

Theme: Blessed “Blind” Faith

1. Not Really a “Blind” Faith
2. But Truly a “Blessed” Faith!

Text: John 20:24-31

Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 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." 26 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!" 27 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." 28 And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed *are* those who have not seen and *yet* have believed." 30 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

Besides Judas who betrayed the Lord, who among the disciples is most remembered in a bad light? Some people might answer Peter for having denied the Lord, but the one that probably pops into most people's heads is Thomas. His skepticism and doubt at the reports of Jesus' resurrection have landed him the nickname "Doubting Thomas." Thomas was clearly a man who wanted evidence. He wanted something he could touch and feel before he would believe that Jesus had, in fact, conquered death and risen again. He wouldn't just take the others' word for it. (He wouldn't just take Jesus' word for it either, as we will see later on in our sermon). His own words leave no doubt that this was his attitude, "**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**" (v. 25).

But our view of the disciples is not always quite fair. This skepticism and doubt that Thomas exhibits and his need for visible, tangible evidence is not something that was unique to Thomas. We've all got a little bit of "Thomas" in us, don't we? We all, to some degree at times, have an attitude of "I'll believe it when I see it!"

Do you realize just how impractical and, in fact, absurd it is to refuse to believe something that you've never seen with your own eyes? You probably "believe in" more things that you've never seen—and simply can't see—than you realize. I have never seen the oxygen molecules I breathe in each moment of each day, but I don't doubt that they exist. Why? Because I am still living and breathing! That's pretty overwhelming evidence, isn't it? Or, thinking along those same lines, how about the wind? Have you ever thought about the fact that you really can't see the wind? Who here believes that the wind *doesn't* exist?

The fact is we believe in these things even though we can't see them. Why? Because of the overwhelming evidence we've observed, experienced, and simply know to be true even though we've never seen many things, like oxygen and the wind (or many, many other examples) with our eyes.

Why is it that we don't often use this same clear and obvious type of thinking when it comes to Jesus and His promises? We've got evidence of God and His love all around us—in the magnificent way He's made us, in the beautiful creation He's provided for us, and the way He preserves and blesses us every single day. Most importantly of all He's told us about Himself—pages and pages of eyewitness accounts, examples, illustrations, decrees, commandments, prophecies, and promises that have themselves been miraculously preserved for us over thousands of years. All people should believe, at the very least, in the existence of God and the fact that He must be incredibly wise and powerful, just as easily as they believe in the existence and power of the wind!

Thomas should have “put the pieces together” as well and realized the truth that Jesus had in fact risen from the dead even before Jesus appeared to Him the week after Easter behind locked doors.

- ✠ Thomas had the eyewitness testimony of the women who saw Jesus on their way back from His empty tomb.
- ✠ He had the eyewitness testimony of the two disciples who walked and talked with Jesus on the road to Emmaus on Easter afternoon & evening.
- ✠ He even had the eyewitness testimony of the rest of his close, trusted friends: Jesus’ disciples. We hear them tell Thomas in our text, **The other disciples therefore said to him, “We have seen the Lord” (v. 25).**

Thomas had no reason not to believe, but he chose to believe his reason and intellect instead. On top of all this, during Jesus’ ministry Thomas and the rest of the disciples had repeatedly heard Him predict His suffering, death, and His resurrection on the third day. Mark records one of these predictions for us, **Then He [Jesus] took the twelve aside again and began to tell them the things that would happen to Him: “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles; and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again” (Mark 10:32-34).** At the very least Thomas should have believed the very words of the Lord Jesus Himself!

In the case of Thomas, as it often is with us, the problem is not that there isn’t evidence or reasons enough to believe, but rather that our reason won’t let us believe! We sometimes hear people speak of having faith in Jesus, the true God, as being a “blind faith.” In a sense, that’s true. It’s a “blind” faith in the sense that we’ve never seen Jesus with our physical eyes. The letter of Hebrews defines **faith** as **“the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1).** However, our faith in Christ is **1. Not Really a “Blind” Faith** at all. It’s not that the evidence isn’t there. We have pages and pages of true, historically accurate testimony from many eyewitnesses of Christ’s resurrection—eyewitnesses whose written words were inspired by God Himself! Through the eyes of these men and through our eyes of faith we too are eyewitnesses of Christ’s resurrection. **“We have seen the Lord!” (v. 25).** But still, that sinful flesh of ours likes to pop up every once in a while and put that thought in the back of our minds, “Yes, but we really haven’t seen the Lord with our own eyes!” Like Thomas, our natural reason and intellect often work against our faith and can lead us to doubt even the very words of Jesus Himself.

Jesus does not want this type of “doubting Thomas faith” from His followers. That is why He says, **“Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (v. 29).** The fact that we haven’t seen Jesus with our physical eyes should not worry us or cause us to doubt. In times of weakness when we, like Thomas ask the Lord for more proof, what we are doing is ignoring all the sure and certain things He has shown us and narrowed our search down to the visible, physical proof that we want to see.

- ✠ When we do this, we ignore the fact that His handprints are all over creation.
- ✠ We ignore our natural knowledge of Him; the conscience that He has placed inside each one of us.
- ✠ We ignore the cross where Jesus gave His life for us as the ultimate and unquestionable “proof” that He loves us and would do anything to save us from hell.
- ✠ Worst of all we ignore the fact that He has given us His very own words—the very words of God Himself—which He inspired His own eyewitnesses to write. Eyewitnesses like John, who tells us in the last verse of our text, **but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name (v. 31).**

Jesus has come to each one of us this morning in His Word to remove our doubts. He says to each one of us, **“Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand *here*, and put *it* into My side (v. 27a).** See and touch the wounds I bore on the cross for your sins. See and touch that I am your living, loving Savior! **Do not be unbelieving, but believing” (v. 27b).**

So while our faith really isn't a "blind faith," it **2. Truly is a "Blessed" Faith!** Jesus is speaking to you and me as well when He says, "**Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed**" (v. 29). Jesus has also given us the sure and certain words of His eyewitnesses, like Peter, who wrote to Christians, who, like us, had not seen Jesus with their physical eyes either, "**Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls**" (1 Peter 1:8-9 NIV).

The fact is, we "believe in" plenty of things in this life without having seen them with our eyes. We can look at the evidence and the effects of things like oxygen and the wind and be certain that they do exist. Take a look at all the evidence Jesus has given us that He lived, He died, and lives again—or just take His Word for it! He's never broken a promise! With eyes of faith in Jesus' Words we confidently say today with the disciples, "**We have seen the Lord!**" (v. 25). There will come a day for each one of us when we will no longer need to look with our eyes of faith, but "**we shall see Him as He is**" (1 John 3:2). Like Job of the Old Testament, we look forward to that day and say, "**For I know that my Redeemer lives... Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!**" (Job 19:25,27). Amen.