

John 20:24-29
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- I. **Doubt** in the fellowship of **believers** is to be **expected**.
- II. **Doubt** in the fellowship of **believers** will be **expelled**.
- III. **Doubt** in the heart of the **unbeliever** is to be **expected**
- IV. **Doubt** in the heart of the **unbeliever** left unchallenged leads to **Hell**.

This morning we are turning again to **the Gospel of John 20 :19 -31**, and our subject is **“Doubting Thomas, the Supreme Example of Faith.”** (from S. Lewis Johnson’s title)the Gospel of John concludes, it would seem, in the great **confession of Thomas**,

- **“My Lord and my God.”** It’s remarkable how the Lord’s appearances after his resurrection met various needs.

Mary Magdalene, the DEMONIAC, we know as one out of whom came seven devils, who eventually as a Christian became one of those noted for her love for Jesus Christ. He ministered to her in his post resurrection appearance and met her needs.

Then there was **Peter**, one of the **apostles who DEPARTED** from our Lord. And in **Peter’s** case more severely, because he **DENIED** our Lord before our Lord’s death and resurrection.

All the disciples or apostles forsook and fled Jesus at the crucifixion. But Peter the BACKSLIDDEN one is dealt with very lovingly and mercifully following the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

the **Emmaus disciples** were the **DISCOURAGED DISCIPLES**. They were exhibiting the **greatest form of discouragement** that a professing Christian could ever have - - - - they were **discouraged in or because of Jesus Christ himself**. They said on the Emmaus road,

After recounting the betrayal and crucifixion –

“But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Lk. 24:18-21 NKJV -

There’s hardly a Christian who has at one time or another not be **disappointed in Jesus Christ**.

- Of course the disappointment is our own fault.

Somehow God has let us down,

He did not do what 2 or more were “gathered together” to pray about.

He didn’t answer our prayers the way we told Him to when we prayed in our closet.

The problem is the same in each area of disappointment - We have failed to see Jesus as we ought to see him. We will all pass through those experiences of why the Lord hasn’t done something about my particular problem.

(Election next week – some will awake disappointed and doubting the Sovereignty Of God. BUT Acts 17:26 will still be true, - “ And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, “

Just as the Lord dealt lovingly with the Emmaus disciples. So likewise he **then he deals with defeated, doubting Thomas.**

Doubt is a funny thing. If you were to read in a scientific journal that there are **558 billion 678 million, 934 thousand 341 stars**, you would probably believe it.

But when you come up on a sparkling **new coat of paint** that has a sign put there by the painter that says - **WET PAINT** - what do you do? You have to touch it don't you?

Someone once wisely said that we should "**Doubt our doubts before we doubt our beliefs.**"

There are many who set out to establish a religion to their own liking - and many indeed who set out to destroy the one true faith - Christianity.

A young scholar approached the British statesman **Benjamin Disraeli** one day to announce that he had **developed a new religion** and he had just written a book to explain its doctrines. The young man claimed that his newly devised creed surpassed in beauty the message of Christ and His sacrificial crucifixion on Calvary. Disraeli asked the young man about the success of the books sales, only to hear him complain that he couldn't get anyone to buy it or to believe in his religion. The old statesman placed his hand on the young man's shoulder and said: "**No, my boy, you will never get anyone to read your book and believe in your religion until you too have been crucified on a cross and risen from a tomb.**" DB 7/23/83.

"Two infidels once sat on a railroad train, discussing the **life of Christ**. One of them said, "I think an interesting romance could be written about Him " The other replied: "And you are just the man to write it. Tear down the prevailing sentiment about his divinity, and paint him as a man - a man among men. "The suggestion was acted upon and the romance written. The man who made the suggestion was **Colonel Ingersoll**, the noted **atheist**. The **writer** was **General Lew Wallace**, and the book was called - **BEN HUR**.

