

## **The Blessings of Faith**

### **John 20:24-29**

Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.<sup>25</sup> The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord."

So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

<sup>26</sup> And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!"<sup>27</sup> Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."

<sup>28</sup> And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

<sup>29</sup> Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." NKJV

Today we find out that when Jesus appeared to the disciples on the day of His resurrection, that Thomas was not there. Now not a lot is said about Thomas in the Scriptures but more is said about Him in John's Gospel than any other.

I feel sorry for Thomas. If only he had been there that first Sunday all this would not be recorded about him and we would not know him as Doubting Thomas. But neither would we have the lessons we can see in this passage.,

Paul said, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable. . . So let us see how God might profit us by these verses this morning.

#### I. Thomas absent

- A. We do not know and it is not good to speculate too much as to why Thomas was not there.
  - 1. He was there, he just arrived late.
  - 2. Whatever reason it was Thomas missed the blessedness of seeing Jesus that first resurrection day.

#### II. Thomas' unbelief

- A. We should be careful not to pick on Thomas.
  - 1. The rest of the apostles did not believe until they saw the Savior.
  - 2. They did not believe the women, nor Cleopas and his friend who had seen the Savior earlier that day.

3. So although the others did not say what Thomas said they were of the same mind.
- B. Thomas was a loyal follower.
1. He had challenged the other to go to Jerusalem with Jesus that they might die with Him.
    - a. John 11:16 (NKJV)16 Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."
  2. It seems that he was totally dedicated to Jesus.
  3. But when Jesus give Himself up to die rather than put up a fight Thomas felt betrayed.
  4. Such a person is not likely to jump back on the band wagon just because everyone else did,
  5. This also shows us that Thomas was an individual and not one who was just swept up with the enthusiasm of the crowd.
  6. So really he just wants what the rest had expected.
- C. Thomas gets his wish.
1. God doesn't rebuke our unbelief but gives us ample proof for those who will seek Him out.
    - a. Thomas was not one who would not believe but rather one who would believe with the proper proof.
  2. Miracles do not make believers.
    - a. They only make stronger believers.
    - b. Look back on the periods of miracles in the scriptures.
      - (1) Moses lead a nation of faithless people who were constantly grumbling against God and built an alter to a false god even after they had seen some of the most tremendous miracles in the Bible.
      - (2) Elijah stopped the rain, called down fire from heaven and various other miracles yet the nation did not turn back to God.
      - (3) John 12:37 (NKJV)37 But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him,
      - (4) The idea that some have today that if the church would just start working miracles then everyone would turn to God is

just not true.

c. Jesus rebuked a generation that was looking for miracles.

(1) Matthew 12:39 (NKJV) 39 But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

3. Reach here, Jesus says.

4. Be not faithless but believing.

III. Thomas confession.

A. My Lord and my God.

1. There is not a bolder confession of Jesus' deity in the gospels.

IV. The blessedness of faith

A. The following is taken from Boice on John's Gospel.

1. It is by faith that we become *children of God* and thus enter into the privileges of being in God's spiritual family. John indicates this at several points but especially in the first chapter, where he says, "Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God" (1:12). Certainly this is a great blessing and the source of many others that follow.

2. It is through faith that we have *eternal life*. This is the teaching of the best-known verse in the Gospel, John 3:16. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." Death is an "enemy" (1 Cor. 15:26). But death shall be conquered by faith, which unites us to Christ who conquered it.

3. By faith we are *delivered from judgment*. John quotes Jesus as saying, "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life" (5:24).

4. John 6:35 teaches that faith ushers us into the blessings of *spiritual satisfaction* now: "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty." To come to Christ is to believe on Christ; that is what the parallelism suggests. So belief in Christ is set forth as the key to having all spiritual longings fulfilled.

5. Jesus also calls faith the means for entering into the final *resurrection*: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die" (11:25–26). The blessings of the resurrection are for those who believe on Jesus.

6. Faith in Jesus is also said to be the way in which we become *blessings to others*, as the Holy Spirit who communicates all God's blessings works through us. This is taught in John 7:38–39: " 'Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.' By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive." The image is of a

broad river flowing through a desert land, giving life and joy to all who come upon it.

7. Through faith we see *the glory of God*. “Then Jesus said, ‘Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?’ ” (11:40). Without faith we will be like the heathen, who are surrounded by the glory of God in nature, yet either do not see it or else attribute it to that which is not God by a worship of idols. It is only as we look to God that our eyes are increasingly opened to see what he is doing.

8. Faith is the secret of *a holy life*. Jesus said, “I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness” (12:46). In biblical language, darkness is the darkness of sin (cf. 1 John 1:5–10). So walking in the light means walking in holiness by means of the spiritual and moral life which God gives.

9. The blessing of *a fruitful and effective life* comes by faith. Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father” (14:12). This does not necessarily refer to what we would call miracles, though taken together the disciples may well have performed more miracles than Jesus did. It refers rather to the many works of witnessing, preaching, and Christlike service performed by Christian people. They are performed by those who take God at his word and go out boldly to do his bidding.

10. Finally, it is through faith that we receive the benefits of *Jesus’ prayers on our behalf*. He said, “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message” (17:20). If, as we are told in James, “the prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective” (5:16), how much more shall the prayers of the Lord Jesus Christ avail for us! If we lacked all other promises of blessing through faith, this alone should be enough.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Boice, J. M. (2005). *The Gospel of John: An expository commentary* (1614–1616). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.