

From Mistrust to Faith

John 20:24-29

Mistrust is one of the deadliest diseases of the heart for man. If we mistrust each other, we may never have a good relationship with each other. It is because mistrust is a very serious disease of the heart that it also breaks relationships between others. As we know, hate, hatred and murder all begin with mistrust. Our Christian life is much the same. We believe in love, greatness and the power of God for us all. However, if we do not believe in God's love and begin to doubt Him, then we cannot live a rightful Christian life. For those Christians who have lived a Christian life for a very long time and have a good belief, but then begin to have doubt, they may have a difficult time praying and listening to the Word of God. From this point forward, their Christian life will begin to become ill.

Mistrust is a strong weapon that Satan uses. When we look at chapter 3 of the book of Genesis, this weapon called 'mistrust' was used when Satan tempted Adam and Even. The serpent said to the woman in Genesis 3:1, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'" She was supposed to say, "you will surely die." However, she said to the serpent, "or you will die." This shows that she was not confident about the Word of God. Satan never misses a chance like this. Satan said with confidence to the woman who already had a dim belief, "You will not surely die." At this point she began to doubt and was thinking, "Really?" And then they committed a sin. Mistrust is a horrible tool of Satan. A mistrustful person is one that has been appointed by Satan. If you begin to doubt God, you cannot have a good relationship with Him.

Thomas, one of Jesus' disciples, and was a very smart person. However, when we look at today's reading scripture, he fell into doubt. He began to have doubts about Jesus' resurrection. When the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" he sneered at them. 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." Actually, Thomas told them the right thing. From a natural and science stand-point, how can people that have died be raised up from the dead? This story about Thomas has a very important message in chapter 20 of the Gospel of John. This chapter contains the recounting of the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus' resurrection is a supernatural and "super science" event.

When we look at the Bible, we can find that several times where Jesus told His disciples before he was hung on the cross that he would be 'raised from the dead.' However, the disciples could not believe this and had doubts. These doubts are what we are reading in the Gospel of John. Mary Magdalene who went to the tomb and saw that it was empty did not believe in the resurrection of Jesus. Even though the resurrected Jesus appeared in front of her, she thought he was the gardener. She said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." Peter also didn't believe in Jesus' resurrection. He confirmed that the tomb was empty, but he was not convinced of the resurrection of Jesus. Many people at that time did not believe in Jesus' resurrection. It is not much different today. Many Christians still do not believe in Jesus' resurrection.

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Doubt, mistrust, and disbelief are the universal truth of our day. Thomas says, “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.” This unbeliever’s attitude has lasted the test of time. But Jesus did not blame His disciples for their disbelief. Rather, He went to see them. In the Bible, it says that when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The Bible also tells us that the disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord from this point forward. Many people couldn’t believe in Him and had doubts about Him, but history proves that Jesus rose from the dead and was resurrected.

Then, why couldn’t Thomas believe in His resurrection? Thomas’ first problem was that he tried to “see” with his eyes. Verse 25 says, “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.” Thomas did not believe that Jesus was resurrected. He wanted to see Him with his own eyes. The problem is that he would only believe if he was able to see it. Then Jesus told him in verse 29, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” The phrase, “blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” is a very important message for us. When we talk about God to unbelievers, most people respond like Thomas. “If you show me the living God, then I will believe in Him” or “Show me a miracle, then I will believe in Him” or “Heal the sick, then I will believe in Him”. They must all be from Missouri because each of them say, “Show me.” Thomas kept saying “show me” when he was not sure. He said that he would believe it after putting his finger where the nails were. “Show me” means I doubt something. It doesn’t mean that he could believe.

We can also understand another very important message here. That the opposite of believing is seeing. It is because when we don’t believe something we need to see it. If we always want to see something, that is disbelief, not faith. However, what we should know is that believing is not seeing, just as seeing is not believing. Many great believers in the Bible acted on their faith, not on what they saw. David’s great belief in God was the same. His belief was decided by his relationship with God, not by the things that he saw. He didn’t decide to act by seeing how strong Goliath was, or how tall he was, or what kind of weapon he had. David believed in God who was with him. Even though he couldn’t see God, he believed in Him that he was there with him. So he said, “You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.” That is right. Believing is not seeing. Many people have thought ‘God was with me’ after they successfully achieved their goal or completed their project. But the true, faithful believer can give thanks to God who rules over all events before they achieve their goal and can foresee success before they complete their project. Their belief is not because of a result, but because of their thanksgiving to God.

The second reason why Thomas had doubt was that he couldn’t meet the resurrected Jesus. The reason why Thomas had doubt was that he was not there when Jesus came. Verse 24 says, “Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came.” On the whole, when we leave a church – which is a community of faith – many people begin to fall into temptation or

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doubt. So the first thing that Satan did to the congregation that fell into temptation was to have them leave the church, leave their community of faith. Strangely, we can feel that people still in the church become hated and cannot enjoy the Pastor's sermon. So they too leave the church. This is a good time for Satan. We should know carefully that Thomas fell into temptation when he left his community of faith. Therefore, listening to the Word of God and not leaving the worship place, is the way to transform from mistrust to faith. Our faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

Rev. Moody, who saved over one million people, thought that belief came from heaven like lightning. But one day as he read Romans 10:17 he recognized that faith comes from hearing the message and reading the Bible. So he is beginning to understand that his faith is growing as he reads the Bible and prays over and over again. One day a young man came to him and said, "I have no confidence about my sin being forgiven." Rev. Moody read John 1:12 for the young man. And then he read Romans 8:1 for him. However, the young man said that he still couldn't believe that his sins were forgiven and that was saved. Then Rev. Moody read 1 John 1:9 for him. However, he said that he was still not sure. Then Rev. Moody said to the young man with anger. "How in the world do you not believe in God? How many times does the Bible have to tell you that your sins are forgiven?"

We should believe in what the Bible says. We must grasp the Word of God instead of leaving this place of grace. In today's reading scripture, Thomas, who had doubt about the resurrection of Jesus, finally met the resurrected Jesus. Then Jesus said to him, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." After meeting with the resurrected Jesus and listening to his voice, Thomas' heart pumped and began to fill with faith. So Thomas said to him with joy, "My Lord and my God!" If we want to be a real Christian, we should meet the resurrected Jesus. We must be where resurrected Jesus is. We must be in this place of worship and God's Word should touch our heart and our mind.

At this time I want Jesus to come here and meet each of you. No matter what, we must be faithful Christians as we live in this world rather than be doubting ones. Faith is the pathway to meet God. Our faith is a pathway to saving our lives, to receiving our prayers, and to experiencing the miracles of God. We were saved by the faith. We were saved not just because of what we did, but because we believe that Jesus was our Savior and he was crucified, then was dead, and on the third day He rose again from the dead. We can have an experience with God as much as we believe. Do you have just a little faith? Then you will have little experience with God. If you have large faith, you can have a large experience with God. If your faith is great, you can have a great experience with God. If you have a doubt, you cannot experience God's power.

Beginning this Friday, we will have a revival service. The most important thing is that we should be there and have the faith that wants to have an experience with our amazing God. So that's why all of us should be here to meet with God at the banquet of His Word. I want to encourage all of you. Are you a doubter? Or are you a believer? Do you really believe that He is alive and with you? If so, you will be a faithful Christian who wins in this world from now on.