

Quasimodo Geniti

“Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing. . . Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

Today, is the Sunday after Easter. Thomas Sunday as some call it.

John is the only Evangelist who records this story. together with his name.

John doesn't just describe what he does but he makes it into his name — three times: Thomas, who was called Didymous in John's Gospel.

Didymous - means the one who is of two minds. To believe or not to believe.

Everybody knows that Thomas doubts — that He doesn't believe that Jesus is resurrected from the dead...

But we rarely consider what he BELIEVES.

He is not only a doubter but he is also a strong believer.

He believes, for instance, that all of the other ten disciples could be deceived.

He believes that he alone could be the reliable judge over whether the reports of the resurrection are true or not.

These things did Thomas count as real: The warmth of blood the cold of steel.

He believes that sight and touch are reliable enough to discern the truth.

What did he expect to feel? Would the wounds still be open? Would they be closed scars? Would it make a difference?

How exactly should the wound of a crucified but risen man feel?

And how did he know where to look? He wasn't there to see the nails driven.

John alone stayed to the end to report the spear thrust into His side.

So the very demand of Thomas is based on a belief in what he has heard from John.

Why believe one report from John but reject the other?

This is what makes Thomas of two different minds. Why he is called Didymous.

Today you are called Didymous.

When you too believe in what you can see, and touch, measure and discern.

When your faith in God, the Creator of heaven and earth, wavers because some scientist claims to have found rocks that are billions of years old.

...How exactly should a rock look that was created 6 or 7000 years ago?

When you too believe that the witness of the Bible is doubtful.

When you believe SOME of the reports of Scripture but reject others.

Last week you heard that Jesus was raised from the dead.

You believe that, I can tell — otherwise, you would not be back here today.

But what parts of Christ's preaching do you doubt?

Or, for that matter, what do you believe that is contrary to Christ?

Perhaps you don't believe that ALL of God's Ten Commandments are for your good on every occasion.

If you did, you would never disobey or consciously act contrary to them.

But knowing that God commands you to honor your father and mother, you nevertheless grumble about those in authority over you.

Knowing that God commands you to remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, you still find other reasons for not doing so.

Believing one thing and yet believing another — In two minds — Didymous.

It is a pretty descriptive name.

But Jesus gets to the point even more sharply.

“Do not be unbelieving but believing.”

You see, it is not really a matter of believing both contrary things.

In the final analysis, it can only be one way.

You really only believe one of them.

You are either alive with Christ or you are piled with the dry bones.

Thomas's behavior gets a rousing condemnation and so does yours.

But Jesus doesn't forsake Thomas on this account.

And neither does He forsake you.

Even for one so enamored by the things of this world and obviously erring...

Even for one so misguided and full of faults...

Even though He already came last week to give you faith in the resurrected Lord, still He comes again this week — eight days later.

He comes again with His same Word of peace and joy in preaching.

He comes again to show forth His wounds opened for your benefit.

Of course, it is not that Jesus ever left the disciples.

He is, after all the omnipresent God.

How else would He have known Thomas' reaction to the disciples' report?

It wasn't a messenger who told Him, He was there!

It is simply that He willed to be seen and touched at the moments of His visible presence but not during the week that intervened.

Nor was Jesus present as a Ghost or pure Spirit. Jesus is always incarnate.

Still, you cannot deny that there is a difference between the times of Christ's appearance and the rest of the week! It is not all the same.

While Christ is always present to you, He is not always available in the same way.

Sometimes He is present to be seen and touched — others not.

Sometimes to be heard — others not.

Sometimes to be eaten and drunk — others not.

What matters is that you receive Him when, how, and for the purpose He comes.

So today you are called to believe that in the forgiveness spoken here is Christ's.

Do not reject the Word which Christ speaks to you through today's preaching.

Don't insist on proofs that you yourself have designated.

Do not let your sight and experience cause you to disbelieve the Words of Law and Gospel—judgement and absolution that you hear.

Rather, place your trust in this promise of Christ that here in the preaching of those that God sends to you, the Holy Spirit comes to give new life.

This is the foundation for everything that happens within this place where you, Jesus' disciples, are assembled behind shut doors.

If you do not have this promise or do not believe it, there is nothing and no one in the entire world that will be able to give you peace.

But for you who believe in Christ and the means that He has instituted to be with His Church today, there is nothing and no one who will be able to separate you from the love of God.

Let the world rage and rant, *“Whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—your faith.”* You are *“Blessed because you who have not seen and yet have believed. . . and believing you have life in His name. Amen.”*