

“Trusting Is Believing!”

I. **INTRO:**

- A. **Teaching Schedule next 2 weeks:** [**Wed** 3/3 Worship Night; **Sun** 3/7 Jeff T + Comm; **Wed** 3/10 Pastr Tony Sch; **Sun** 3/14 Greg Opean]
- B. **3rd Service: Master Sergeant *Joe Maldonado*** (w.Sylvia; Joe Jr; Jasmine) deployed to Afghanistan early March. [Already served 2 tours in Iraq] - Usher.
- C. **C.S. Lewis** in, *A Grief Observed* - You never know how much you really believe anything **until** its truth or falsehood becomes **a matter of life and death!**
It is easy to say **you believe a rope to be strong** as long as you are merely using it to cord a box. **But** suppose you had to **hang by that rope over a precipice**. Wouldn't you then first discover how much you really trusted it?
 - 1. Do you believe? Do you have faith in Jesus? Do you really trust in Him?
- D. **Outline:** In ch.20 we have 4 reactions to the resurrection:
 - 1. **Hearing is Believing!** (Mary Mag hearing Jesus say, “**Mary**”) - **Seeing is Believing!** (10 apostles) - **Proving is Believing!**(Thomas) - **Trusting is Believing!**(us)

II. **TRUSTING IS BELIEVING!**

- A. **SEEING IS BELIEVING!** (19-23)
- B. The room is dark. Only a flickering oil lamp dancing shadows upon the walls. The windows shuttered & door barred, the disciples cover in the shadows. Nails bitten to the nub. Jaws clenched in anxiety. Heads aching. Throats parched. Tongues clinging to their mouth. (Chuck Swindoll John; pg.95)
- C. But **locked doors** will not give you peace...**nor** keep your Savior out!
 - 1. **Matter of fact** He shows up & gives these frightened disciples what they need most...**Himself!**
- D. **Peace be with you** -
 - 1. This peace is based on His sacrifice on the cross.
 - 2. Rom.5:1 **Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,**
- E. (20) With the words *Peace be with you*, a calm settles over their heart, so they gather around for a closer look. {They were glad when they **saw** the Lord}

- F. *“Look at the wounds of Jesus!”* cried Staupitz to Martin Luther (Staupitz supervised Martin Luther during a critical period in his spiritual life).
1. There is indeed **no other sign** which can give **rest/peace** to the penitent.
 - a) Have you *“Look at the wounds of Jesus”*?
- G. **Peace to you!** - The 1st message of peace was accompanied by Him *showing his wounds*. Now the 2nd time the message of peace was accompanied by *an injunction to go forth into the world*. (On the great errand of world evangelism)
1. See My hands...It's Me! - See My hands...and Go!
 2. The 1st “peace” is **peace with God**, based on His sacrifice on the cross. *That is why He showed them His hands and side.*
 3. The 2nd “peace” is the **peace of God** that comes from His presence with us.
 - a) He commissioned them to take His place as the Father’s ambassadors in the world.
- H. (21-23) Jesus Commissions his apostles: **By what authority?** (21) **Father**; **With what power?**(22) **H.S.**; **For what purpose?**(23) **Sin** (*to forgive or retain*)
- I. (21) **He breathed on them** - For their new commission they needed **spiritual power**.
1. The image and wording of **breathing on them** recalls God’s creative work in making Adam. (*both gave life: 1 physical, 1 spiritual*)
 2. This **reception of the Spirit** was in anticipation of the day of **Pentecost** and should be understood as a partial limited gift of **knowledge, understanding, and empowerment** until Pentecost, 50 days later. (Knowledge Bible Commentary)
 3. **Like an instrument** is blown into, to make music. They were to **sing & sound** the note of the new kingdom.
- J. (23) **Forgiving or Retaining sin?**
1. In light of being called to be **sent to the world**, the church (not just the apostles) **is now** given authority to declare that certain sins are forgiven & certain sins retained. (Morris; LKGNT; pg.261)
 2. **Proclaiming the forgiveness of sins** was the prominent feature of the apostolic preaching in the Book of Acts.
 - a) Jesus was giving the apostles (and by extension, the church) **the privilege of announcing heaven’s terms, on how a person can receive forgiveness.**
 - (1) If one **believes** in Jesus, **then** a Christian has the right to announce his **forgiveness. :)**
 - (2) If a person **rejects** Jesus’ sacrifice, **then** a Christian can announce that that person is **not forgiven. :(**

3. **Note:** There is no instance in the New Testament of any apostle forgiving sins.

