

Gospel of John Chapter 20C

As far back as the 1800's the State of Missouri has been known as the "Show ME State." The phrase seems to have originated from a political speech made in Philadelphia by Missouri's Congressman Willard Duncan Vandiver who said:

"I come from a state that raises corn and cotton and cockleburs and Democrats, and frothy eloquence neither convinces nor satisfies me. I am from Missouri. You have got to show me."

Today Missourians hold dearly to that identity saying it rightly describes them:

They proudly declare that they are not gullible – they hold conservative values and are unwilling to believe without adequate evidence.

- Today as we return to the Gospel of John we begin by focusing on the original Missourian: he was from Israel The Apostle Thomas.

Here is my OUTLINE for today's study:

1. The Challenge of Belief
2. The Confirmation of Belief
3. The Catalogue of Signs Designed for Belief

John 20:24 **Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." 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."**

- IN the providence of God Thomas was not in attendance when the disciples gathered together on that first Easter evening.
- The words that Thomas speaks are strong; without proof, apart from physical evidence, he says, **"I will never believe."**

THIS IS THE CHALLENGE OF BELIEF

- I believe that in the providence of God Thomas' absence was for OUR benefit.
- After all WE weren't there either.... Like Thomas WE hear the news of the resurrection second hand. Like Thomas the news challenges our logical minds. After all "People don't just rise from the dead." It is scientifically impossible.
 - Many of us are "reformed skeptics."
- BUT you could say: Thomas should have known better, after all, he was there when Jesus raised the young man from Nain who was dead.
- Thomas was there when Lazarus was raised from the dead. One of the few times we hear him speak up was when Jesus decided to go to Bethany: John 11:16 **So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."**
 - The disciples were very apprehensive about returning to Judea. The Jews were planning to kill Jesus.
 - So Thomas' words were either very compassionate (cared about Lazarus family) or very sarcastic. (if we go we might die)

Consider Thomas' personality:

- He was a loyal follower of the Lord Jesus:

- After the miraculous feeding of the 5000, when the crowd came looking for Jesus in the morning. Jesus tried to teach them the meaning of the “SIGN” of the miraculous feeding, BUT they refused to believe: John records:

John 6:66 **After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.**

- BUT Thomas remained! He was LOYAL!

Thomas was the HONEST disciple. On that last night when Jesus is teaching his disciples about the eternal realm, encouraging them with the promise of another counselor, talking to them about his ascension and eventual return.

The others remained quiet, (smile and nod) OK Father’s house, a big, big house with lots and lots of rooms.. You are going to come and take us to be with you... (Smile and nod)

Thomas stepped up to say, “I don’t understand.”

John 14: 2 **In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.**

4 **And you know the way to where I am going.” 5 Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” 6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.**

- Thomas’ questions, his doubts actually serve to bring about greater clarity, for which I am very appreciative. I need the same assurance. I need the conformation that comes from Jesus’ words.
- One week to the day, Jesus returns to the disciples, this time Thomas is present.

John 20:26 **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.” 27 Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.”

- You will note that while Jesus was NOT present when the Disciples spoke with Thomas about Christ’s resurrection, and yet Jesus had a full knowledge of their conversation.
- The Bible describes God as “ALL KNOWING” We call that OMNISCIENT.

Psalms 139: 2 **You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. 3 You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. 4 Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether. 5 You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.**

- Here in the Gospel of John, Jesus knows the details of a conversation that took place in his absence. This is a display of his omniscience.
- I find great comfort knowing that the one who heard the words of Thomas hears my voice as well. He knows our thoughts from afar, before a word has formed on our tongues he knows it completely.
- Can you picture Jesus taking Thomas’ hand and pressing his fingers against his hands and side? Thomas has an immediate response:

This brings us to THE CONFIRMATION OF BELIEF:

28 Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” 29 Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

- Thomas responds with a bold confession of faith. With these words Thomas declares his faith in both the resurrection and the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- This is one of the strongest affirmations of the deity of Christ in the N.T.

I do not think it is a coincidence that Thomas’ bold declaration of faith in Jesus Christ is what leads us into John’s explanation of the purpose for which he has written this Gospel.

John’s whole purpose in writing is that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that by believing we may have life in his name.

- This belief is exactly what Thomas has just expressed: and John says:
- (Now = Therefore)

John 20:30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

This brings us to the Catalogue of Signs Designed for Belief

In the writing of this Gospel John has labored to assemble a catalog of the wonderful works of the Lord Jesus. This is a limited record of signs, those miraculous acts of Christ designed to reveal his divine nature.

