

FROM ONE TO MANY**MONDAY 5/29/23**

PSALM 51:8-14//8-9 Oh, (God) give me back my joy again; you have broken me— now let me rejoice. 9 Don't keep looking at my sins. Remove the stain of my guilt.

JOHN 20:1- 2 and 19-29 //1-2:19-20 Early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. 2 She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. She said, "They have taken the Lord's body out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!" 19 That Sunday evening the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them! "Peace be with you," he said. 20 As he spoke, he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord!

REFLECTION John the evangelist is telling us his personal take of the resurrection of Jesus. He was actually at the grave site and in the upper room. On that Sunday he, along with the rest of Jesus' followers, were trembling in fear wondering what would happen next. Suddenly God poured His grace out right in front of them. Standing among them was their beloved Jesus. They could no longer doubt this truth of Jesus. Jesus spoke these gentle words, "peace be with you." This is a common greeting among the Jews. The word "peace" means to be cheerful and have a good life. Christ intended His disciples to have a happy and prosperous life because they no longer have to fear death but embrace life to the fullest. Christians need to remember no matter our crisis, the peace of Christ is with us. Jesus has brought physical proof that His followers' gain new life after death. In that moment, He was demonstrating to them physically that they, too, will rise from the dead. Imagine for yourself being a witness to this world-changing miracle of God. If you are born from above, then you have experienced this spiritual awakening. As followers of Jesus, we have encountered the truth of God's grace and once you have you can never go back to your old life. We have seen the full glory of God.

PRAYER Oh God, please give me back my joy again. Help me to live a prosperous life knowing you have blessed me with a future life. Praise your holy name Lord Jesus. In Jesus Name Amen.

TUESDAY 5/30/23

PSALM 51:8 -14/10 Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me.

JOHN 20:19-29// 21-23 Again he said, (Jesus) "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you." 22 Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven. If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

REFLECTION Jesus again said "Peace be with you." This time, He is telling the disciples to pay attention. This is a supernatural event which is very important for the people of the world. The rest of your lives will be shaped by it. Jesus tells them they are to be His witnesses to the amazing love of God. Here, Jesus is ordaining His Apostles by saying "I am sending you" as my ambassadors to set up God's kingdom on earth. Paul writes years later in Ephesians 4:11-12, "Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ." Christ is blessing His Apostles and appointed ministers and teachers to grow and govern the Church. Truth is we claim nothing for ourselves but the actual ministry. The Holy Spirit of Christ does the rest. The roles of Jesus' ambassadors is to proclaim eternal salvation, and establish the kingdom of God on earth. It is

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obvious that we need to be raised up to heaven for such a task. This role is far beyond human capacity. We must be born new by being anchored in the truth of the Gospel. Let's remember no person can speak a true word concerning Christ unless the Spirit guides their speech. 1 Corinthians 12:3 says, "Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says "Jesus is accursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except in the Holy Spirit." The fullness of the Spirit has been poured out on us by Christ to teach the truth. Heaven forbid we should teach something contrary to God's commands. (Leviticus 18)

PRAYER As you say Lord, the work is plentiful but the workers few. I pray I may be receptive to you using my hands, and mind and soul to share what I know about you. In Jesus Name, Amen

WEDNESDAY 5/31/23

PSALM 51:8 -14//11 Do not banish me from your presence, and don't take your Holy Spirit from me.

JOHN 20:19-29 //24-25 One of the twelve disciples, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin), was not with the others when Jesus came. 25 They told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he replied, "I won't believe it unless I see the nail wounds in his hands, put my fingers into them, and place my hand into the wound in his side."



REFLECTION The unbelief of Thomas is related to his dullness of faith. He was slow and unwilling to believe Jesus even before His death and now resurrection. Thomas's stubbornness was one reason Christ permitted them to see and touch him again. If you ever touched a dead body you know that they are very cold. Not Jesus. Jesus' resurrection is the first to raise from the dead. Now this truth, given to all who believe in Him, is natural for us at first; to be stubborn when the entrance to faith is opened to us. When it comes to faith in Christ, we all want to be wise from our own understanding of truth. Jesus knows this and says, "you would not believe unless you see me and touch me." The disciples had not been really listening to Jesus' words. They held in their hearts, as we often do, judgment. Human judgment is based on knowledge and the awareness of our senses. This happens to all of us who are devoted to ourselves. We leave little room for listening to the words of God. This is why we need the Holy Spirit to help us interpret and accept the truth of the Bible. Without the Spirit we do not have any ability to understand it.

