

# *Who Do You Say That I Am?*

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

117- Jesus Chooses His Apostles- Part 14  
Thomas- Part 2

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Church November 03, 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.*

Last Time, we saw how that, even though Thomas DID doubt- his Struggle to believe did NOT overshadow a deep Love for Jesus. So, in **John 11**, when Jesus was going to go and raise Lazarus from the Dead, Thomas said this in verse 16:

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

Jesus had been horribly persecuted in Bethany and now He was talking about going back to minister to the Family He loved. And it looked like a “suicide Mission” to the other Apostles- so, they tried to talk Jesus out of going. But Thomas- thinking there was a real chance that they might die by going- was completely unafraid. And this reveals a powerful Love where Thomas didn’t mind dying at all. What caused him great Fear was living without Jesus or being separated from Jesus.

Now **Matthew 10:3** says that this man’s Name was “*Thomas*”- but we already know that that is NOT a Jewish name. So, down through the Centuries,

“Thomas” was transliterated from the Greek- which originally came from a Hebrew Name. The “Nag Hammadi” copy of the “Gospel of Thomas”<sup>1</sup> begins like this,

“These are the secret sayings that the living Jesus spoke and Didymus, Judas Thomas, recorded.”<sup>2</sup>

... and even today, the “Coptic Church” in Syria refers to this Apostle by the Name, “*Judah (Judas) Toma*”.

As we learned last Time- God the Holy Spirit led Thomas to travel to India in AD52, where he preached, taught, and established several Churches as well as train and ordain Elders; Pastors; Bishops; Deacons; and other Leaders. It is thought that the Apostle Thomas was martyred in AD72 after 20 years of faithful and fruitful Ministry. So, a man, who began his Ministry with great Doubt ended his Life as a man, of great Faith. And this should give us all great Hope that the Way we begin our Walk with God is NOT the Way our Time with Jesus will end.

Because even though it is true that God will initially save us “just like we are”- once we are saved- God will NEVER leave us just like we are. Because part of the Wonder of Salvation is that once we are born again; Justified; and Adopted- we enter into the part of Salvation called, “*Sanctification*”. And if we are saved as a young person and die as an old person- Sanctification is the part of Salvation in which we will spend the overwhelming *majority* of our Time.

And Sanctification is where God sovereignly uses both Good and Terrible things to change us into being more like Jesus. And the verse that illustrates this- probably better than any other is found in **2Corinthians 3:18** that says,

**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, once God sovereignly and powerfully removes the spiritual Veil that covers our minds and eyes and hearts- we are then able to see...

**... the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (2Corinthians 4:4b)**

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<sup>1</sup> The so-called, “Gospel of Thomas” was discovered near Nag Hammadi, Egypt in 1945. It was probably written around 60AD- probably by a group of Gnostics. It contains Statements that specifically contradict the other Books of the Holy Bible- which is why it was correctly excluded from the Canon.

<sup>2</sup> This man is called, “*Judas Thomas*” in ancient Syrian Tradition.

... or the...

**... the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.  
(2Corinthians 4:6b)**

... which is what satan has worked so hard to keep us from seeing.

But one God sovereignly moves and removes that Veil- and we see the magnificence of God's Glory- our *initial* Response is that the Contrast between God's Glory and our Sinfulness becomes so clear; so prevailing; so impossible to ignore- that we recoil in Horror at the "Sinfulness of our Sin" and we agree with the Prophet who said this in **Isaiah 6:5b**"

**... Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.**

... and unless we experience this kind of Sorrow over our Sin- we really have only "repented" or "turned from" the *Penalty* of our Sin.

Isaiah thought he was a "*dead man*" NOT because God was pouring out His Wrath on him- but because God allowed this man to see the Glory of God! So, his *first* Response to "*beholding the Glory of God*" was to understand the Depth of his own Wickedness and Unworthiness! So, his *first* Re-action to being able to behold the pristine Glory of God was to repent- NOT to celebrate!

