

Introduction:

- I love the scene in The Santa Clause where Tim Allen is at the North Pole in Santa's workshop and he is having a hard time believing what he is seeing. And Judy the elf speaks up, "*Seeing isn't believing, believing is seeing!*" 251 days until Christmas if you are wondering. Judy is right - Believing helps us see things with our spiritual eyes. Jesus chides Thomas in saying...
- John 20:24-29 "*Then Jesus told him, "You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me."*" (John 20:29, NLT)
- One of the things that I see in the resurrection account is how close doubt and faith are to each other and yet with one little nudge of the Word, faith is moved light years from doubt.
- Let's look at three things this morning: What made Thomas different? What made the others different? What will make you different?

I. What Made Thomas Different?

- A. He believed because he saw. In the ESV and other translations Jesus asks Thomas a question: "*Have you believed because you have seen me?*" verses the statement: "*You believe because you have seen me.*"
 1. It is a question that is intended to point Thomas to a deeper foundation than just seeing with his eyes (his senses).
 2. It is a question that is intended to point Thomas back to the Word. The OT words about Messiah and the NT teachings of Jesus.
 3. Jesus is asking Thomas why is it that you are believing? In the next few verses we read John's words, "*But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name.*" (John 20:31, NLT) These are written that you may believe and by believing you will have life/Zoe! The Word is written that we may believe.
- B. He **demand**ed to see before he would believe. This made Thomas different. Faith is not based on what we demand to see. In his mind, his 'right' of refusal to believe took precedence over the word of faith/or the word that creates faith. So many people miss God because of this. They will not believe until they see they are healed, delivered, saved, etc. Faith does not operate by sight.
 1. "... *But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."*" (John 20:25, ESV)
 2. "*Unless I see...I will never believe.*" Can be heard as saying, "*I refuse to believe until I have...empirical evidence in my hands.*" I must have a faith that comes by observation or experience.
 3. Faith does not operate at that level. Faith is not sense (five senses) based. It is based on what God has said. Romans 10:17
- C. Jesus heard his unbelief! "*Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, ...*" (John 20:26-27, ESV)
 1. Eight days earlier the disciples had said, "We have seen the Lord!" And Thomas

doubted. Why eight days? Eight days was when a male born child was circumcised. A sign of covenant. Jesus was there to cut away unbelief from Thomas' heart. To move him into covenant faith. *"circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter."* (Romans 2:29, ESV). Eight days later

2. Now the disciples are together again with Thomas and Jesus appears in their midst again *and Jesus says to Thomas...*
3. It appears to me that Jesus is intentionally showing up to talk to Thomas and give him opportunity to do exactly what he had asked eight days earlier. It was like Jesus had heard his conversation and is now repeating it to him in an *"I dare you to touch my nail scared hands, my spear pierced side..."*. To Jesus it is a matter of the heart by the Spirit!
4. Jesus heard his unbelief and comes to help him believe. I like that about Jesus...He helps us to believe.

II. What Made The Others Different?

- A. On the surface, every one of the people found in the resurrection story had a problem with unbelief too.
 1. There is not found one person in faith who said, "Oh wow! It is just like He/the Word said it would be!" No one believed about the empty tomb being empty because Jesus said He would be crucified and then on the third day rise from the dead.
 2. What we find is that none believed until they saw...Jesus.
- B. The List:
 1. Mary Magdalene saw Him: *"Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus."* (John 20:14, ESV)
 - a) She turns and sees the man talking to her but is so overcome that she cannot recognize Him.
 - b) Grief, intense emotional pain, will often cause good people to miss God when He is revealing himself to us because we are so caught up in our own pain and disappointment.
 - c) Jesus asks her, *"Why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?"* John 20:15 That question should not be being asked on a day like today...I AM ALIVE! IT IS RESURRECTION DAY! If you believed me you would be really happy the tomb is empty. *"Blessed are those who have believed and have not seen."*
 - d) *"Jesus said to her, 'Mary.'" ..."* (John 20:16, ESV) It is in the present indicative form. *"By using present indicative in English is getting straight to the point and telling the person you are speaking to what's up."*(unknown). MARY! It gets her attention because Jesus is telling her, "What's up?"...Me Mary, I am up! No more dead! I AM UP!
 - e) She is not demanding to 'see' but Jesus and the angels give her the words she had heard previously and she believed...along with seeing! Go tell the disciples.
 2. The disciples hear from Mary, *"I have seen the Lord!"* Thomas is not there. They did not believe her!
 - a) *"but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them."* (Luke

