the scars.

Does this make our faith less real. Oh, contraire, I say not, in fact it make it more blessed.

Faith is the purpose of John's gospel and yea, the life of Christ. John recorded the events that others who followed him through the centuries would believe.

Joh 20:30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: 31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

Faith is summed up in a story of a man lost in the desert.

Pete had become lost in the desert and had been chasing mirages. He thought to himself, I'll follow this last one. It was a deserted town with a well in the very center. His mouth parched from the intense heat, he ran to the well with his last ounce of energy. He vigorously pumped the handle only to find that no water came forth. Then, he looked up to a note nailed to the post. It instructed its readers to "look behind the rock where a five-gallon container of water will be found" and warned against drinking or using it for anything besides priming the pump. Every ounce was needed, and not even a drop could be spared, the note emphasized.

"After pouring the water down the pump, pump the handle vigorously and all the water you desire will come forth," the note said. One last instruction was to please fill the water can and place it behind the rock for the next weary soul who might happen to come along.

How hard it is for people to give up a "sure thing" for something they cannot see at the time. Pete had a sure thing in the bucket of water and yet was instructed to pour it "all" down the pump.

Many today are unwilling to believe and trust in anyone or anything but themselves. My, my that is sure a bad foundation. What are you building your eternal hope upon? Have you moved from doubt to assurance?