

J.J.

STOP DOUBTING AND START BELIEVING

John 20:24-29

ANNOUNCEMENT:

- William Osler Hospital Service
- Baptism in Camp

INTRODUCTION :

A rich family had twin boys whose only resemblance to each other was their looks. If one felt it was too hot, the other thought it was too cold. If one said the TV was too loud, the other claimed the volume needed to be turned up. Opposite in every way, one was an eternal optimist, the other a doom and gloom pessimist.

Just to see what would happen, on the twins' birthday their rich father asked them what they want for their birthday and they could ask for anything. So he asked the pessimist first and his pessimist son said without excitement, "I don't know, a toy?" Then he asked the optimist son, which said excitedly, "Anything? I want a pony."

So on their birthday the father loaded the pessimist's room with every imaginable toy and game. The optimist's room he loaded with a huge, huge pile of horse manure.

That night the father passed by the pessimist's room and found him sitting amid his new gifts crying bitterly.

"Why are you crying?" the father asked.

"Because my friends will be jealous, I'll have to read all these instructions before I can do anything with this stuff, I'll constantly need batteries, and my toys will eventually get broken." answered the pessimist twin.

Passing the optimist twin's room, the father found him dancing for joy in the pile of manure.

"What are you so happy about?" he asked.

To which his optimist twin replied, "There's got to be a pony in here somewhere!"

Today, we're going to talk about a disciple of Jesus Christ who obviously had a twin who was infamously and I say unfairly labeled as "doubting Thomas".

John 20: 24 Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

28 Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

29 Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

PRAY

24 Now Thomas (also known as Didymus),

Etymology :

Thomas "Aramaic" in origin, means "a twin"

Didymus "Greek" in origin, means duo or used when describing a twin.

Thomas is not a common name with the Jews. Maybe it's because you only give that to a person who has a twin.

one of the Twelve

This means he is one of the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ.

A WORD ON THE DISCIPLES OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

- The disciples Jesus chose are a band of men with flawed characters. Most of them are ordinary men like fishermen, some are hated by people because of what they do (tax collectors), others hate the government (political zealots) and most of them have unstable and volatile personalities like Peter.
- But when our Lord chooses men, He doesn't look at them on who they are right now but on their potential.

APPLICATION : A good lesson when looking at people, don't look at who they are right now but look at their potential. That's how our Lord looked at men.

Matthew 4: 18 Now as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. 19 And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."

It gives me great comfort to know that I don't have to be great or perfect to be used by God.

And one of those men who is not perfect, in fact, he is well known as "doubting Thomas".

The reason we are talking about doubting Thomas is because all men, even Christians face times of doubting.

Charles Spurgeon once wrote :

"“I think, when a man says, ‘I never doubt,’ it is quite time for us to doubt him...” - Desire of the Soul in Spiritual Darkness

I. THE CONDITION OF HIS HEART

24 Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

We can see here that the condition of Thomas heart was that he was skeptical.

Why? It's already the other disciples who were telling him that they have seen the Lord and yet he doesn't believe them.

Ice breaker : Remember during that time, there is no "Wow Mali" or there is no "Smile you're on candid camera" or there is no "Punked" by Ashton Kuschner.

The disciples had no reason to tell him that they have seen him when all of them were down, depressed and knew Jesus died on the cross and was buried in the tomb.

Why did he began to doubt?

1. It's part of his nature.

John 11: 14 So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, 15 and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."

16 Then Thomas (also known as Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

Background : Jesus was in Jerusalem in John 10 and he was claiming that He is God so the Jews wanted to stone Him.

John 10 : 31 Again his Jewish opponents picked up stones to stone him, 32 but Jesus said to them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?" 33 "We are not stoning you for any good work," they replied, "but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God."

But he was able to escape their grasp. And so they went to the other side of the Jordan where the Jews cannot enter. That's why when he said they are going back to Judea, the disciples said to Jesus in verse 7 and 8

John 11: 7 and then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."

