

LAST SUNDAY,,, FOR **EASTER**,,, WE HAD A **JOYFUL AND UPLIFTING CELEBRATION OF FAITH,,, IN CHRIST,,, AND HIS RESURRECTION**. WE READ TOGETHER,,, THE STORY OF HOW JESUS ROSE AGAIN,,, HOW HE APPEARED TO THOSE HE LOVED,,, AND HOW THE MESSAGE OF GOD'S LOVE BEGAN TO SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, IT'S HARD TO LEAVE CHURCH ON EASTER AND NOT FEEL SOME SENSE OF JOY,,, AND,,, AN INCREASE OF FAITH,,, ISN'T IT?

WHEN I LEFT THE EASTER CELEBRATION,,, LAST SUNDAY,,, I WAS ON "**A FAITH HIGH**" BECAUSE I WAS SURROUNDED BY ALL OF YOU,,, WITNESSES OF GOD'S LOVE,,, AND AT THIS HOLY TIME OF YEAR,,, I FEEL PARTICULARLY CLOSE TO THE LORD,,, DON'T YOU? LENT IS OVER AND JOY HAS FILLED GOD'S CHURCH! WE RETURN TO CHURCH THIS WEEK,,, EXPECTING THE HARD STUFF TO BE OVER. WE SORT OF EXPECT AN EASIER STORY,,, RIGHT? BUT,,, THAT'S NOT WHAT WE GET. **THE DISCIPLES AND MAINLY THOMAS,,, ARE STILL LEARNING**. THE STORY WE READ LAST WEEK,,, WAS A JOYOUS STORY ABOUT EASTER SUNDAY AND JESUS' RESURRECTION,,, SO LET US CONTINUE ON OUR JOYOUS JOURNEY TOGETHER.

THIS SUNDAY IS **THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER**
ALSO KNOWN AS "**DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY**"!

IF I WERE TO MENTION,,, THE NAMES OF CERTAIN DISCIPLES,,, AND ASK YOU TO WRITE DOWN THE FIRST WORD THAT COMES TO YOUR MIND,,, IT'S UNLIKELY,,, THAT YOU WOULD ALL SAY THE SAME WORD.

BUT,,, **IF I WAS MORE SPECIFIC** AND MENTIONED THE NAME; "**JUDAS**",,, MANY MIGHT SAY: "**BETRAYER**".

IF I WERE TO MENTION THE NAME; "**SIMON PETER**",,, SOME,,, BUT NOT EVERYONE,,, MIGHT SAY: "**ROCK**".

NOW,,, IF I WERE TO MENTION THE NAME: “THOMAS”
I’LL BET THAT THERE WOULD BE LITTLE QUESTION,,,
ABOUT WHAT WORD,,, THAT MANY WOULD SAY.
THEY WOULD PROBABLY SAY: “DOUBTER”.

TRULY,,, WE’VE CLOSELY ASSOCIATED THOMAS WITH
THIS WORD AND WE’VE EVEN CLOANED THE PHRASE
“DOUBTING THOMAS”,,, HAVEN’T WE?

BUT INTRESTINGLY ENOUGH,,, IN THE FIRST THREE
GOSPELS OF MATTHEW,,, MARK AND LUKE,,, THERE’S
NOTHING AT ALL MENTIONED ABOUT THOMAS!

IT’S IN JOHN’S GOSPEL,,, THAT THOMAS EMERGES AS
A DISTINCT PERSONALITY,,, BUT EVEN THEN,,,
THERE’S ONLY ABOUT 155 WORDS ABOUT HIM.

SO,,, WAS ST. THOMAS REALLY A DOUBTER?

EVERYONE HAS DOUBTS,,, SOMETIME! MANY
PEOPLE TODAY DOUBT THE VERY EXISTANCE OF GOD
AND THEY DOUBT THE RESURRECTION TOO.

ON THAT FIRST EASTER,,, THOMAS,,, JUST LIKE ALL
OF US,,, HAD DOUBTS. HE REFUSED TO BELIEVE IN
THE TESTIMONY OF THE OTHER DISCIPLES,,, WHO
PERSONALLY SAW THE RISEN CHRIST AND BELIEVED.

WHEN JESUS HEADED TOWARD JERUSALEM,,, **THE
DISCIPLES THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD BE CERTAIN
DEATH,,, FOR ALL OF THEM.**

BUT IT WAS THOMAS WHO SAID:

“THEN LET US GO,,, SO THAT WE MAY DIE WITH HIM.”

WHAT A COURAGEOUS STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT
FOR “DOUBTING THOMAS” TO MAKE! IT WAS RIGHT
THERE,,, THAT THOMAS MADE HIS 1ST;

“EARTH SHATTERING CONFESSION OF FAITH!

HOWEVER,,, BECAUSE OF ONE PLACE,,, IN ALL OF THE
GOSPELS,,, WHERE THOMAS DEMONSTRATED SOME
DOUBT,,, HE IS HISTORICALLY LABELED FOR IT.