PRAYER Lord Jesus do not cast me out from your presence but send your Holy Spirit of truth upon me and draw me nearer to you. In Jesus Name, Amen

THURSDAY 6/1/23

PSALM 51:8 -14//12-14 Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and make me willing to obey you.13 Then I will teach your ways to rebels, and they will return to you.

JOHN 20:19-29 //26 Eight days later the disciples were together again, and this time Thomas was with them. The doors were locked; but suddenly, as before, Jesus was standing among them. "Peace be with you," he said.

REFLECTION Thomas is totally missing the point about his life being changed forever. For the first time in his life he has the opportunity to have true joy and happiness. Let's be fair, when Christ entered the upper room His greeting was awesome to those who were there, but it was not peaceful. Shocking to say the least of it would have certainly filled

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their minds with wonder and awe too. They saw Jesus speaking to them in the flesh! When Thomas heard of Jesus' appearance he should have been ashamed of his doubt. So, when he responds to Jesus to touch His body, it is not cold but warm and alive. This should be a lesson for us to be more diligent in restraining our wanton minds. Being pessimistic and thinking we know everything will block our gate of faith.

PRAYER O God, restore to me the joy of your salvation, and make me willing to obey you. Please continue to teach me your ways and continue to enlighten my heart with your wisdom. In Jesus Name, Amen

FRIDAY 6/2/23

PSALM 51:8 -14//14 Forgive me for shedding blood, O God who saves; then I will joyfully sing of your forgiveness. 1

JOHN 20:19-29 //27-28 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don't be faithless any longer. Believe!"²⁸ "My Lord and my God!" Thomas exclaimed.

REFLECTION Like many people, Thomas was slow to believe in the resurrection. Jesus invited him to come and physically touch His flesh. I can see in my mind's eye; Thomas' trembling hand reaching out to the holes in Jesus' body. This is a fierce way to be drawn to faith. Can you imagine this experience of you touching Jesus? True faith is believing in Jesus without seeing Him and without touching Him. It was not just the touching or even seeing that brought Thomas to faith that night. Every one of us needs to be awakened from our dark sleep by the calling of the Lord. True faith comes by listening and responding to the Word of God. We must be drawn in by the origin from which God speaks to us. These Words come from Jesus' own lips. Many of us are like Thomas because we give less honor to the Word of God than we should. Faith springs from hearing the Word and obeying it. This is by far more effective than any physical display through our senses. John 20:29 reads, "Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.""

PRAYER How much more do I need Lord to believe? Nothing, nothing more. You have given me the Holy Spirit and the Holy Bible as a gift. I praise you for everyday! In Jesus Name, Amen

SATURDAY 6/3/23

PSALM 51:8 -14//15 Unseal my lips, O Lord, that my mouth may praise you.

JOHN 20:19-29 //29 Then Jesus told him, "You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me."

REFLECTION Christ commends faith on the grounds of just hearing the Word. It is our sinful nature which fails at giving us faith in God. The carnal views of human reason are ill-equipped to trust in God. How do we break through the darkness of our own minds? The power and nature of faith must come from outside our being. To penetrate into heaven, and receive the things that are hidden, our human senses must be disrupted. Faith in God goes far beyond sight. Corinthians 5:7 says, "for we walk by faith, not by sight." Faith does not depend on visible things of this world even though we can think of a Creator seen in the beauty of nature. For true faith to occur it depends on the Holy Spirit empowering the Words coming from the mouth of God. When His Word is preached or taught it mysteriously arises above the sphere of human logic and rationality. The Word is fixed safely in heaven from which faith arises. Faith comes from the invisible kingdom of God, and goes far beyond all human capacity. Paul writes in Galatians 3:2-3, "Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?"

PRAYER Then the question is, why do we open up our minds to everything, yet not you. Forgive me for allowing things into my mind that are not of you. IJNA