8 "But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?"

That's why Thomas said in verse 16

"Let us also go, that we may die with him."

So he was expecting the worst to happen.

In short, he was a pessimist.

Pessimists are always expecting the worst about a situation.

Ice breaker : That's the reason why when you need money, you should borrow money from a pessimist. Why? Because he never expects that he will get it back.

Thomas forgot that Jesus is God (which he had heard him claim), he saw Jesus' miracle and they're purpose in going back to Judea is to go to Lazarus.

Application : Our natural bent is pessimism because we are always expecting the worst about a situation. It's part of our survival instincts.

At this point with Thomas, he can't believe that Jesus is alive from the dead because he forgot who Jesus is and what He can do.

This is the reason why when we worry, it means we forget who God is and what He can do.

Reminder to Israelites :

- He always wants them to remember who He is.

Jeremiah 32:27 "I am the LORD, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?"

- He always wants them to remember what He has done.

Most of the time, He will remind them that He saved them out of Egypt when they cried, He opened the Red Sea to make a way for them when there is no other way and etc.

Application 2 : When you are becoming pessimistic and worried, remind yourself who God is and what He has done in your life in the past.

2. He distanced himself from other believers.

was not with the disciples when Jesus came.

This is what happens when you distance yourself from other believers, from the church. Doubt or wrong belief sets in.

NOTE : I said wrong belief. It's because WRONG BELIEF IS UNBELIEF.

And then you begin to lose your enthusiasm for the things of God, like serving other people to share Christ or serving others.

Illustration : It's like a lump of coal that is burning hot. But when you pull one coal from the rest, that coal loses its heat and eventually becomes cold.

It's obvious that Thomas has gone cold. It's because he wasn't there when Jesus appeared to the disciples. Look at what he missed from the previous passage.

John 20: 19 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"

IN SHORT, HE MISSED THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

QUOTE : THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD BRINGS PEACE

Etymology : Shalom – a feeling of completeness, not lacking anything. It's a peace that whatever is happening (whether good or bad), you feel complete, you feel joy, you're not worried

What else did Thomas miss?

20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

QUOTE : THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD BRINGS JOY

Psalms 16:11 You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

What else did Thomas miss?

21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

QUOTE : THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD BRINGS FIRE

Thomas had gone cold. He missed initially the instructions of the Lord and the joy and fire of serving him.

This is the reason people begin to have doubts or have wrong beliefs or become cold. And one of the results of distancing yourself from fellow believers or the church that is **they lose their fire for the Lord.** They are not on fire for His coming again.

That's the reason why the Bible says :

Hebrews 10: 23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

II. THE CONVICTION TO HIS HEART

26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” 27 Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”

26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them.

Look at what happens when you are with fellow believers. You are in the presence of God.

Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them

And what do you receive?

and said, “Peace be with you!”

We receive peace from the Lord.

27 Then he said to Thomas,

Imagine YOU ARE THOMAS, you are in this room. I’m pretty sure they are telling stories to one another, PROBABLY TELLING THEM THAT WE SAW JESUS and you still do not believe them. Then Jesus comes suddenly in the room, REMEMBER THE DOORS WERE LOCKED. He says to everyone, “Shalom” and then he looks at you. You just said last week, that you don’t believe He rose from the dead.

SIMILAR SITUATION : I had a boss in the Philippines before. Sa tagalog, “wala akong bilib sa kanya.”(I had no belief in her). While she’s around since she’s the boss, she thinks I’m one of the best people in her team and I’m loyal to her. But one time, she wasn’t around, we were talking about her and I said, something like, “Hindi naman talaga siya magaling, ako naman ang gumagawa ng strategy e.” And then I saw at the corner of my eye, that she passed by and I knew she heard what I said but she just kept on walking. Imagine the embarrassment I felt.

It’s the same with Thomas.

But our Lord wasn’t angry with Thomas. Remember, He said to everyone in the room, “Shalom” so that includes Thomas.

“Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side.

Look at what our Lord did. HE MADE ROOM FOR THOMAS’ DOUBT. He did not rebuke Thomas. It’s because our Lord knew that sometimes we doubt. A lot of Old Testament people doubted.

In fact, he was even reassuring Thomas, almost like saying, “I am here Thomas. I am real.”

APPLICATION : Isn't that what happens to us sometimes, when we are in the precipice of doubt and not starting to believe, our LORD DOES SOMETHING TO LIFT US BACK AGAIN from our doubt and unbelief.

ILLUSTRATION : I don't know how our Lord does it in your life but He usually do that when I start doubting His love or His provision. You all know the story that one time in the middle of Chicay's fight with cancer, I was the only one working, the kids were young and it's the end of the work day and I was so tired and I didn't know what's going to happen in the future, as I was in the parking lot walking to the car, I looked up to heaven and said to God, "Do you really love me?" And then my cellphone rang, and it was from a pastor that I haven't talked with for quite some time and the pastor said, that I was on his mind the whole day and at this time, he knew Jesus was asking him to give me a call just to say to me, "Jerry, mahal na mahal ka ng Dios" God loves you very much. WOW! And I just bowed and I was encouraged again and all doubts were removed. It still brings tears to my eyes and gives me goosebumps when I remember that.

I don't know how God does it with you. It maybe through a friend or something you read in the Bible that jumps out of the pages and etc. BUT JESUS KNOWS THAT WE SOMETIMES DOUBT AND HE GIVES ROOM FOR THAT AND ASSURES YOU.

But he follows up with these words :

Stop doubting and believe."

Note : I'm pretty sure when Thomas heard those words, there was no doubt in his mind already that Thomas gave his life to Jesus Christ and it was said that he was the one who brought the gospel to India and he even gave his life to Christ.

Now let me say this :

QUOTE : WHEN IT COMES TO TRUSTING GOD, WHEN YOU'RE GIVING ROOM FOR DOUBT THAT'S THE TIME YOU LET FAITH COME IN.

III. THE CONFESSION FROM HIS HEART

28 Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

We all know that we call Thomas "doubting Thomas" but let us remember that after his doubt, we can call him "The Great Confessor"

Confession means, "Agreeing", that's the meaning of confession.

He was the first one among the disciples to proclaim that Jesus is Lord and God.

"Lord" meaning, kurios, meaning "master"

"God" meaning theos meaning "God"

Here's the proof that you do not have the wrong belief of who Jesus is WHICH MEANS YOU TRULY BELIEVE ON WHO JESUS IS.

REMEMBER : WRONG BELIEF IS UNBELIEF

- **You are willing to obey Him personally.**

My Lord.

Why? It's because you know that He is Lord which means "Master".

That's why Paul when he introduced himself, he introduces himself as look

Romans 1: 1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, an apostle

2 Peter 1:1 Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

Look at the half-brother of Jesus Christ,

James 1:1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,

Note : A person who truly believes on who Jesus is will be his servant and will obey Him and follow Him even it's inconvenient for him.

That's the reason why a person who says that Jesus is Lord and yet still maintains a sinful lifestyle doesn't believe really that He is Lord.

- **You are willing to trust Him personally.**

My God.

It's because you know who God is and what ever happens you know that He can be trusted.

CONCLUSION :

29 Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Why did our Lord say this?

It's because you do not need faith if you can see it.

That's the reason the Bible says :

2 Corinthians 5:7 For we live by faith, not by sight.

Illustrate : Do I have \$10 in my hand?

Who says, "Yes"... Who says "No"... Who says "Yes, but I have doubts"

Reveal the \$10 in your hand.

Why did you believe? Is it because you saw the \$10 or is it because I said it.

This is the reason why the Lord said, blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Why? It's because you have believed in His Word.

Give the \$10 now to the person who said "Yes"

Hebrews 11: 6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

S.G.D