And THAT is what is missing in so many people today. Until our Sin becomes so Evil in our Eyes- we will NEVER experience the profound Transformation that comes from beholding God in His Glory. So, as we behold that "*Shekinah*"<sup>3</sup> IN the Person of Jesus Christ- we *initially* see the Horror of our Sin.

But once we are *gifted* with the Desire and Ability to turn away from Sin- and God works the Miracle of the New Birth; Justification; as well as Adoption in us and to us and through us- the very Sight that caused us so much initial Grief- begins to become Beautiful in our eyes! And so, we then begin to love and admire and be in Awe of the Glory of God that is found ONLY in the "Face" or the Person of the Lord Jesus!

But it doesn't End there. Once we begin to love what we see- God the Holy Spirit "moved" on the Apostle Paul to write that we then begin to be transformed into what we see.

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<sup>3</sup> The Hebrew word, "*Shekinah*" in **Exodus 25:8** (dwelling/settling) has to do with the actual Presence of the God of Heaven and Earth as He comes down and dwells with His people. So, the Glory of Jesus is the Shekinah in our midst- constantly!

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

... what Image? The very SAME Image that God has now allowed us to see: The Glory of God in the Person of the risen Christ!

But HOW are we transformed? The Apostle wrote:

**... from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.**

... from one Realm of Glory to the next.

So, we are *ongoingly* transformed; *progressively* transformed; and *constantly* transformed to become more and more like Jesus! So, NONE of us will finish the Way we began our "Union" with Jesus. So, the Trials; and Tests; and Afflictions; and Persecutions; and Troubles; that God sovereignly *allows* to come our Way- are the chosen "Means" by which God desires to transform you into His Image and Likeness! And that is what He did here with Thomas.

So, in **John 20**- after Judas betrayed Jesus and Jesus died- *whatever* might have been the Sorrow of the other ten Apostles- I think the Sorrow of Thomas was even greater.

And that is because Thomas had a very deep and profound Love for the Lord that was something *beyond* the rest- at that Time- so that his whole World ended, in effect, when Jesus died. There was just nothing left. And the last thing he wanted to do was just hang around his old friends because he was just shattered with Sorrow and Disillusionment so, consequently, Thomas didn't go with them when they *initially* met together after Jesus died. Now please look at **John 20:19-23**:

**19 So when it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you."**

**20 And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord.**

**21 So Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you."**

**22 And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.**

**23 If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have have forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained."**

Now there is a lot to teach here- but I'm trying to concentrate of the Biographies of the Apostles- so, I'm not going to get into what verse 23 means and how it all works with what Jesus said in verse 22. The main Point I want to zero in on- is that AFTER Jesus died- He rose from the Dead; and then He appeared to the scared and discouraged Followers as they gathered together.

But the Apostle John was very clear about what he wrote down in the next 1-1/2 verses,

**But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples were saying to him, "We have seen the Lord!"... (John 20:24&25a)**

... so, the ten reached out to Thomas and told him they had literally seen the Lord- alive!

Now this News may have encouraged Thomas to some degree- but with the powerful Doubt that *dominated* his Life so far- I think that *whatever* Encouragement this News may have brought him was quickly swallowed up in both Grief and Doubt.

Now here is where the "Rubber Meets the Road" as it pertains to both Christianity and Salvation. In order to be saved- we have to believe and trust in things that are completely Ridiculous and patently Impossible.