ON EASTER NIGHT,,, AS SCRIPTURE SAYS,,, WE FIND
THE DISCIPLES GATHERED TOGETHER,,, IN A HOUSE,,,
HIDING BEHIND LOCKED DOORS.

**A NUMBER OF THE DISCIPLES HAD SEEN JESUS,,,
ALIVE,,, AND NOW,,, THEY'RE SCARED!**

- **WHAT WERE THE JEWISH LEADERS GOING TO DO TO THEM NOW?**
- **WOULD THEY BE ARRESTED?**
- **WOULD THEY BE ACCUSED OF STEALING JESUS' BODY?**
- **WOULD ANYONE BELIEVE THEM,,, IF THEY WERE TO TELL THE PEOPLE,,, THAT JESUS HAD RISEN FROM THE DEAD?**

**THEY WERE HIDING FROM THE PHARISEES AND THE
SADUCEES,,, HOPING TO AVOID CONFRONTATION.**

***SUDDENLY,,, STANDING THERE BEFORE THEM,,, IN THE
MIDDLE OF THE ROOM,,, WAS JESUS & HE SAID TO
THEM; PEACE BE WITH YOU!***

**AND THEY KNEW,,, THAT THEY COULD HAVE PEACE
IN THEIR HEARTS. BECAUSE JESUS WAS THERE,,,
THEY HAD NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT!**

***JESUS SHOWED THEM,,, THE NAIL HOLES IN HIS
HANDS,,, AND THE WOUND IN HIS SIDE,,, TO PROVE TO
THEM,,, THAT HE WASN'T A GHOST!***

**HE WAS THE SAME JESUS,,, THAT THEY HAD KNOWN!
THE SAME JESUS,,, THAT THEY HAD EATEN WITH,,,
THE SAME JESUS *THAT THEY HAD SEEN CRUCIFIED*
**AND THEY BELIEVED,,, AS THEY PHYSICALLY SAW
JESUS STANDING THERE,,, RIGHT IN FRONT OF THEM.****

**BUT,,, SCRIPTURE TELLS US THAT THE DISCIPLE
THOMAS WASN'T THERE. WHEN HE RETURNED,,, THE
OTHER DISCIPLES TOLD HIM WHAT THEY HAD SEEN,,,
THAT JESUS HAD APPEARED TO THEM,,, BUT THOMAS
DIDN'T BELIEVE WHAT THEY SAID.**

**HE SAID: *UNLESS I SEE THE NAIL MARKS IN HIS
HANDS,,, AND PUT MY FINGERS WHERE THE NAILS
WERE,,, I WILL NOT BELIEVE!* WOW! YOU CAN'T GET
MORE SKEPTICAL THAN THAT,,, CAN YOU? I WILL
*NOT BELIEVE UNTIL I SEE WHAT YOU GUYS SAW!***

SO,, WHY DID THOMAS REFUSE TO BELIEVE?

BECAUSE THOMAS WAS A PRACTICAL MAN,, WHO LIVED IN A PRACTICAL WORLD,, PERHAPS SOMEWHAT LIKE OUR WORLD TODAY.

THOMAS WAS SHATTERED WHEN JESUS DIED ON GOOD FRIDAY AND HE WASN'T ABOUT TO GIVE IN TO ANYONES ILLUSIONS.

YOU SEE,, NO ONE IN THEIR RIGHT MIND,, WOULD DOUBT IT! WHEN THE ROMAN'S SAID,, THAT A PRISIONER WAS DEAD,, THEY WERE DEAD! AFTER ALL,, THE ROMAN'S WERE EXPERTS AT CRUCIFIXION.

NOW,, IT WASN'T THAT THOMAS DIDN'T WANT TO BELIEVE THAT JESUS WAS ALIVE,, HE LOVED JESUS! BUT THOMAS,, BEING A PRACTICAL GUY,, HE KNEW HOW THE WORLD WORKED. YOU SEE,, TO HIM,, DEAD IS DEAD,, AND THAT'S ALL THERE WAS TO IT! BROTHERS AND SISTERS,, THAT WAS NEARLY 2000 YEARS AGO AND UNFORTUNATELY,, THAT'S HOW MOST OF OUR WORLD SEES JESUS' RESURRECTION TODAY. IT'S A NICE THOUGHT,, A GREAT IDEA,, BUT,, IT DIDN'T REALLY HAPPEN!

MANY PEOPLE KEEP ON TRYING TO PROVE,, THAT THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS,, WAS JUST A SIMPLE SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION AND THAT JESUS' BODY DIDN'T RISE FROM THE GRAVE. ONLY ROUGHLY 60% OF PEOPLE BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION. THAT'S DOWN 20% FROM JUST A DECADE AGO.