K. Jesus put into the hands of **Peter** and of **all believers** *the keys of the Kingdom* which we should use to **open the door** for those who wish to enter.

1. This glorious promise applies to **all believers** who will tell the story of Christ's love for men.

L. **PROVING IS BELIEVING!** (24-28)

M. (24) Thomas the *bold skeptic*, the *classic empiricist* (the theory that all knowledge is derived from **sense-experience**; a person who relies solely on **observation** and **experiment**)

1. He had the *I will not believe unless...* head-wag going!

2. Maybe you're at the place where you will **not believe** unless Christianity passes your battery of scientific tests.

3. **But...**you believe in things you **can't see** all the time!

a) *Have you ever seen a germ with your naked eye?* Yet you don't walk around licking hand rails.

b) *Have you ever seen electricity?* Yet you won't touch a bare copper wire!

N. **How great the anguish** of Thomas during that week. Tossing between *hope & fear*. **And** seeing on the other 11 faces the light which he cannot share!

O. Yet, how *tenderly* Jesus deals with our **doubts & unbelief**.

1. Jesus *came & complied* with the conditions that Thomas' poor faith laid down.

2. Jesus was *set on winning* this **1-poor-starving-soul** to Himself & blessedness.

P. (28) I think it's *unlikely* that Thomas took Jesus up on His invitation to touch.

1. Thomas hears that Jesus had knowledge of what He said & His willingness to meet it, were sufficient.

2. **My Lord & my God!** - all demands for proof forgotten.

Q. So for Thomas *seeing/proving was believing...* **but** to his discredit! - The greater blessing is to **not see & believe!**

1. **W/o faith it is impossible to please God.** Heb.11:6

R. **TRUSTING IS BELIEVING!** (29-31)

S. **Listen up...**this is our category today!

- T. **Blessed are those who have not seen** - **Blessed are those who believe**, even in the pitch black when no stars are shining; **Blessed are those who believe** even when the sun hasn't shone for days, but stays hidden behind the darkest blanket of clouds; **Blessed are those who believe** when there is no friendly voice amidst the crowd.
1. To **believe then** is to get very near the heart of Him who on the cross clung to the Father in the midnight darkness.
 2. **Trusting is believing. Relying on Jesus, blesses Him.**
- U. **Habakkuk** ends his letter with *a Hymn of Faith!*
1. His name means “*embrace/one who embraces/or clings.*”
 2. Habakkuk chooses to **cling firmly to God** regardless of what he sees before his eyes! (see 3:17-19)
 3. Here is one of the greatest confessions of faith!
 - a) **Though** Babylon comes to destroy; **Though** You send away your people; **Though** the bottom drops out of everything...**yet** I will trust in you!!!
 4. Had he **looked ahead** he would only see *the invading Babylonian army*;
Had he **looked within** he would only see *fear & trembling*;
Had he **looked around** he would only see *everything falling apart*;
But by **looking up by faith** he saw *God...& all his fears vanished!*
 5. To walk by **faith** means to focus on the **greatness & glory** of God!
- V. **God** became *Habakkuk's Strength, Song, & his Salvation!*
1. “*If my legs were shaking, I probably would be looking for a place to sit down... not bounding up the side of a mountain, like a deer!*”
 - a) The Lord gives us **bounding feet** so we can overcome the obstacles of life.
 - b) God doesn't always change the circumstances, **but He can change us to meet the circumstances!**
 2. **Faith** gives you the ability to stand sure-footed like a deer, & to be able to **run-swiftly & go higher** than ever before!
 3. **Like the eagle & like the deer, God made us for the heights!**
 - a) They both will go down into the **valley**, but that's not where **they live!** (us too!)
- W. (31) **That you may believe** that **Jesus is God**; that **you might have life!**
1. **Have you experienced that abundant life?**
- X. **Prayer:** *Blessed are those who do not hear...or see...or feel, or prove...& yet believe.*