Salvation *requires* that we believe that Jesus *physically* and *literally* rose from the Dead in the very SAME Body in which he died! And there is simply NO Room for any debate about this. Anyone who denies the *physical and literal* Resurrection of Jesus is NOT saved- they are still on the Road to Hell. God the Holy Spirit "moved" on the Apostle Paul to write this in **1Corinthians 15:12-19:**

**12 Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?**

**13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised;  
14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain.**

**15 Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God, because we testified against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised.**

**16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised;**

**17 and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.**

**18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.**

**19 If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.**

The literal and physical Resurrection of Jesus is the very CORE of Christianity. It is NOT a “stand-alone” Doctrine. The entire Christian Faith rises or falls on the Truthfulness of the Resurrection of Jesus. Look what all is at stake when discussing the literal and physical Resurrection of Jesus. Because if there is NO Resurrection of Jesus- here is what also is true:

- ALL Preaching is in Vain
- ALL Belief is in Vain
- The Apostles are Liars and false Witnesses
- ALL Faith is Worthless
- EVERY human on earth is Lost- with NO Hope of ever being saved
- EVERY dead person will remain dead
- EVERY Believer is to be pitied

About a Century ago- CS Lewis made a Statement concerning the Christian Faith that has been repeated over and over by many people. And I really don't know why- because what Lewis said was patently Unbiblical. But it goes something like this:

If I believe and live the Christian Life (a Life of Sacrifice) and I die and find out that it was all a Myth- I really haven't lost anything. Because I have had Joy unspeakable and great Peace and Love in my Heart. I have met many other people who were lovely people and had a great Life- so, I haven't lost anything. But if you do not believe and die and find out that it was all true- you have lost everything.

Now I have heard several different variations of this over the last 50 years- because, for some reason, this makes sense to a lot of people.

But neither the Bible nor the Christian Faith teach this. The Bible doesn't “*hedge our bets*” just in case it all ends up being a Myth. That is NOT the Way the Bible was written and not a single person in the Bible echoed anything like Lewis' Statement.

The Apostle said, “*If Jesus did NOT rise from the Dead- we're sunk!*” *We have been found to be Liars; we are yet in our Sins; and we should be pitied above all other people!*” So, to the Apostles- it was ALL or NOTHING! There was no room for any Doubt. And that should be our Position today. What the Bible

teaches IS true. Period. God is NOT a Liar and so, we can trust what He said for no other Reason than He said it.

Jesus Christ rose from the Dead in the SAME Body that He died in. And, even more- He ascended into Heaven in the SAME Body in which He died. And what's more- He is sitting (He's finished- not tired), right now- at the "Right Hand" (the Position of Power and Authority) of the Majesty on High- making *continual* Intercession for God's people- in the SAME Body in which He died. And, when Jesus comes back to establish His Kingdom on the earth- in Finality- He will do so in the SAME Body in which He died!

Now how do I know this is true? What gives me the Right to be so Certain about this? Because that is *exactly* what the Bible says! And so, the REAL Issue that we MUST contend with is the very SAME Issue that saved people have always had to contend with and that one, single Issue is this:

**Is the Bible true? Are the 66 Books of the Holy Bible the Inspired; Inerrant; and Infallible Word of the living God? Can I trust what the Bible says? Can I put my Heart and Soul and Mind in complete and full Alignment with the Scriptures?**

The Bible wants me to believe that God created everything out of nothing but His Word. The Bible wants me to believe in a talking snake that walked upright until God judged him (**Genesis 3**). The Bible wants me to believe that a donkey spoke to a Prophet (**Numbers 22**). The Bible wants me to believe that the sun went backward in the sky (**2Kings 20; Isaiah 38:8**). The Bible wants me to believe that Jesus raised Lazarus from the Dead (**John 11**). The Bible wants me to believe in a horde of fallen Angels called, "demons". The Bible wants me to believe in a fallen Arch-angel called, "satan". The Bible wants me to believe that Jesus was born of a Virgin; lived a sinless Life; died and ascended into Heaven; and is coming back. The Bible wants me to believe that God hears my Prayers and answers them when they are in accord with His Will. The Bible wants me to believe that my Salvation is in accord with God's Grace and NOT my own Efforts. And the Bible wants- expects- demands- that I believe that Jesus rose from the Dead!

