

Who Do You Say That I Am?

Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository
Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew**

116- Jesus Chooses His Apostles- Part 13
Thomas- Part 1

Church October 20, 2024

Matthew 10:1-4

1 Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;

3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus;

4 Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Him.

*To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son;
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Now one of the most Common Experiences that Believers face- is Doubt. And Doubt has been defined as:

Being uncertain about something; Hesitating to believe

... and that is *why* Doubt is almost always considered to be a Sin.

But as you read the Bible- you see a few things that helps us to understand just *what* Doubt is; and *why* it is so common like:

1. Everyone in the Bible, who doubted- was saved
2. Doubt is NOT “Unbelief” nor “Disbelief”- which ARE Sins

So, Doubt then *could* be understood as:

“The Struggle to believe”

“Unbelief” is defined as, *“The State or Condition of NOT believing”*; while *“Disbelief”* is: *“The Inability or the Unwillingness to believe”*. And so, NOT believing in something- say the Bible- is ALWAYS Wrong. Christianity is a Religion that REQUIRES Belief. Nothing happens in Christianity unless a person believes. But the Irony of Christianity is that, because of the radical and negative Results of the Fall of Adam on all of us- human beings CANNOT believe- unless and until God ALLOWS or CAUSES it.

So, we believe by the Permission of God. We have Faith and we are both able and willing to believe and trust and hope in Jesus- because God has, first, transformed our Natures in the Miracle of the New Birth. And until that Miracles happens- *first*- NO ONE believes. So, lost souls DO NOT believe- because they CANNOT believe. And they CANNOT believe because they DON'T WANT to believe.

And that means that, even though we are totally dependent on the Sovereign Grace of God to believe- when a lost person does NOT believe- he is fully culpable. He is a “Culprit” and is NOT a “Victim”! But look what the Bible teaches about WHY lost people DO NOT believe from **2Corinthians 3:12-18 & 4:3-6** that says:

12 Therefore having such a hope, we use great boldness in our speech,
13 and are not like Moses, who used to put a veil over his face so that the sons of Israel would not look intently at the end of what was fading away.
14 But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ.
15 But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart;
16 but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.
17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.
18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.
4:3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,
4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.
5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake.
6 For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has

shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Now this is one of the most important Passages found anywhere in the Bible about WHY human beings believe. But sadly, it is also one of the most *overlooked; by-passed; skipped over; neglected; unknown; and misunderstood* Passages in the Bible as well. And to get the basic Meaning of it- we need to zero in on a few verses. First, look at verses 14&15:

**14 But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ.
15 But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart;**

This explains WHY Jews do NOT believe in Jesus. The “**their**” in these verses refers to the Jews. The Apostle Paul said that a Veil- “**lies over their heart**”. And the Veil that lies over their heart is *symbolized* by the veil that Moses put over his face after he had spent Time with God in the Mountain.

But this spiritual Veil is powerful enough to literally STOP the Jews from seeing what they NEED to see- so they can believe in Jesus and be saved. But then Paul said something very odd. He said,

... for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ.

So, as an unsaved Jew reads the 39 Books of the Old Testament- the Veil remains, “UNLIFTED”. And that means that the Jews are NOT reading the Old Testament correctly. And we know that because Jesus said that EVERYTHING in the 39 Books of the Old Covenant was about Himself. So, if a Jew or anyone else reads the Old Testament Books and does not see Jesus- then that alone is Proof that the Veil is on their heart. But then Paul said,

... because it is removed in Christ.

So, a person MUST “Hear the Gospel preached” in order to believe because **Romans 10:17** says,

... faith [the Ability to believe] comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

... so, as the “Word of Christ (the Gospel) is preached- God sovereignly grants Faith (the Ability and Desire to believe) in all who are chosen to be saved- Jew or Gentile. And that’s WHY everyone MUST hear the Gospel; and WHY we MUST preach the Gospel to everyone!

