

Richmond Hill Baptist Church

May 1, 2011

The Next Sunday – Moving from Doubt to Faith (John 20:24-31)

Prelude & Prayer Time

Call to Worship: O For A Thousand Tongues to Sing

Welcome: Welcome to Richmond Hill Baptist Church! It is good to see you. It looks like most of you survived the Royal Wedding. If you are a guest thank you for joining us today. Please fill out a Connect Card and place it in the offering plate at the end of the service. Let's take a moment and greet one another.

Sing: *Majestic, Everlasting God, Great Are You Lord, Forevermore*

Children's Corner: (Alyssa)

Song: *Stronger*

Sermon: **The Next Sunday – Moving from Doubt to Faith**

Last week, churches overflowed with Easter visitors. Some of those who came last week remain unconvinced of the resurrection and the claims of Jesus Christ. They are like a lot like Thomas, the disciple of Jesus, who struggled with his doubts.

Let's see how Jesus moved Thomas from a place of doubt to a point of faith.

**John 20:24-31**

*Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"*

*But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it."*

<sup>26</sup> *A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them.*

*Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said,*

*"Peace be with you!" <sup>27</sup> Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."*

<sup>28</sup> *Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" <sup>29</sup> Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." <sup>30</sup> Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. <sup>31</sup> But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

## Seven Thoughts from Thomas

### 1. Twins (vs. 24)

John 20:24: *Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came.*

“Thomas” is Aramaic, “Didymus” is Greek, and they both mean “twin.”

You gotta love twins! Shane & Shawn Spellbring. Twins often look, act, and think alike.

Who was Thomas’ twin? We do not know—but sometimes you and I feel as if we might be his twins! How often we have refused to believe and have insisted that God prove Himself to us!

We do know that Thomas was a disciple Jesus. He was one of the twelve.

We also know that Thomas was not with the other disciples when they met on the evening of Resurrection Day?

Why? Perhaps he was disappointed like the disciples that we talked about last Sunday. The two on the road to Emmaus.

In a lot of ways we are a lot like Thomas. When we are discouraged and defeated we often seek solitude when we need our friends all the more!

Solitude often feeds the discouragement and helps it grow into self-pity, which is even worse.

When things get tough and we go off on our own we are a lot like Thomas. We could be his twin.

Unfortunately, Thomas’ solitude caused him to miss out on seeing Jesus on the first Easter Sunday.

Kahlil Gibran: *Doubt is a pain too lonely to know that faith is his twin brother.*

### 2. Seeing is Believing (vs. 25)

John 20:25: *So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it.”*

Some folks think that Thomas is from the state of Missouri because it is called the “Show Me” State.

Thomas was skeptical of what his companions said. He had to see for himself.

Seeing is not always Believing. When Neil Armstrong landed on the moon in 1969 and sent back televised pictures of the earth, Britain’s Flat Earth Society continued to stick staunchly to its horizontal view of the world. It wasn’t willing to believe, even when presented with hard evidence.

The [Flat Earth Society](#) was one of the first organizations to accuse NASA of faking the landings, arguing that they were staged by Hollywood with [Walt Disney](#) sponsorship.

In a scientific world we want to see the facts before we will believe and yet there are times when we are presented with the hard evidence and we still choose to not believe.

### **3. A Double Negative (vs. 25)**

*John 20:25: So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it.”*

In the Greek text, there is a double negative: οὐ μὴ πιστεύσω (Who Me Pisteuo)

Literally translated: “not not I will trust” or “I positively will not believe!”

Thomas says, unless God proves himself to me on my terms, then I absolutely will not believe.

I refuse to believe.

### **4. One Week Later (vs. 26)**

*John 20:26: A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!”*

One week after the first Easter Sunday Jesus shows up again. Can you imagine the regret and frustration Thomas was feeling over the course of that week.

Regret: That he was off by himself and missed out.

Frustration: That he wanted to believe and but could not.

Jesus comes through locked doors, this is cool, then he and greets them again with a blessing of Peace.

It's amazing how God can bring peace into our lives when we need it most.

## **5. Stop & Start (vs. 27)**

John 20:27: *Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."*

I love this: Jesus quotes Thomas. Can you imagine the shock and surprise Thomas hears Jesus quoting his skepticism word for word. Thomas put your finger here!

When you stand before the living God to give an account of your life – be prepared to stand by your doubts, reasons, and excuses. God knows them and he will remind you of them.

Then Jesus says, "Stop the unbelief and believe." Stop not trust and start trusting.

We call him "Doubting Thomas," but Jesus did not rebuke him for his doubts. He rebuked him for unbelief.

Doubt is often an intellectual problem: we want to believe, but faith them is overwhelmed with questions.

Unbelief is a moral problem; we simply will not believe. Belief and unbelief are a choice. Stop doubting and start believing.

## **6. Confession of Faith or Blasphemy (vs. 28)**

John 20:28: *Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"*

In response to what Jesus – Thomas makes a great declaration of faith.

To the Jesus this statement would have been double blasphemy.

We need to remind ourselves that everybody lives by faith. The difference is in the *object* of that faith. Christians put their faith in God and His Word, while unsaved people put their faith in themselves or other things.

What will be your confession when Jesus comes back! Wow - you are real! In that case you are my Lord and God. Too late.

## 7. Believing without Seeing (vs. 29-31)

John 20:29-31: *Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."<sup>30</sup> Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book.<sup>31</sup> But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

Here we find a great blessing for those who believe without seeing.

Here we also find a great testimony of the first resurrection skeptic: Thomas. This story was given to us as proof and confirmation of what happened and encouragement that we too can move from doubt to faith.

Blaise Pascal (French Mathematician & physicist): In faith there is enough light for those who want to believe and enough shadows to blind those who don't.

Hebrews 11:1: Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

Thomas represents all of us who at some point have struggled with doubts and unbelief. We are his twin. It is encouraging to know that Jesus took a personal interest in Thomas and helped him with his unbelief.

Father we thank you for Thomas and his confession of faith.....

**Video: Doubting Easter**

**Response & Offertory: My Saviour My God**