Now I have a brain. And I am NOT superstitious; and I can think and ponder and make logical and reasoned Decisions. And all that I just mentioned are complete Impossibilities. These things are NOT hard; they are NOT difficult; they simply CANNOT be done! They are fully and totally Impossible- to the point of being Absurd!

So, how do I get my educated and logical brain to NOT *reject* these things- but to *energetically* embrace them? Some teach that we must put our brains "on

hold”. But the Bible doesn’t teach that. Some teach that Faith and Reason are Enemies. But, again, the Bible doesn’t teach that, either. Some even teach that Science and Faith are incompatible with each other. But, again, the Bible has NEVER taught that.

God is a God of Truth. And that means that Truth is our Friend. Without Truth- we have NOTHING. So, I NEVER have to choose between believing what the Bible clearly and repeatedly teaches and what is true. I *want* the Truth. I *hate* Lies; and I *hate* Deception; and I *hate* Falsehoods. And so did Jesus and the Apostles. So, I *continually* seek for the Truth. I don’t want a Lie- even if it comes from people who are on “my Side”. Lies have NEVER helped anyone- long term. So, I work hard to arrive at Truth- in every Situation. But I go further than many and I actually *love* the Truth.

Because I know that God does NOT want; nor does He expect “*Blind Faith*” from us. The ONLY one in the Universe who expects “*Blind Faith*” from his Followers- is the devil and those who serve him. But God has NEVER asked for Blind Faith. God wants us to know and to be “rock-solid” Certain about two things:

1. *What* we believe
2. *Why* we believe it

... and so, here is what God said about “Blind Faith” in **Isaiah 1:18**:

**Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the Lord, “Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool.**

But the FIRST Truth; the HIGHEST Truth; the BEST Truth; the most IMPOSTANT Truth- is the Truth about God; and what God has said. And EVERYTHING that God has said- about Salvation and Heaven and Righteousness- is in the Bible. So, sooner or later, I must either embrace what the Bible teaches- or I must reject it. But I should not ever try to straddle the fence. And even though there is so much Evidence to believe the Bible is true- I know that unless God the Holy Spirit sovereignly reveals the Truthfulness of Scripture to you- you will always live in the “*Valley of Doubt and Indecision*”.

So, when confronted with an abject Impossibility- that the other Apostles had seen the Lord alive AFTER He had died- Thomas doubted. His *first* Response was, “*This is just too Good to be true! I saw Jesus die and dead people CANNOT live again! So, they are obviously mistaken- maybe overcome with Emotion- but Jesus is Dead and that is that!*”



So, look what Thomas said at the End of verse 25:

**... Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."**

Now we can criticize Thomas all day long and shake our heads in Self-righteous Pity on this man- but really and truly- who among us would have believed at that Moment? Nothing like this had ever happened before. And if you look really hard- the Truth of the matter is that none of the Apostles believed, either. I mean those men were in such Doubt- that they didn't even go to the Tomb to give Jesus a proper Burial. It was the Women who went and even at that- those Women didn't believe that they were going to find Jesus alive- they just wanted to give Him a proper Burial. Yet that was demonstrating MORE Faith than the Apostles had.

And this illustrates another very important point about the Sovereignty of God in our Faith; and in our Salvation; and another Illustration of just how Fallen- we really are.

This Truth teaches that unless and until God graciously and mercifully and sovereignly *overrides* our Unbelief- and grants to us the Gift of Faith- NONE of us would ever believe! Our profound Unwillingness and Inability to believe- due to the Fall- is so far reaching that, in and of ourselves- we do NOT possess either the Will nor the Ability to believe- unless God *overrides* the Darkness of our souls and *causes* us to believe.

That is why it is so amazing to me to hear people brag about how much Faith they have. Because they wouldn't have ANY Faith at all- if God had not given it to them. And there isn't anything they have done to *increase* their Faith or to *cause* their Faith to be stronger- outside of the sovereign Grace of God. Because, contrary to popular Belief- the Bible does NOT teach that our Faith is like a "muscle" that we need to exercise in order to have strong Faith. That is a Man-made and purely *invented* Teaching that has NO Basis in the Bible at all.