Now God didn’t HAVE to set it up like this- but He did. And because God has established that ALL who are saved- are saved because they *hear* the Gospel; *believe* the Gospel; and *obey* the Gospel. And that is also WHY the PRIMARY Effort by the Christian Church is to preach the Gospel; to as many people as possible; every single Day; using every Tool that God provides; all to God’s Glory!

So, God goes to great lengths to save the Jews precisely because God Himself put that Veil over their Heart. But thanks be to God, that over the last 2,000 years- Jesus has sovereignly *removed* that Veil from many Jewish Hearts; and they have believed; and they have been saved! And we pray that many more will be saved.

Now keep reading as Paul goes even deeper into this Dynamic from **2Corinthians 4:3&4:**

**3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,
4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.**

So, satan does NOT mind lost people seeing all sorts of things. He will NOT fight against lost people beholding many great and wonderful things. But there is one thing that satan does everything he can to *prevent* lost people from “seeing” or “beholding”. And it is described in two different Ways. In verse 4, it is described as:

... the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

... and then in verse 6, Paul described the SAME thing using opposite words:

... the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

... and ever since God opened this verse to me- it has become more and more central to the Issue of WHY and HOW lost Sinners believe.

The spiritual Veil that satan has placed around the MINDS and Hearts of the Lost- is ALREADY there! In fact, this is one of the distinguishing “Signs” or “Marks” that actually *defines* “Lostness”.

Now we should all thank God that very few lost people are “Mass-Murderers”; “Drug Dealers”; or “Pedophiles” So, MOST lost people are NOT as “Bad” as they *could* be. They could always be much worse than they are. But ALL lost people have this Veil that “blinds” their Minds.

So, this Veil is NOT something that is added to a person later *after* he has committed terrible Sins. NO! This blinding Veil is part of that individual as he is being fashioned in his Mother’s Womb! And it is NOT something that describes WHAT he does- but WHO he is!

So, lost people are NOT “Sinners” because they commit Acts of Sin. No, they commit Acts of Sin because they are already rebellious and fallen “Sinners” in their Natures! And so, as a lost person- he is UNABLE to see or behold something. He is blind to...

1. **the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God**
2. **the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face (Person) of Christ**

Now we need to understand this “Blindness” in a deeper Way. Because it ISN’T that a lost person is unable to comprehend that the Glory of God in Christ *exists*. But he is UNABLE (and Unwilling) to assign that Glory any Value. He CAN’T delight in that Glory. He CAN’T love that Glory.

So, that which means the MOST to God- means NOTHING to a lost person! And that is truly a frightening Blindness.

But the Good News is that even as the spoken “Word” of God (in Creation) brought Light into the Darkness that was ALREADY there- as the Gospel is preached today- God sovereignly “UNVEILS” the minds of the elected Sinners- and they are then able to “behold” or “see” or “comprehend” the Glory of God in Christ! They are able then to appraise what they are beholding- as being the HIGHEST and the BEST and the MOST IMPORTANT Treasure in the Universe: God’s Glory in His Son!

Now there are many facets of this Passage that are worthy of Discussion and Embrace. But I want to focus on just one Aspect of this

this morning:

Saving Faith is a Gift from God

People demonstrate Faith all the Time. For example, we trust that when we put our foot on the brake pedal- the car will stop. We hope that the plane will land at our Destination without crashing. We have Faith that our spouses will remain Faithful. And all of this is a Type or a Kind of Faith. And that Faith is given to us at Birth. But this kind of “Faith”; this kind of “Believing” is ONLY on a *horizontal* and *earthly* Level.

But there is another Kind of Type of Faith. And theologians call this other type of Faith, “*Saving Faith*”. And this Faith operates ONLY on a *vertical* and a *heavenly* Level. And it is the Ability (and Desire) to *believe* in God; to *hope* in Him; and to *trust* Him. It is the Capacity to believe that God is NOT a Liar; that He meant what He said; and that He will do what He said He will do. So, Faith is the Ability to trust in what God said- for no other Reason than He said it. So, in that sense- Believing IS Worship.

