



“An Evil Heart of Unbelief”

John 20:19-31; Heb. 3:7-19

Lesson Text John 20:29 Hebrew 3:12

The resurrection of Jesus had come and gone and in it's after mass was left His devoted trusted followers. For three long treacherous years, they had learned from Jesus what His mission was on earth and what was to be their assignments once He had ascended to be with the Father. Before Jesus left the earth and immediately after His resurrection, He felt the need to appear before His apostles so they may see for themselves that He fulfilled His Word that He would rise in three days.

John 20:19-31 gives us an eyewitness account of what happened when Jesus came into the midst of the disciples after His resurrection. The reactions of Thomas, and Jesus' response to Thomas, are a profound lesson for each of us to apply in our daily lives. Beginning in the 19th verse, we read about the “brave faithful” followers huddled in a locked room fearful of Jewish reprisal. Jesus suddenly appeared in their midst and simply said “Peace Be With You” or “Shalom” the Hebrew greeting. He showed them the wounds in His hands and feet to prove that He was no phantom, but a real man with a real body. He had been dead, but was now alive. They were actually afraid. He even ate with them. (Luke 24:41-43). At this meeting Thomas was not present (Jn. 20:24). The others told Thomas “we have seen the Lord (vs.25) but said, first, I must see the nail scars in His hands and touch them with my finger. I must put my hand where the spear went into His side. I won't believe unless I do this!” (vs. 25).

John 11:16 indicates that Thomas was basically a courageous man, willing to go to Judea and die with the Lord. John 14:5 reveals that Thomas was a spiritually minded man who wanted to know the truth and was not ashamed to ask questions. He may have been a little pessimistic. Some have called him “Doubting Thomas”; but Jesus did not rebuke him for his doubts. He rebuked him for unbelief: “Be not faithless, but believing.” Doubt is often an intellectual problem: We want to believe, but the faith is overwhelmed by problems and questions. Unbelief is a moral problem; we simply will not believe.

Here is a good point for us today, do not miss the gathering of the saints, for you might miss seeing Jesus. Don't stay home from worship service, because the Spirit of God will always be available to you!! Thomas' words help us to understand the difference between doubt and unbelief. Doubt says, “I cannot believe!” They are too many problems!” Unbelief says, “I will not believe unless you give me the evidence I ask for!” In fact, in the Greek text, there is a double negative; “I positively will not believe!”

At the second meeting Thomas was there and Jesus asked Thomas to “Put your finger here and look at my hands”! put your hand into my side Stop doubting and have faith!” (vs.27) When the time came to prove his faith, Thomas needed no proof! He said, “You are my Lord and my God.” (vs.28)

Our Lord's words translate literally “Stop becoming faithless but become a believer.” Jesus saw a dangerous process at work in Thomas' heart, and He wanted to put a stop to it. The best commentary on this is found in Hebrews 3, where God warns against, “AN EVIL HEART OF UNBELIEF.” John 20:29 indicates that Thomas' testimony did not come from his touching Jesus, but from his seeing Jesus.

For us today it should be encouraging to know that Jesus had and has a personal interest in appearing before us and removing the evilness of a doubting heart. The Hebrew writer warns us being like the children of Israel who had evil hearts of unbelief, therefore a generation did not make it into the land promised by God. Jesus' is teaching, “Blessed are those who believe in My Father's Word who have not seen me, but who have faith.”(vs. 29)

The disciples were changed from fear to courage, and Thomas was changed from unbelief to confidence. Now, John invites you to trust Jesus Christ and be changed from death to eternal life.”

If you have already made this life-changing decision, give thanks to God for the precious gift of eternal life.”

If you have never made this decision, do so right now.

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