Let me say this another way. Your Faith in God- your Willingness and Ability to trust that God is NOT a Liar- is a Gift from God- because you do NOT normally or naturally possess the kind of Faith in yourself. So, NO ONE is willing or able to trust in God; or believe in God; or trust in the Promises of God- unless God graces them with that Gift.

Therefore- a *lack* of Faith is NOT something that is at odds with God's people- it is the Norm. Every single human being- that is saved right now; that has ever been saved; and that will ever be saved- doubts. And we doubt all the time. And the only reason we believe at all- is because God has *empowered* and *enabled* us to believe. So, it isn't about you *having* Faith. It is about God *giving* you Faith.

And that means that a Lack of Faith in us is not something to be ashamed about. Now it IS something to go to God about. It IS something to pray about; and something to seek God's Face about- that God may graciously and mercifully grant to us the Faith that we need.

But it is a Testimony to the Arrogance and Self- righteousness of the modern Church and the unscriptural approach to Christianity that would allow any of us to look down on somebody else because of a supposed Lack of Faith. Because it isn't that *some* people have great Faith (because they did certain things)- while others do not (because they didn't do those things). That isn't what Christianity teaches, dear friends. And that is a false Comparison that doesn't do anything but build up the Pride and Arrogance of sinful people.

The Truth is that God has graciously and mercifully *granted* Faith to some while others are still struggling. That is the correct Comparison.

So, I beg you to NOT believe that you have strong Faith because you have done certain things; and you have supposedly "built up your Faith" by what you have done for yourself. Nothing in Christianity works like that. NOTHING! EVERYTHING we are; EVERYTHING we have; and EVERYTHING we do- is all because of God's Grace and Mercy! It ALL comes from God; and it ALL goes back to God; and it is ALL for God's Glory- or it is Sin! And so, we need to really work very hard to stop robbing God of his Glory by taking Credit for things that we say that we do for ourselves.

Do not think that and please do not say that- because all you do is condemn other people and puff yourself up. Please turn with me to a very important passage in **Ephesians 2:8-10**:

**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.**

**10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.**

Now I was speaking with a very nice man the other day on the telephone who had called to challenge some of the statements that I made on a previous radio broadcast. And in the course of the conversation this kind man told me that when the Apostle Paul wrote this passage- he never said what the Protestant Reformers of the 6th Century said that Paul said.

Verse 8 says,

**For by grace you have been saved through faith ...**

And this man correctly told me that the Reformers taught that Salvation was by Grace *alone* through Faith *alone* but that the Reformers added the word, "*alone*" to what Paul actually wrote here and thus because they added that word, "*alone*" to this passage- we added to the Bible; and we changed the meaning of what Paul meant here; and thus, we were wrong.

He said that his Church- the Roman Catholic Church- had it right. And people are saved through a *cooperative* Effort between God and Man with Grace mixed in with the partaking of Communion; attending the Mass; being baptized and going to Confession. And that this Cooperation between God and Man is what really brings forth Salvation.

But I begged this man to realize that what he was reading was an English translation of the Scriptures that had been originally written in Greek. And if we are to fully understand what Paul was saying here- it was a Requirement that we turn away from the English and look back at the original Greek.

Because in the Greek language- the language in which Paul wrote **Ephesians** sometime between AD 60- 62- that in the Greek language this phrase-

**For by grace you have been saved through faith ...**

... is what is called an "*exclusionary phrase*" and that means that we are absolutely correct to use this phrase in context with the word, "*alone*". And to prove that is true- we look at the very next verse which says:

**not as a result of works ...**

Which means – that our Salvation and the Faith that it takes to be saved is not brought forth by *any* human works. None; zero; no Works; not even good religious Works like Baptism; or attending the Mass; or partaking of Communion; or of going to Confession like this man's Church teaches; or of any other human Works that other Churches teach like speaking in tongues; or paying your tithes. And Salvation is NOT acquired through keeping the Law of God like some messianic Cults teach.