WE'RE CHRISTIANS,, BROTHERS AND SISTERS,, AND WE'RE SURROUNDED BY A SEA OF DOUBT AND QUITE OFTEN,, WE TOO,, ARE AFRAID TO FACE THE DOUBTERS,, BECAUSE *WE'RE AFRAID OF WHAT WE MIGHT FIND*,, OR PERHAPS BECAUSE WE'RE *AFRAID OF WHAT OTHERS MAY THINK OF US.*

PEOPLE MIGHT JUST FIND OUT,, THAT OUR FAITH IS WEAK,, SO,, WE KEEP OUR DOUBTS TO OURSELVES.

BECAUSE OF THAT,, OUR DOUBTS DON'T GO AWAY,, THERE ALWAYS THERE. THEY EAT AWAY AT OUR FAITH UNTIL SOMETHING WONDERFUL HAPPENS,, JUST LIKE IT DID FOR THOMAS. HE HAD A LOVING RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS AND HE WAS CURED OF ALL HIS DOUBTS!

DOUBTS ALWAYS LEAD US TO THE ANSWER,, AND THAT IS,, A LOVING RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS!

SCRIPTURE TELLS US,, THAT ON THIS SUNDAY AFTER EASTER,, THE DISCIPLES WERE TOGETHER AND THIS TIME,, THOMAS WAS WITH THEM. THE DOORS HAD BEEN LOCKED,, FROM THE INSIDE. SUDDENLY,, JESUS WAS STANDING THERE,, AGAIN,, IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROOM AND HE SAID:

PEACE BE WITH YOU!

WHILE FOCUSING HIS ATTENTION ON THOMAS,, JESUS INVITED HIM TO TOUCH THE WOUNDS HE HAD SUSTAINED ON THE CROSS,, JESUS TOLD THOMAS:

STOP DOUBTING AND BELIEVE!

THOMAS DIDN'T EVEN HAVE TO TOUCH JESUS. HE SAID: ***"MY LORD AND MY GOD"***.

THOMAS WAS THE ONLY DISCIPLE TO MAKE SUCH A PROFOUND PROFESSION OF FAITH. HE BELIEVED IN JESUS,, IN SPITE OF THE LOGIC OF THE WORLD AROUND HIM,, THAT TOLD HIM OTHERWISE.

JESUS SAID TO THOMAS; ***HAVE YOU COME TO BELIEVE,, BECAUSE YOU HAVE SEEN ME? BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HAVE BELIEVED AND HAVE NOT SEEN.***

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,, IF YOU DOUBT,, THE ONLY SOLUTION,, THE ONLY WAY,, THAT YOU CAN RID YOURSELF OF DOUBT IN YOUR HEART,, IS TO HAVE YOUR OWN SPECIAL MOMENT WITH JESUS,, LIKE THOMAS HAD ON THAT SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

JESUS COMES TO YOU,, IN AN INVISIBLE WAY,, THROUGH THE HOLY SCRIPTURES,, EVERY TIME THAT YOU HEAR THE ***WORD OF GOD IN SCRIPTURE.***

WHEN YOU HEAR THE WORD OF JESUS,,, HE IS STEPPING INTO YOUR LIFE AND SAYING;

PEACE BE WITH YOU,,,

I LOVE YOU,,,

I GAVE MYSELF FOR YOU!

EVERY TIME YOU RECEIVE THE **HOLY EUCHARIST,,,** **JESUS' BODY AND BLOOD,,,** IT SHOULD ERASE YOUR DOUBT AND THEN JESUS FILLS YOU WITH FAITH AND TRUST IN HIM.

THROUGH THE CHURCHES SACRAMENTS,,, JESUS APPEARS AND SPEAKS TO YOU,,, JUST LIKE HE DID TO THOMAS,,, AND SAYS:

BE OPEN TO RECEIVE HIS GRACE,,, LOVE AND FORGIVENESS,,, INTO YOUR HEART,,, BY FAITH.

SO,,, TODAY,,, I PRAY THAT YOU WILL TURN TO THE ONLY THING THAT CAN CURE YOU OF YOUR DOUBT,,,

TURN TO THE HOLY WORD OF GOD AND READ IT!

AND ALSO,,, BE SURE TO RECEIVE THE **HOLY EUCHARIST AT THE LORD'S TABLE** OFTEN AND THAT WILL ALLOW JESUS TO SPEAK TO YOUR HEART,,, JUST LIKE HE DID TO ST. THOMAS,,, SO LONG AGO.

TODAY BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, LET JESUS TAKE AWAY YOUR DOUBTS. PROFESS YOUR BELIEF THAT

JESUS IS THE CHRIST,,, THE SON OF GOD,,,

AND BY DOING THIS,,, YOU ALLOW JESUS,,, TO RENEW YOUR MIND AND THOUGHTS WITHIN YOU,,, WITH A HEART THAT SAYS:

“MY LORD AND MY GOD!”

AND THROUGH THAT,,, YOU CAN BE CONFIDENT,,, THAT YOU WILL RECEIVE LIFE ETERNAL,,, IN HIS NAME.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER,,, AND OF THE SON,,, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

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1,530 Wds, 6 Pgs

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