

Not Seeing Is Believing - (John 20:19-29)

Intro: Hebrews 11:6 states that without faith it is impossible to please God. While it seems obvious that those who had spent much time with Jesus would be exempt from unbelief, the opposite is true. Thomas exemplifies this, but even in the midst of such doubt, Jesus still offers hope and assurance.

A. Jesus and Thomas

- In addition to this encounter, John records two other conversations Jesus had with Thomas.
 1. Lazarus' death. "Let us go that we may die with Him" (John 11:12-16).
 2. Jesus' promise to go and prepare a place. "Lord, we do not know where You are going" (John 14:4-6).

B. Post Resurrection Appearances (Five recorded appearances of Jesus on the first day).

(1) Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-18); (2) The other women (Matthew 28:9-10); (3) Peter (1 Cor. 15:5; Luke 24:34); (4) The two Emmaus disciples (Luke 24:13-32); (5) The disciples minus Thomas (John 20:19-25); Additional appearances: Thomas with the other disciples present (John 20:26-31); Seven disciples by the Sea of Galilee (John 21:1-24); The eleven on a mountain in Galilee (Matthew 28:14-20; Mark 16:15-18); Christ's ascension (Mark 16:19-20, Luke 24:44-53, Acts 1:1-11); Saul (Paul) on the road to Damascus (1 Corinthians 15:8; Acts 9:3-6, Acts 22:6-11; Acts 26:13-18)

C. The Sin of Unbelief (Matthew 17:14-20)

1. The Parable Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31-32)
2. Parable of the Sower (Mark 4:13-20)
3. The Lesson of the Fig Tree (Mark 11:20-24)
4. The Measure of Faith (Romans 12:3)

CI. The Duplicity of Doubt (James 1:5-8)

1. Being double-minded leads to -
 - a. Doubt – wavering between two or more opinions or ideas (1 Kings 18:20-21)
 - b. Lack of faith – uncertainty due to the lack of knowledge of what God's Word says.
 - c. Unbelief – a refusal or inability to believe because one chooses to operate by reason over faith.
2. While we tend to focus on how we need great faith in receiving God's promises, these Scriptures demonstrate that it's the size of our unbelief that hinders us.
3. The remedy for all of these is hearing and trusting the Word of God (Romans 10:16-17).

CII. Now Faith Is... the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Heb. 11:6).

1. Faith begins where the will of God is known.
2. God's will is found in God's Word for most circumstances. For others, He will make His will known by the witness of the Holy Spirit, other people and circumstances.
3. Without faith, it is impossible to please God.

Postscript: Church tradition holds that Thomas traveled to India to spread the Gospel. There are churches there today who trace their spiritual lineage to these efforts. Most certainly, he suffered a martyr's death. In Christ's kingdom, you can start out a wavering doubter and end up a devoted believer.