Salvation is solely and wholly a sovereign Act of God and is given to unworthy Sinners by way of Grace through the Gift of saving Faith “only” or “alone”. And that is the very Heart of the Gospel. If in any Way lost fallen Man does something- *anything*- that *causes* God to respond to what he did by rewarding that person with Salvation- then Salvation could not be "by Grace".

Grace by definition is not earned; it is not deserved; and it is not worked for. If you get something because you worked to receive it; or because you deserve it; or because you have earned it by doing something- then that which you get could never in any way be called Grace- it is a Payment; a Wage; or a Reward- but it isn't Grace.

And the reason why Salvation must NOT be of any human Works- not even good Church Works; or nice community Works; or even noble Works- is the one single reason that Paul gives in the very next phrase:

**... so that no one may boast.**

God saves unworthy Sinners by Grace alone through Faith alone in the finished Work of Christ alone precisely because by saving us that way- God gets all the Glory and we get all the Benefit.

We must understand, dear friends, that the basic underlying Reason behind why God does anything in the Universe is so that He will be glorified or another way the Bible puts this is "For my Names' Sake" or another way the Bible puts this is "So they will know that there is none like Me". That is the only Reason God does *anything*.

God created *everything*- "For His Glory" God chose us for His glory' God saved us for His glory; God does everything that He does so that He will be magnified and exalted and known and loved and feared and revered and obeyed and glorified and enjoyed because God is "white hot" in His Passion to be glorified!

The reason why God tells us not to have any other gods before us is because God has no other gods before Himself. The reason why God tells us to love Him with all our heart soul mind and strength is because God loves Himself that same exclusive Way.

God is praised and adored and worshipped and magnified precisely because He is the only One Who is *worthy* of that. We do not worship God because we look good by doing it. We do not worship God because it makes us look Noble to do so. No, we worship God because nobody else in all the Universe is *entitled* to be worshipped other than God; nobody else deserves Worship other than God.

And if in any way we do give someone else or something else the Worship; or the Adoration; or the Devotion; and the Praise that, by rights, should only go to God- then that other person or that other thing is an Idol; and we are guilty of Idolatry. And if we do that- then that means that we are not faithful believing Christians- no, that means that we are unbelieving Pagans.

Now let me tie this all back together. God created this thing called Salvation for no other reason than He created a waterfall or a galaxy or a man- for His Own

Glory! And so God is not about to share the glory or the credit or the praise or the honor of Salvation with any man any more than God is going to share the glory of Creation with any man. Man has no more to do with Salvation than he does with Creation. And therefore man is not entitled to boast or brag or take credit for Salvation any more than he can with Creation.

But if in any way- we had something to do with our own Salvation- then we would be justly *entitled* to some of the credit and God would be wrong to take all the Glory for Himself or even want it. And the same thing is true about our Faith.

Most of us have been taught that Faith comes from inside us. And so, if we are to *use* Faith- we must dig down and go deeply within ourselves and find this Faith that is *supposedly* lying Dormant inside of us; tap into it; and then bring it to the Surface where it can be released.

And that Theology is very popular today because it sounds great. And that Theology is easy to teach; it is easy to learn; and on a human Level- it feeds our inherent fallen and sinful Need to be exalted.

The Problem with that Theology is that it contradicts what the Bible actually teaches about Faith. Paul taught at the end of **Ephesians 2:8** that Faith does NOT already lie inside of us. It does NOT reside deeply inside of us. The Bible teaches that Faith is not “of “ us at all- in any Way. So from where does Faith come? Well, Paul infallibly taught here that Faith is:

### **... the gift of God**

So, if that is true- then to find Faith- we must certainly NOT look within *ourselves*- we must NOT look *inwardly*. We must look *outwardly*- away from ourselves- to God. And since this is an “exclusionary Statement”- that means that we must look to God *alone* for Faith. And so, if we are to find Faith- we must seek God for this great and gracious Gift. And if we are to *develop* our Faith- we must *resist* the Temptation to think that we can again look *inwardly*- but we must *continue* to look to God.

