

April 7, 2024

Thomas Sunday

John 20: 19-31

Thomas Sunday is the essence of Easter. It describes the whole human experience around the resurrection. This morning we are all Thomas, waiting with great anticipation. Are we going to see Jesus and have our own resurrection experience of the Risen Lord.

We have to back things up a bit to put things in context. Seeing is believing in Our Lord's day and the Gospels are no different. They are a product of that time. In order for a Jew to give testimony about anything they would first have to see and personally witness the event. If not, they have no credibility. Thomas is stuck in a strange situation. He has not personally seen the Risen Lord. So he cannot talk to anyone

about the event that all the other disciples and apostles are talking about. He has no authority or credibility to do so. Yet he wants so badly to meet Jesus as the others have. This desire is very great in him.

The essence of Easter and Jesus's resurrection is the need and desire to believe. To believe that Jesus has risen from the dead and has crushed death by His death. Granting life to those who lie in their graves.

Thomas's desire to see the risen Jesus and to believe is the essence of Easter. To have the actual hard proof of seeing the Risen Lord. This is so important to Thomas so that he can also talk about His master's resurrection to others. That he too can give credible testimony that Jesus is risen from the dead. I also think that Thomas was feeling left out of the whole experience of meeting the risen Jesus. I am sure he wondered why me, what did I do or not do so that I missed this event. Well good things come to those who wait. Thomas did not give up or get discouraged. He continued to meet with the other disciples and it paid off.

This desire to see the Risen lord is rooted in the disciple's faith in Jesus. That He would do what He said He was going to do. He claimed that He would rise from the dead on the third day and He does just that. Jesus keeps His word and promises. Faith is hope in those things expected. Thomas gets a huge shot of encouragement to his faith this morning. Thomas is asked to do something that the other disciples did not get a chance to do. Thomas's finger becomes the nail when he puts it in Jesus's hand and his hand becomes the spear as he puts his hand in Jesus's side.

This moment is an incredible flash back to Golgotha for many when this occurs. Jesus is giving testimony to what happened to Him on Good Friday. Yet as He stands before Thomas He is testifying to His resurrection. Thomas has the full story to testify too when he speaks to others. He can say with great certainty that he has seen the Risen Lord. Thomas has much more of a testimony than the rest. He can say, I put my finger in His hand and my hand in His side.

We all desire to hear these Easter stories every spring. They are a great reassurance to our faith. We rely on these written testimonies of the evangelists and the experience of people like Thomas. They strengthen and encourage our faith. This is why testimony is so important for those of that day and the generations yet to come.

I love Thomas and the examples that he gives us. To not give up or lose faith. Keep believing and continue to hang out with your friends whose experience you wish to have. Thomas gives us one of the greatest expressions of faith when he sees the Risen Lord. Thomas says, "My Lord and My God." None of the others say this when they meet Jesus. Thomas has been misunderstood for many centuries. He didn't doubt Jesus's resurrection, he just wanted his own experience of the Risen Lord. Thomas's faithfulness is rewarded greatly through his finger and hand. He can give a testimony to the Risen Lord far greater than the others.

For us in our day we have the testimonies of those who came before us. Mostly written accounts in the Bible. I have read some accounts of traders on the Silk road in India and China who talked about the resurrection of Jesus. These were only sixty years after the resurrection. This story was similar to what we have in the Gospels with a slight twist. They said it was the Romans who killed Jesus and not the Jews! That puts things in a different light and makes you think. Our faith in the resurrection requires much more faith. We do not have the physical proof that Thomas had this morning. We believe due to the testimonies from the past. Those in the Gospels and other writers from that period. We are grateful for the testimonies like Thomas's. Keep the desire to believe strong in your hearts, God Bless Pastor D