- 24:11, ESV) They did not believe because it sounded like a story, a bunch of silly talk, foolishness.
- (1) *"For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."* (1 Corinthians 1:18, ESV)
 - (2) *"The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned."* (1 Corinthians 2:14, ESV)
- b) So many are like this today. They hear the message of the Resurrection and it all sounds like foolishness. Because they are lead by their senses (seeing is believing) they can't understand spiritual truth that must be discerned in the heart. Therefore they perish.
 - c) To often the natural man stands in the way of faith. It is easier to trust the senses than it is to trust God.
 - d) Peter ran to see and Luke says he marveled. Peter marvels: 'Thaumazo' - And he marveled at what had happened. To marvel, is to bring out the inexplainable ways of God! Wonder, ponder, stand amazed.
3. The disciples see for themselves. Luke 24:36-ff. And they are still in doubt and unbelief. *"And he said to them, 'Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?'"* (Luke 24:38, ESV) See! Touch! Give me something to eat! See Mark 16:14 too
 - a) They are not demanding a sign but are being lead back to the Word, by Jesus. Luke 24:45-47
 - b) Jesus is so kind and tender in leading the disciples to a place of faith.
 - c) After all, the Kingdom is about to be entrusted to them. Jesus wants them to know He is alive. One thing I have notice about those called into ministry...they really believe He is alive and the Kingdom is obvious in their lives.
 4. The men on the road recognized Him. *"And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight."* (Luke 24:31, ESV)
 - a) The Emmaus Road Doubters
 - b) They are walking by sight and not by faith. Verses Paul, *"for we walk by faith, not by sight."* (2 Corinthians 5:7, ESV)
 - c) If you are not in the place of faith you will be walking and discussing when you could be walking in and developing faith.
 - d) Note: What they were discussing made them sad. vs 17 What you believe determines your discussion! They believed Jesus was dead so they were sad.
 - e) Not seeing (vs. 24) keeps us from believing. "Seeing" takes what we know from head faith to heart faith. 'Seeing' is when the Holy Spirit shines a light on a certain truth and it shines visibly so that we can see!
 - f) Another issue with these disciples is that their eyes were kept from recognizing Him.
 - (1) Jesus addresses their unbelief with the Word of God. He goes through all the law and the prophets giving them the Word about himself.

- (2) Next, He gives them an encounter. vs 31 their eyes open and they recognize Him and He vanishes from their sight.

III. What Will Make You Different?

- A. Believing without seeing! *"Blessed are those who believe without seeing me."* Simply hearing the anointed message that He is risen!
1. Faith comes by hearing the message and the message through the Word of God. Romans 10:17.
 2. Paul declared, *"for we walk by faith, not by sight."* (2 Corinthians 5:7, ESV). We don't walk by our sense—but by our faith.
 3. The Holy Spirit brings conviction to our hearts when we are not in faith or not in the Kingdom. He prepares our heart for the entrance of His word. And when we hear it we are moved towards Him ...in faith.
- B. Your faith, from having heard the Word, makes you different! He is RISEN!!!
1. *"Blessed are those who believe without seeing me."* (John 20:29, NLT)
 2. These words are from the mouth of Jesus. Happy are those who believe without seeing. When we make our faith personal unto God, in simple trust, we are blessed (happy), alive, and established. See personal faith of:
 - a) The Centurion who saw the whole crucifixion: Truly this was the Son of God!
 - b) The thief: Remember me, when you come into your kingdom.
 - c) John believed: *"Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed;"* (John 20:8, ESV)
- C. Jesus will meet you where you are to work with your faith as long as you are humble and do not demand a sign. True humility is the seed bed in which the Word of God grows.
1. As the disciples hear the Word once again after the resurrection, their encounter with the Christ left them in faith and changed!
 2. The message He is Risen, must be met with our faith. The Good News is that Jesus himself, will work with us to believe—just like He did with Mary, Peter, John, etc.

Conclusion:

- An interesting scripture in Jude 22: *"And have mercy on those who doubt;"* (Jude 22, ESV)
- Blessed are those who believe and have not seen!
-