The Goal in compiling this list of signs is that the readers would believe that Jesus is the Christ (Messiah)

- Looking back over John’s writings we see the connection between the signs that Jesus performed and the belief of those he called:

Remember the first sign that John recorded? Jesus turned water into wine at the wedding of Cana.

- There was a wedding in the town of Cana and Mary the mother of the Lord was there. Jesus was also invited and his disciples with him. In the middle of the feast they ran out of wine. Mary told Jesus “**They have no wine.**” (*You know the story*) Jesus had the servants fill the water pitchers and serve it up to the Master of the Feast. (*the water was turned into wine*)

John 2:11, 11 **This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.**

- You will note that this sign had its desired effect on the Disciples. They believed!

Healing a royal official’s son – John 4:

Once again in Cana of Galilee, a desperate father comes to Jesus pleading for the life of his beloved son. Jesus doesn’t go with him instead simply speaks a word, “Go your son will live.”

John 4: 51 **As he was going down, his servants met him and told him that his son was recovering.** 52 **So he asked them the hour when he began to get better, and they said to him, “Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.”** 53 **The father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live.” And he himself believed, and all his household.**

Healing a man who was born blind – Remember, It was the Sabbath day and Jesus spat on the ground making mud, he anointed the man's eyes with the mud and said: "*Go wash in the pool of Siloam,*" and the man returned seeing.

- A volley of heated words took place between the man and the Jewish leaders because he had been healed on the Sabbath. Later Jesus caught up with the man:

John 9:35 *Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"*

- Jesus, the Son of Man, did what no one had ever done, he provided sight to a man who was born blind.
- John counts this as one of the many "Signs" finger posts pointing to the fact that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God.
- After his encounter with the Pharisees, Jesus finds the man who was healed and asks this question: "*Do you believe in the Son of Man?"*

36 *He answered, "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?"* 37 *Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you."* 38 *He said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him.*

- Once again the sign has the desired effect, the man believed.

Raising Lazarus from the dead. –

Remember after hearing of Lazarus' sickness Jesus remained where he was for another 2 days. When he finally arrived in Bethany Martha said, "*Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died.*" To which Jesus responded, "*Your brother will rise again.*"

- Jesus stood at the mouth of the tomb and said: "*Lazarus come forth.*" And he did.

John 11: 45 *Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him,*

- The miraculous signs that Jesus did when he walked the streets of Galilee and Judea served to proclaim that He was the Christ (Messiah) the Son of God.
- He demonstrated the Kingdom of God by showing his authority over sin, sickness and death. He revealed his unique authority as the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity.
- When he spoke to the winds, the waves and all manner of spiritual beings and they obeyed his voice.
- He boldly declared his victory over death through his resurrection, showing himself alive from the dead to as many as 500 people.

WE may not have been among the 500 who saw the resurrected Lord with their physical eyes, but we have the special blessing of being among those who have not seen but believe.

John 20:29 *Jesus said to him, (Thomas) "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."*

- Through the New Birth, God has graciously opened the eyes of our hearts through the hearing of His Holy Word.
- With the eye of our heart we have seen the Lord High and lifted up!
- We may NOT have touched his wounds with our hands BUT we know that "*He was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed.*"

John 20:31 but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Through the Word of God penned by the hands of the Apostles WE BELIEVE:

1. That Jesus is the Christ – The long awaited Messiah of Israel: The Seed of the woman, born of a virgin, The promised son of Abraham, the son of David who will reign over all the earth, The suffering servant of Isaiah who purchased our redemption.
2. The Son of God – The second person of the Trinity who left his heavenly home, putting on human flesh. This is the one who John describes as the Word of God who **was in the beginning with God**, the creator and sustainer of all things. In him was life.. He is the source, the very one who breathed into man the breath of life.
3. **by believing you may have life in his name.** Through faith in his incarnation, his sinless life and his atoning death and glorious resurrection, we have been redeemed from sin, restored to a right relationship with God and given the gift of eternal life.

John 3:14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. 16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

If you are here this morning and you come from the great state of Missouri and You need a reason to believe, I would pray that the Lord, graciously remove the scales from your eyes.

- That the truth of God’s eternal and unchanging Word would be made clear to you.
- That He would graciously provide you with a glimpse of his glory
- The gift of repentance, the faith to believe and the assurance of eternal life.

For those of us who do believe, I pray that the evidence that John provides in his Gospel would strengthen your faith and be used to transform you into His image.