In the process of constructing the life of Christ, **General Wallace** found himself facing the greatest life ever lived on earth. **The more he studied, the more he was convinced that Christ was more than a man.** Until one day, he was forced to cry - "**Verily, this was the Son of God!**" Tan #850

John 20:24-27

Given time, Jesus will deal with all our doubts and fears. Jesus knew exactly what Thomas needed in order to believe. Important note: Thomas was still meeting with the other disciples. He did not alienate himself from the commonwealth of believers. And, it was in the context of the "assembly of themselves together" that Jesus took away the doubt of Thomas!

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

While it is true that there are "many members to the body of Christ", meaning that there is room for great diversity within the church universal, it is also true that there are many counterfeit fellowships in the world. We call these counterfeits **cults**. They may smile and exude a joy and love that seems genuine. They may meet for hours at a time for prayer, visit the homeless, heal the sick etc. But yet, they may not be a Christian fellowship.

Matt. 7:21-23 - ". . . I never knew you"

One of the chief ways to **identify a cult** is by their view of the Person of Jesus. Is He God, co-equal with the Father - or is he just a chosen prophet? Is he the Creator or just another created being?

THE WORD OF GOD LEAVES NO DOUBT ABOUT THE PERSON OF CHRIST.

The **deity of our Savior** is declared throughout the Bible. At the **annunciation** in **Luke 1:35** the **Angel** proclaimed it to Mary. "**That Holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the SON OF GOD.**"

John the Baptist – the greatest prophet who ever lived - announced it to Israel - **John 1:(29) 34** Behold the **Lamb of God** that taketh away the sin of the world . . . and I saw and bore witness that **this is the Son of God.**

A legion of demons knew it, for they exclaimed in **Matt. 8:29** "What have we to do with thee, **Jesus thou Son of God.**"

Mark, Peter and John all made clear assertions concerning the deity of Christ. (**Mark 1:1; Matt. 16:16; John 20:31.**) *DB 1/18/70.*

BUT IN SPITE OF SCRIPTURE, MILLIONS TODAY TEACH THAT JESUS CANNOT BE GOD.

A preacher was confronted by one such **cultist** who put forth the following argument. "You say that Jesus Christ is coequal with the Eternal Father; but he cannot be, **for no son is ever as old as the one who sires him**" The preacher paused for a moment and then gave this devastating reply.

"You yourself have just called the **God the Eternal Father**. Does it not strike you that that God can only be the **Eternal Father** by having an **Eternal Son? Eternal Fatherhood demands Eternal Sonship!**" , *DB 1/18/70*

"Doubt our doubts before you doubt your beliefs."

We need not be afraid to share the Gospel with any man. Not all who hear us present our case will be won over to the cause of Christ. Many will openly scoff. Others will shake their heads and walk away. But if we truly present the Gospel from a heart of love, one that is genuinely concerned with the eternal soul of man, there will also be those who respond to that call to salvation. And for those who do not answer "yes" to Jesus' gracious invitation, extended through the "Body" ("His Church)" He gave His life to create - then there awaits certain judgement, **for whereas it is true that 'as many as believe on His name shall be saved - it is equally true that those who fail to believe are eternally damned to languish through the eons of eternity - separated from the Love of God - the Goodness of God - and the Fellowship of the family of God.** Cf. **John 3:18**

John 3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Thomas who **was so certain that the resurrection** had not taken place that he said, **"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.*"

Remember, **Thomas** is an **apostle**! And our Lord is going to deal mercifully and gently with **Thomas the doubter**.

Thomas appears **three times** in the **gospel of John**.

In **chapter 11**, he **exhibits some genuine affection** for the Lord. When Jesus goes to Jerusalem in spite of the fact that they had been trying to put him to death there, **Thomas** said,

Joh 11:16 Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellowdisciples, **Let us also go, that we may die with him.**

In the **14th chapter** he **exhibits his caution**. He is a man who has always managed to keep well within his knowledge.

Joh 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also.