But Saving Faith is a Gift from God. The Ability and the Desire to believe and to trust and to hope *IN* God- is a gracious Gift *FROM* God. You see, because we are already “Fallen”- we MUST be “given” the Gift of Saving Faith” or NOBODY would believe. **Ephesians 2:8&9** says,

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Now look closely at the End of verse 8:

... you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

So, the Faith that Salvation is “**through**” is “**NOT of yourselves, it is the GIFT of God;**” And that means that God MUST *give us* or *grant to us*- this Gift of “Saving Faith”. And the “giving” or the “granting” of this kind of Faith is a sovereign Work of God’s Grace toward His elect.

And, as this Faith is developed, it is also the Ability (and Desire)

to delight in God; and to find the Fullness of our own Joy- in God alone being glorified.

So, underneath it all- in the Language of **2Corinthians 3&4**- the Ability (and Desire) to Believe- to Hope and Trust in God- *personally*- as well as in what He has said; and what He has promised in Scripture- is the Result of God having *first, sovereignly removed* the Veil that was over our Hearts (and Minds) which has allowed us to “Behold” or “See” or “Comprehend” the Glory of God in Christ!

But like many things in our Lives- looking at something one time- is NOT nearly as effective as analyzing it over a period of years. And seeing something for ten minutes is NOT nearly as effective as being near to it for many years. And that is what Paul was getting at when he wrote this in **2Corinthians 3:18**:

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

So, the blinding Veil has been *forever* removed from our Minds! Praise God! But now comes the *ongoing*; the *progressive*; and the *ever-growing* Transformation that automatically comes from that “Beholding”!

The Will of God is that God sovereignly removing the Veil *allows* us to see God’s Glory in Jesus Christ. And the Will of God is that by allowing us to see the Glory of Christ, Who is the Image of God- we DO NOT merely “see” one Time for ten minutes. We *linger*. We *keep on* seeing. We *ponder* what we see. We *analyze* what we see. We *savor* what we taste. We behold this Glory from different angles. We talk about what we are beholding. We meditate on the Importance of what we see. We assign a Value on what we see. And then- we begin to LOVE what we see!

And all of this has a profound Impact on us- because as we “keep on” beholding the Glory of God in the Lord Christ- through the pages of Scripture- the Will of God is that we begin to be changed into that which we see! The Apostle John wrote this in **1John 3:2**:

Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will

see Him just as He is.

The *longer* the Veil is removed- the MORE of Jesus we can see. And the MORE of Jesus we see- the MORE glorious He becomes to us. And the MORE glorious Jesus becomes to us- the MORE our Love for Him grows. And the MORE our Love for Jesus grows- the MORE like Him we become! And the MORE like Him we become- the MORE our Obedience grows. And that is what John meant in the very next verse when he said,

1John 3:3

And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

As our Hope in God; our Trust; our Faith; our Belief gets stronger- the Result is that we begin to *emulate* what we see; what we behold; and what we love. And that is why Paul said,

2Corinthians 3:18:

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

... and This Transformation is “ongoing”.

Our constant and ongoing and ever-growing “Beholding the Glory of God in Christ” CAUSES our Love for Jesus to continually grow. And our continually growing Love for Jesus is the Catalyst for this ongoing Transformation into His Image. And so, our Transformation should NEVER STOP precisely because our “Love” NEVER Stops! And our Love NEVER STOPS because our Beholding NEVER Stops!

So, how do you measure Love? Love is like a slippery bar of soap- it’s hard to get a hold of it. So, there is really ONLY one Way to measure our Love for Jesus- and that is by our Obedience to Jesus. And that is why Jesus said,

If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. (John 14:15)

... but please notice that Keeping the Commandments does NOT come

first. What comes *first*- is loving Jesus. But loving Jesus doesn't rise up out of the ground. Loving Jesus is a Result of Knowing Jesus- correctly and fully. And knowing Jesus correctly and fully is the Result of spending Time with Jesus in both Prayer and through His Word.