So, the Strength of our Faith; the Effectiveness of our Faith; the Ability of our Faith to actually work- is NOT due to how hard we have worked; it does not come by how much we have cooperated with God. No, the Strength and Effectiveness of our Faith is due to how much we look to God and how much we *depend* upon Him.

So please turn back to **John 20** and we see that Thomas just can't quite get to the Point where he believes his friends, who tell the Truth. All he could see was the “bad side” of everything. And for him to think that Jesus had actually risen from the Dead- was just too Good to be true. But the Apostle John said this in **John 20:26-31**:

**26 After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you."**

**27 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing."**

**28 Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"**

**29 Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed."**

**30 Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;**

**31 but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.**

So, the next time they met together- the Disciples told Thomas- *"You better be there because Jesus might show up again."* And sure enough, Jesus came to them eight days later- the door having been shut- and He stood in their midst.

Now what that tells you is that Jesus was in a supernatural Form at that Time- because He just walked through the wall and said, *"Peace be with you."* And I can understand why He said that because it would be so frightening for us too if we were in the room and somebody just came through the wall. And so, this time Jesus looked right at Thomas and said,

**Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing.**

Now many people have taught that Jesus was being very Kind to go to all this Trouble for poor, old, doubting, Thomas. But the Reality is that Jesus had to go to all this Trouble for all the Apostles to believe. And He has to go to all that Trouble for us to believe today- because Faith does not come from *inside* of us- it is a Gift from God.

So, in Reality- Jesus was not doing anything unusual here with Thomas. John simply writes about this to illustrate how much God wants us to believe and how Faith comes to us.

So, Thomas was wrong- true. But this was being Wrong out of a deep and profound Love. It's the Grief and broken-Heartedness and Uncertainty and Doubt

of a shattered Heart. And nobody could feel the way Thomas felt- unless they loved Jesus the way Thomas loved Him.

And then Thomas said what is probably the greatest Statement ever to come from the lips of any of the Apostles, verse 28,

### **My Lord and my God!**

So, let all the people who deny the Deity of Christ meet Thomas! Let Thomas tell us who Jesus is! And with this precious sacred Moment- his melancholy, comfortless, negative, moody Tendency was forever banished by the Appearance of Jesus Christ!

Now we need to know that Jesus is tender here with Thomas because Jesus understands Doubt. He understands Uncertainty. He understands Pessimism. He doesn't agree with it- but He understands it. And that means Jesus will be gracious to you as you struggle with your Doubt! All He asks is that you come to Him; come to Him in Prayer; come to Jesus in reading and studying the Bible. Come to Jesus and your Faith will become strong and vibrant and healthy and effective.

So, the great Testimony of Thomas, "*My Lord and my God.*" Must become *our* Testimony. Because in that Moment- Thomas was forever transformed into a great Apostle and Evangelist. And History tells us that Thomas took this great Faith that Christ gave to him and he took the Gospel as far East as India.

And there is in India today the "*Bar Toma*" Church which means: the "Sons of Thomas" Church- and those people trace their Origins all the way back to Thomas.

History says that because his Faith became so Strong and Powerful- Thomas became *unable* to deny his Faith anymore. And he would simply *refuse* to stop preaching. So, a spear was run through him; and he was executed as he was preaching to Pagans about Faith in Jesus Christ.

So, in the End, God turned Thomas' great Doubt into great Certainty. And Thomas became so Certain of his Reunion with his Savior- that he took a spear and finally gave his Life- so he could have the eternal Reunion he longed for all those years between Christ's Ascension and his own Death.

So, what about you and me? Do any of us struggle with Doubt? Come to Jesus with your Doubt and ask God for this great Gift of Faith!

Amen. Let's pray.

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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.