

Faith Overrides Doubt  
(Delivered March 30, 2008 by Victoria Fussell)

I greet you in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Easter Sunday we celebrated the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

On this second Sunday of Easter we are reminded by the scriptures that Jesus lives!

In the Gospel (John 20:19-31), after his resurrection, Jesus appeared in a house that was locked, where his disciples were meeting and greeted them. Jesus showed them the marks where the nails went through his hands and his side where he was stabbed. All present rejoiced in his resurrection. But one disciple was away.

Thomas was absent when Jesus made his appearance and upon his return the others told him they had seen Jesus. He knew these other eleven men quite well. He had worked along side them in the work Jesus had given them to do. The others had no reason to make up a story. But Thomas did not believe them.

So who was Thomas? In all accounts, Thomas, who was also known as the twin, was described as a cautious and very loving person. As a matter of fact, Thomas loved Jesus so much that when Jesus told him he was going to Jerusalem and might be killed, Thomas said to the other disciples in John 11:16 "Let us go, that we may die with him".

This same man, who had seen Jesus in other miraculous situations, said to the other disciples after hearing the good news, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

This is where the phrase Doubting Thomas was conceived.

But we all know that God has a way of proving a point.

A week later, same house, locked doors, the disciples are meeting and this time Thomas was present. Jesus appeared again, greeted everyone, but makes a special point of speaking to Thomas. Hey Thomas, "Put your finger here, see my hands, reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas' response says it all doesn't it, he answers, "My Lord and My God!" Jesus asks him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe".

It is easy to believe something when you have the proof right in front of you. In fact, that is simply observation, not belief.

How many of us would have believed without seeing?

I work in the world of “If it sounds too good to be true, it usually is”. Where those with grand promises most of the time don’t deliver what is promised and often take things of value through deception.

Much like Thomas, I am doubtful. I need assurances, verification, I need proof. I am not swayed by the stories that are told, because talk is cheap. Although I was born here in California, I am from the “Show Me” state of Missouri.

Through divine fate, I am also a child of God. I believe that Jesus Christ died for us, was buried, rose again on the third day, ascended into heaven and through him all things are possible.

That’s quite a leap from “Show me”. It is because I believe. And,

Belief is like the wind. You cannot see the wind, yet, you can feel it all around you and see its effect on things, and therefore you know it exists. And believing like this is called Faith.

You cannot see God, but you know he exists because you experience the effects of his blessings.

So, how do we get to the place within ourselves where our faith overrides our doubt?

The answer is through prayer.

I asked my Sunday school students if they prayed? They quickly assured me they did. And then I asked them how often? As you can guess I got varying answers – Before I eat, Before I go to bed, When I’m scared.

I asked, If praying was your job, how much would you get paid? Could you live off of it or would you starve to death? How about the rest of us in the congregation this morning?

God answers our prayers. He sent his son in our place for our sins. And his son is making a way for us. But if we don’t pray, then what?

Faith in God makes prayers come true (Mark 11:24) and the Lord is ready to help those who pray (Psalms 55:22). No prayer goes unheard (Psalms 55:16-17).

I am not saying we get everything we pray for. Sometimes God saves us from ourselves by answering our prayers in HIS time and in ways we are able to handle and not in the way we think they should be handled. Sometimes we do not know what is best and God has an even bigger dream for us than we have for ourselves.

A prayer can be as simple as Help Me Lord or Thank You Jesus.

All I know is that when I send prayers up, blessings come down.

Jesus told his disciples to be sincere when they prayed and not to do it for show. “Whenever you pray go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you” Matthew 6:6

I am reminded by the Gospel this morning that God bestowed a very special blessing upon those of us not there to witness the resurrection. “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe”.

True faith is believing in things that cannot be seen (The letter to the Hebrews 11:1-3).

Will your faith override your doubt? Will you pray?

Will you pray with me now? Please bow your heads. “Protect me, O God, for I take refuge in you. “You are my Lord, my good above all other.” (Psalm 16:1) Amen