So, beholding the Glory of God in Christ- allows us to understand and know and see and comprehend and admire and respect and assign a Value to Jesus. And as we do that- our Love for Jesus grows. And as our Love for Jesus grows- we are transformed into what we Love. And as we are transformed into what we love- our joyful and glad Obedience flows out from us- *normally and naturally*.

And this is simply another Way of understanding what it means to believe. This is what Faith *does*. This is what putting our Hope and Trust in Jesus *causes*.

You see, we were created to worship God. And ONLY by doing what we were made to do- can we ever find true and lasting Joy and Peace. So, Salvation is actually the Way in which God moves *sovereignly* on His people- to *radically; progressively; and eternally* deliver us from Sin and its Penalty- so that we can be "free" to worship God and delight in Him- FOREVER!

And the ONLY thing that can stop that- is Sin. And both Disbelief and Unbelief are derivatives of Sin. Both of these are Efforts to NOT behold; NOT value; NOT love; NOT obey; and NOT worship. And that is Sin. Both of these are Wrong- they do NOT honor God nor do they bring Him any Glory. But as both of these Sins dishonor God- they also hurt us.

But that's NOT what Doubt is! Doubt is the struggle to Believe; to Hope; and to Trust! Doubt is the Struggle to put all these pieces together so you CAN behold; so you CAN value; so you CAN love; so you CAN obey; so you CAN worship!

For example, I have already discussed with you some of the *deepest* Water in the entire Bible already this morning. And you have heard me talk about this many times before. Yet, I am convinced that some of you do NOT fully understand what I am trying to say. And *part* of the Problem is you not spending Time with God in Prayer and the Study of His Word. *Part* of the Problem is that some of you haven't had God remove the Veil that is over your Mind and hearts, yet. But *part* of the Problem is me. I'm NOT explaining this as well as I should. Now I think I'm explaining it *better* than I *used* to. But I absolutely

understand that I *should* and I *will* do a better job explaining this next time than I am doing right now.

So, if you don't comprehend it all right now- that's perfectly understandable. Hopefully, you have been able to take another bite this morning that has helped you get just a little bit more than what you had before.

But because you probably don't get it all this morning- you may have Doubts. But your Doubt is NOT about Disbelieving or even Unbelief- your Doubt stems from the fact that you simply don't get it all – at least not right now.

But there is a World of Difference between that and people who simply couldn't care less about any of this and who are *unwilling* to believe at all. And that's all I'm trying to tell you this Morning. I'm trying to encourage you that your Doubt- is a Struggle to believe. So, you ARE trying to accept all this. You read it in the Bible along with me and you realize that it IS in the Bible. Yet because so few people are even talking about this; combined with the fact that I'm just NOT a very Good Teacher- has given rise to some of your Doubts. And I'm here to say to you this morning that this is actually Progress!

And so, I *could* say it like this:

Thomas was NOT Judas Iscariot!

Thomas believed- even though he doubted. Judas NEVER believed. Thomas was saved- Judas was NEVER saved! But like you and me- Thomas *struggled* with some of this Stuff. But his Struggle was NOT an Effort to throw it all out- but an Effort to embrace it all!

The Condition of "Unbelief" or "Disbelief" is usually caused by that person being UNWILLING to believe. And if a person is UNWILLING to believe- that is absolutely a Sin.

But Doubt is the Effort or the Struggle to believe. So, someone, who is doubting, WANTS to believe- he is TRYING to believe- yet is struggling. So, WHY is he struggling to believe? His Struggle may be caused by things like:

- Not have enough Information
- Not being able to "put the pieces together" correctly
- Already having Bad or Wrong Information that creates Confusion

- What he is asked to believe is so amazing; so fantastic- that unless God moves on him- sovereignly- he could NEVER embrace it all

Sadly, the first Quality that most people attach to the Apostle Thomas is his great Doubt. Not his preaching into India; and not anything to do with the Gospel- but the great, dark Cloud of Doubt that Thomas has been forever attached to. And so, when we know of someone, who struggles with Doubt today- we even call them, a “*doubting Thomas*”.

