

Blind Faith 4-19-20

We all trust certain people in situations. We trust our mail carrier will deliver our mail and not open it first. We trust our physicians are reading our lab results correctly. We trust our spouses not to cheat on us. We trust our children to one day have to take care of us and even have to make decisions for us as our minds cloud and bodies degenerate. Most important of all, we trust God has us no matter what. We learn about God and Jesus as children, most of us, and even as we age, we continue to learn about all the power He has and all the things He does for us. None of us can say we have ever seen God, but we have seen him in others through their smiles, concerns, things they do for us and in our prayer life. We pray without any way to see if our messages are delivered, but we get the proof when the prayer is answered. The disciples were more fortunate, because by seeing Jesus they saw God. They were able to see the healings take place. They saw how people reacted just to see Jesus. If only we were so fortunate today. Yet, even if people could see Jesus today, would they believe?

Think about it. If Jesus had an office in every town and had a time and date he would be in the office for business, would there be more believers? I would love to be his administrative assistant. Yes, it would be a grueling more than forty hour a week position as there would be so many messages to take and scheduling would be a nightmare. However, would people still doubt he existed? Perhaps it is better we have to rely on our faith alone to believe. Not that seeing Jesus in person would not be the greatest day of our lives, but having that mystery sometimes is to our benefit. It is the mysteries of God, Jesus and heaven which cause believers to be constant in their faith. Yet, it is this same doubt that causes others not to believe at all. Then there was Thomas.

Thomas was one of the lucky twelve who walked and talked, lived, and broke bread with Jesus. They pounded the same sand together as they walked from town to town or got in a boat and went across the seas. This was a unique experience just to have been chosen. Jesus would have had a lot of people to choose from when he gathered his twelve, and as we know they were not all that one would have expected them to be. Their backgrounds were varied. Their thoughts were not all of one mind. Some even spoke another language. Our world and lives are just like that now. We are surrounded by people of different ethnicities, races, social and economic status, and our home lives are all different even when we look alike and talk alike. Thomas was different in his own way because he needed more.

Ever eat a really excellent dinner and just want more? A while back someone described this crab cake meal to me, and I am pretty picky about that food as is she. When she told me about the dinner, I wanted to have been there. Maybe when the disciples saw Jesus appear in that locked home they were staying for fear of their lives, they described it in that way. It was enticing and clear, and Thomas just wanted more. Also, let us not forget the gift that had been given to the other disciples, the gift of the Holy Spirit which Jesus breathed upon the disciples on his visit empowering them for their missions that lie ahead. Thomas didn't get a gift. Ever not get a Christmas gift, nothing at all? You felt left out. You wanted something, anything, just a little token, but Jesus left nothing behind that day for Thomas. When you miss a sermon, now you can read it in an email we send to you. Thomas didn't get the chance to catch up. No one had the technology to record the visit on their phones, which we would do today. We could post that on social media and have it go viral, but not then. It was just a story that Jesus was there and oh, poor Thomas, you missed him. Where was Thomas? Who knows? I always felt he was out gathering groceries and other needs. After all, someone had to go out and gather while they were all in hiding. Yet, there is nothing to

support his absence. Don't you just hate when you miss someone's visit? Most people today call ahead, but even fifty years ago, we got surprise visitors and we still do today. Sometimes I try to visit people and get no response, so I appear at their door and hope to get invited in. Sometimes they aren't home, but I try to return and that's the thing Jesus did, he came back.

It was a week later according to John's gospel, everyone including Thomas was in the house. Just the same way, the door being shut, probably bolted, and Jesus appears. Jesus goes right to Thomas, knowing his need, and tells him to touch his hands and side in order to feel the wounds from the nails and the spear used to pierce his side to hurry the death. He tells Thomas not to doubt, but to believe. He then asks, "have you believed because you have seen me?". There is no recorded response from Thomas, and some look poorly at Thomas for his doubt. Do we not doubt at times ourselves? When we get bad news, do we not question it? When God does not answer our prayers in our time, do we not doubt then of his existence? You would be fooling yourselves if you don't admit your own times of doubt. Yet, we continue to believe in Jesus whom we have never seen. It's called blind faith. It has nothing to do with actual vision. It is all about believing in that which we do not see. We do it for many things if we realize it or not. We believe our mail will be delivered, especially if we are expecting something good like a check or a special gift delivery. We believe our friends when they say they will pick us up and take us somewhere that they will show up. If we can believe in people and their actions, why are there still so many who doubt? We have blind faith in Jesus and in God and in that magical, mysterious place we refer to as heaven. Many of us even have it all plotted out in our minds, but we have not seen that either. There is no virtual heaven you can look at online. You can't choose your design online, although that would be great. I guess God isn't into technology, but he sure gave a lot of people the idea to create it.

Jesus tells those in that locked home that blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe. Have come to believe, in other words, learned to believe, got to the point to believe. It isn't an automatic. We have to learn about God, Jesus and all the promises in the Bible to make that decision, to have that blind faith, in order to believe. He did it all for us. God sent his son, his only son to a people who would not know him, some who would reject him, and for those who killed him. He sent Jesus for all of us, the believers and the none-believers. At one time, all of us had to learn about him. It was not something we knew immediately. We go to school to learn to read, write, add and subtract. We go to Sunday school to learn who Jesus was, what he did for us, and keeps doing for us. We learn about brave people who followed God, good men and women like Moses, Ruth, Esther and Job.

Thomas was a disciple. Jesus did give him the gift of the Holy Spirit, only a week later than the others, because he just wasn't home. He missed the first visit. The others told him all about it, and he felt left out. We are never left out with God. He's there right now listening to us. He hears our prayers, he listens to our words, our thoughts, sees our needs. He has such a small request of us, and that is simply to believe. He asks for our blind faith, because that is what it is. He gives us nothing we can physically show others that proves our faith. No Real ID is delivered by God, because he doesn't need it. We don't need an ID to be part of his family. Our only proof we need is our faith. We show it in our words, our deeds, our acts of kindness, our concern for others and like that excellent meal, it should keep us wanting more. It makes us who we are to others. Thomas may still be called "doubting Thomas", but he was a mighty disciple for God. Thomas was responsible for all of what we know now as Asia, that was his mission. What's your mission? Can you see it? Have you completed it? Continue in your faith, it may be blind faith, but through you others can see. Amen.