

John 20:24-31
(Psalm 67; 2 Timothy 2:8-13)
“That You May Believe”

Introduction

Why did John choose to end his gospel with the story of Thomas? Thomas appears two other times in this gospel. First, in chapter 11, when Lazarus’s sisters plead with Jesus to return to Judea even though his enemies want to arrest him and kill him, Thomas says “to his fellow disciples, ‘Let us also go, that we may die with him’” (11:16).

Again, in chapter 14, when Jesus says, “I go to prepare a place for you. ... And you know the way to where I am going,” Thomas replies, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” This question elicits a statement from Jesus that demands either to be rejected as a preposterous lie, or accepted as a life-transforming truth: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (14:2f). In these texts, Thomas shows himself to be a tough-minded, plainspoken, courageous disciple.

And now, we discover that Thomas had gone missing that first Easter day. However, John is not mocking him or criticizing him, but using him as an illustration of how we come to faith. Mary Magdalene and the women disciples who first saw Jesus after the resurrection, as well as John and Peter and all the other disciples who were in hiding – all took the same path from doubt and fear to faith. And so here, at the end of his gospel, John points to Thomas as another illustration of how we come to faith, and as the one whose initial doubts led to a vibrant faith that made the highest and clearest confession of faith made by anyone in this gospel: “My Lord and my God!”

Body

- 1. Notice the importance of being with God’s people when God is moving (20:24).**
- 2. Notice the inadequacy of a mere testimony of words, even if the words are true (20:25).**
- 3. Note, once again, the crucial importance of meeting the risen, living Christ (20:26, 27).**
- 4. Note the blessing that Jesus promises to those of us who have come to know him differently than did those first disciples, those who have seen him, not with fleshly, but with spiritual vision (20:29).**

Conclusion

John concludes his gospel by explaining his reason for writing it: namely, so that his readers might, like Thomas, come to believe that Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah of Israel, and the very Son of God, that we might, like Thomas, fall before him and say, "My Lord and my God," and so "have life in his name."

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