The Truth is that Thomas was a much more- godly man and accomplished many more things for God- than most people realize. For example, God used him to take the Gospel all the way over to India. And over there- Thomas is still revered to this day. According to History, Thomas travelled as far as Kerala in South India, and reached Muziris (modern-day North Paravur and Kodungalloor in Kerala State) in AD 52. Many Churches in the Middle East and southern Asia, besides India, also mention the Apostle Thomas in their historical Traditions as being the first Evangelist to establish those Churches- including the “*Assyrian Church of the East*” and the early, “*Church of Sri Lanka*”.¹

Thomas was part of the *second* Group of Apostles- led by Philip- and which contained Nathnael- Bartholomew, as well as Matthew, the tax Collector.

Now I think it is fair to say that Thomas was what I would call a “*negative person*”. And negative people go through Life with this negative approach to everything- because they are the Pessimists. They speak a Language that I call, “*Old stink!*” Everything’s bad; all is lost; we’re all going to die- “*Old stink!*” That won’t work, “*Old stink!*” We can’t do that, “*Old stink!*” They don’t want that- “*Old Stink!*”

These Pessimists are the great Advocates of “*Murphy's Law*” that says, “*Whatever can go wrong- will go wrong*”. And they just live like that- they can’t help it- they’re Pessimists. They are not trying to be Wrong or Bad- they simply anticipate the Worst all the time. So, to these guys, the Glass is NOT “half-full” or “half-empty”- the water is leaking all

1 Kumar, Anugrah (4 July 2021). “*India: Christians celebrate first Indian Christian Day, feast of St. Thomas*”. The Christian Post. Archived from the original on 4 July 2021. Retrieved 4 July 2021. “*Socotra: The Mysterious Island of the Assyrian Church of the East*”. Church of Beth Kokheh Journal. 11 April 2016. Archived from the original on 4 August 2021. Retrieved 4 October 2022. Pinto, Leonard (23 September 2013). “*Sri Lanka: a brief history of Christianity*”. Scoop News. Archived from the original on 4 October 2022. Retrieved 4 October 2022.

over the place and the glass is breaking apart.

But there's more to Thomas than that he was a Pessimist. According to the Apostle John- this man called, "*Thomas*"- was also called, "*Didymus*". Three times in John's Gospel- the Apostle referred to Thomas like that. And the word, "*Didymus*" means: *the twin*. So, evidently- Thomas had either a twin brother or a twin sister that we don't meet anywhere in the Scriptures.

Now Thomas appears *vaguely* in the narratives of **Matthew**, **Mark**, and **Luke**- but his real characterization appears in John's Gospel. His name certainly appears in the other places- but the *Character* of Thomas is found exclusively in John's gospel Record.

And my Effort today is to help Thomas become more to you than simply somebody who doubted- because we need to realize that Doubt is the single most common Feature of all human beings. We all doubt at Times. So, I suggest to you that if Thomas would not have doubted like the Scripture says that he did- you or I certainly would have.

So, let's turn to the **Gospel of John** and look at a couple of very direct simple passages, starting in **John 11**. And through the infallible Word of the living God- I want you to get to know and appreciate Thomas. In fact- if any of you have a little baby boy in the near future- you might want to name him, "*Thomas*" because after we finish looking at him- it won't be as easy to find any kind of Stigma in that Name.

Now it is true that Thomas could only look into the darkest Corners of Life. He could only anticipate the *worst* of everything. But he was so much more than that. And there are some wonderfully redeeming Elements of Thomas' Character. The account in **John 11** is very familiar to us because it is about Lazarus being raised from the dead. So, let's go there.

There was a Family in the little town of Bethany, which is just a couple of miles outside of Jerusalem on the East. And in Bethany there was a little Family of two sisters and brother- Mary, Martha and Lazarus. And the Bible says that Jesus had gotten to know them all and loved them all with a very special Affection- which is noted here in the Account. And Jesus actually stayed with them and they provided lodging for Him as well as food and they were very beloved to our Lord.