Joh 14:4 And where I go you know, and the way you know."

Joh 14:5 **Thomas** said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?"

Joh 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Joh 14:7 "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him."

Jesus said, explaining what Thomas already knew, "**Thomas I'm the way. You know I'm the way. You've believed in me,**"

And then of course **Thomas** appears **here, cautious, very cautious**. Here almost as an **obtuse pessimist**, he accepts the blackest view of everything.

"I was there when Jesus was placed in the grave. I saw the crucifixion, and helped wrap the life-less body of my friend, I know what I experienced, and now, in spite of what my friends are telling me, I'll not believe unless I can actually put my hands in his side!

Thomas was, I think, that kind of person. He was very **pessimistic**, and so he says, "**Except I can do this**

*(I would not be surprised to learn that later in life he **matured** to being a full blown **curmudgeon**.) I will not believe."*

It is obvious that Thomas illustrates the mercy of our Lord toward the weaker brethren.

Doubters, have you ever doubted things in the word of God? You think **doubt** is something that brings down the condemnation of God and thus everything is closed up, and there's no hope if you **doubt**?

Well Jesus deals very mercifully and tenderly with Thomas who doubts. So our Lord deals with the doubtful as well. **Be not faithless, but believe**. And when Thomas sees him, he falls down and says, "**My Lord and my God.**" He was convinced by the sight of our Lord and by the omniscience of our Lord who said, "Thomas, come on, get your hand. Put your hand in my side." And he realized that Jesus knew what he had said before. And so convinced of this, he

rises. **Think of it, doubting Thomas rises to the highest confession of faith that is found in the whole of the New Testament. Isn't it contradictory? Doubting Thomas is great believing Thomas, "My Lord and my God," you cannot say more about Jesus Christ than that. "My Lord and my God."**

Let me be clear to each one here today - that really is the expression of what saving faith is.

To say to the Lord Jesus Christ from the bottom of hearts meaning it, "**My Lord and my God.**" Now, incidentally no one can call Jesus Lord, Paul will later say, except by the Holy Spirit. And so the one whom they have received for enduement of power is working, obviously, during this period of time before he comes on the day of Pentecost. Because Thomas expresses this highest form of faith, "My Lord and my God."

John 20:30-31 - 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.

When we look at the New Testament we really have a very, very small book. Take the 4 gospels for example; Altogether they were less than **120 pages** in one Bible I looked at yesterday.

I have a habit of collecting **recipes** that look good (*read easy*) to me. I see many, many cookbooks at yard sales, and I have to force myself not to waste money on buying them, even though they are usually only a dollar or so. I love "**Good Eats**" and **Alton Brown's** approach to cooking. It is not just a "How To" cook but "What actually happens" when you cook.

Nathan Myhrvold, **Microsoft's former chief technology officer**, left the firm in **1999 with \$650 million** and has followed his passions, which include . . . *being* trained as a **chef** and *he* has spent countless millions turning himself into the **Medici** of modern food.

For **more than three years**, **Myhrvold** and his team deconstructed, invented and tested thousands of recipes, which they **painstakingly documented** in what can safely be called **The Most Expensive Cookbook Ever Written**. Actually, **Modernist Cuisine: The Art and Science of Cooking** is **six books**, with **2,400 pages and 3,500 photographs**. It went on sale in March of 2010 for **\$625**.

Now if you were to put by the side of **Nathan Myhrvold's**, **Modernist Cuisine: The Art and Science of Cooking** **6 volume tome**, the gospel records, the four gospels, would look like a weekly magazine.

As one man said, "The Gospels are like a pen and ink drawing of the sun."

But they were themselves miracles of the pen. They gospels were each designed to present certain aspects of our Lord's life and ministry that would **bring men to conviction and decision**. If having prayerfully read the Gospels, you have not come to **conviction and conversion** then you have not read them honestly and openly.

Closing Song: **The Love of God**. - #67