And Jesus had been in Jerusalem. But in verses 39&40 of **John 10**- it says,

**39 Therefore they were seeking again to seize Him, and He eluded their grasp.
40 And He went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was first baptizing, and He was staying there.**

So, Jesus went way out by Aenon near the Jordan River because they were trying to kill Him in Jerusalem. But it wasn't the Time for Jesus to die- it wasn't God's Schedule. So, Jesus was purposefully avoiding Death at the hands of the religious Leaders- at that Time- and so, He left Jerusalem and went by the Jordan River to a Place of Safety. So, that's the Setting. Now please read with me **John 11:1-16:**

1 Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.

2 It was the Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.

3 So the sisters sent word to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick."

4 But when Jesus heard this, He said, "This sickness is not to end in death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it."

5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

6 So when He heard that he was sick, He then stayed two days longer in the place where He was.

7 Then after this He said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."

8 The disciples said to Him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone You, and are You going there again?"

9 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world.

10 But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him."

11 This He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I go, so that I may awaken him out of sleep."

12 The disciples then said to Him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover."

13 Now Jesus has spoken of his death, but they thought that He was speaking of literal sleep.

14 So Jesus then said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead,

15 and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe; but let us go to him."

16 Therefore Thomas, who is called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, "Let

us also go, so that we may die with Him."

Now that is Pessimism and that's Thomas. But it is actually a very *noble* Pessimism. How so? Because even though Thomas was struggling to believe- he was also willing to die with Jesus!

Now can you just imagine how hard it is to be a Pessimist all the time? I mean it's got to be a miserable way to live. I mean, if you're an Optimist you would say, "*Hey, let's go, everything will somehow workout okay.*" Right? An Optimist would say, "*Let's go- the Lord will make a Way and we'll be fine.*" But if you're a Pessimist you say, "*We're all going to die- Jesus is going to die and we're going to die with Him. But let's go ahead and do it because we're going to die anyway – so we might as well die with Jesus.*"

I mean, if you're a negative person- that's just how you see it. So, Thomas could see nothing but Disaster. So, he purposes in his heart to go with Jesus to die. And there is a Nobility to that. And from this- we can see that Thomas was actually a man of great Courage!

Now it's easy for the Optimist to be loyal to Jesus. And why is that? Because an Optimist always expects the Best. And so, Optimists do great- UNTIL things go South! And then even many of the Optimists struggle with Doubt. So, NOBODY is immune to Doubt.

But we can also see that Thomas was very devoted to Jesus. And he may very well have been the equal to John in this regard. We think about loving Jesus; and intimacy with Jesus- and we automatically think of John- who was always near Jesus. But, you know, Thomas didn't want to live without Jesus for one second either. So, as far as Thomas was concerned- if Jesus was going to die- then he wanted to die too. Thomas didn't want to live one second without Jesus. So, if Jesus is going down there to die- then let's go and die with Him!

So, that is another Way to look at Thomas- "*If Jesus is going to go and die- then I'm going to go too. You guys, suck it up- let's go and die with Jesus!*" Because that's actually a great Way to be isn't it? Better to die and be with Jesus than it is to live at a Distance from Him. So, that was the one great Fear that Thomas had- to live at a Distance away from Jesus. It is obvious here that Thomas didn't fear Death at all. What he feared was living without Jesus- and that is very good and highly commendable.

Now I don't think it is a stretch to say that Thomas was the

Strength of the rest of the Apostles. And I think they all sort of got their Act together and said, "Okay, let's go and die!" So, Thomas had a deep Devotion to Jesus Christ. And he was resolved that he would go and die with his Lord- but he would NEVER forsake Jesus.

So, Thomas was really quite Fearless! He had no Illusions- he saw the "Jaws of Death" opening- ready to swallow him. Yet that never fazed him at all! Dying was just fine by Thomas- because he would much rather die with Jesus than to be separated from his Lord.

So, from this we can see that Thomas had a very profound Love for the Lord. And this shows up again in **John 14**- let's turn there- **John 14**- and this too is a very familiar portion of Scripture. This is what is called, "*The Upper Room Discourse*".

On the night of the Passover- Jesus' last night of meeting with His Disciples- and it is here that Judas betrays Him. Judas has been dismissed- as recorded in chapter 13- and now here in chapter 14, the Apostles are very troubled. And they are very troubled because Jesus has told them that one of them is betraying Him. And they begin to understand that Jesus will soon leave them. And this had to be so confusing to these men.

The Jews had waited for Centuries for the Messiah to come- and now that He is here- He's going to leave? What's that all about? Why wait so long to come; and then be here for only a short Time; and then leave? How is that the Will of God? Don't you know they were confused? And I promise you that Thomas was NOT the only one who doubted. I don't know if I would have understood any of this either- had I been there. It was all so strange and different from EVERYTHING they had imagined the Messiah was going to do when he got here.

And to add Insult to Injury- by this time- Jesus had already told Peter that he's going to deny Him! So, now even the Leader of all the Apostles is NOT going to remain Faithful! What's going on? So, there's a tremendous "Troubling" among the Apostles.

So, Jesus said this in verses **John 14:1-7**:

**14 "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.
2 In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.
3 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.**

4 And you know the way where I am going."

5 Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?"

6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

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

So, Thomas said to Jesus, *"Lord, we really DON'T know where You're going? How could we possibly know the Way?"* And Thomas is routinely criticized for asking this. But really and truly, dear friends, when people criticize Thomas here- there is a degree of Self-righteousness in that Criticism. Because how many of us would have understood all this? Thomas spoke up here- but how many of the other Apostles understood any of this? I mean not even Peter is going to stand tall. So, I think they were *all* confused and they were *all* doubting- big time.

What we see here- is NOT simply a Pessimist. Thomas was much MORE than a negative person. What he is saying here reveals much MORE than simply a man, who is doubting. This is a man with a deep and abiding Love for Jesus. This is a man with a genuine Relationship with Christ that was so strong that he didn't ever want to be severed from Him. And his heart is really broken as he speaks here. He's shattered. The thought of losing Christ *paralyzes* Thomas. He had become so associated and so attached to Jesus during those years that he would be glad to die with his Lord- but he certainly didn't want to live without Him!

And I really like that about Thomas. *"Lord, let me die- I'm NOT afraid to die- but please don't leave me! Don't go without me- because I don't know how to get where You're going!"* And it is in *that* Context that Jesus said,

I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

So, Jesus was saying, *"Thomas- wherever you go- I'll always be the Way for you! And I'll always be the Truth for you! And I'll always be the Life for you! You will NEVER be alone anymore- I'll ALWAYS be close to you! Just believe that I am God and I alone am EVERYTHING you need!"*

And all of that is a *microcosm* of us today- because EVERY believer struggles periodically with Doubt. But unlike either Disbelief and Unbelief- Doubt is actually the Struggle to believe; the Struggle to love; the Struggle to obey; and the Struggle to worship. So, as we struggle to hope in God and in His Promises- let us also pray one for another so that none of us are separated from Jesus or His Promises!

Amen. Let's pray.

© 2021-2024 by *Delighting in God Ministries, Inc.* All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America

Delighting in God Ministries, Inc. PO Box 147 Saucier, Mississippi 39574 www.delightinginGod.life

Scripture quotations, except those noted otherwise, are from *The New American Standard Bible* © 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

This is a single Transcript in a larger series of Sermons of a verse-by-verse "Journey" through the **Gospel of Matthew**. You are free to reproduce it and distribute it as the Lord leads you- without Cost or Reimbursement to us with the Stipulation that you may not add anything or take anything away from this Transcript without the express written Permission of *Delighting in God Ministries, Inc.* and that this complete Copyright Statement remains at the end of all copies.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your Pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.

