

74. THE SHOW ME MAN (JOHN 20:24-29) 10/26/14
FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, ATCHISON, KS PASTOR LEE HENDON

THERE HAS BEEN A LOT OF THOMAS BASHING IN SERMONS & BIBLE STUDIES. ABOUT HIM BEING *THE DOUBTER* BUT NOTICE IT DOES NOT OCCUR IN THIS PASSAGE. NO ONE REALLY BEAT HIM UP FOR HIS SKEPTICISM. HE IS THE ALL TIME EXAMPLE OF THE **SHOW ME MAN** KIND OF GUY - I GOTTA SEE IT TO BELIEVE IT. THOMAS WAS VERY VISUAL IN HIS FAITH. WHO KNOWS MAYBE HE WAS FROM MISSOURI - *THE SHOW ME STATE*? SOME OF US IN THIS SANCTUARY ARE SHOW ME KIND OF PEOPLE - I AM.

ONE OF THE GREAT MOVIE LINES IS FOUND IN THE PAUL NEWMAN CLASSIC, *COOL HAND LUKE*. NEWMAN PLAYS A PRISONER IN A SOUTHERN WORK CAMP WHO NEVER QUILTS TRYING TO ESCAPE. EACH TIME HE IS RECAPTURED THE PRISON WARDEN GREETES HIM WITH THAT FAMOUS LINE, "*SON, WHAT WE HAVE HERE, IS A FAILURE TO COMMUNICATE.*" IT WAS A FAILURE TO COMMUNICATE THAT WE FIND IN THIS STORY ABOUT THOMAS. THE OTHER DISCIPLES **TOLD** THOMAS ABOUT JESUS' EARLIER APPEARANCE TO THEM - **TOLD HIM**, "WE HAVE **SEEN** THE LORD." WHY DID THEY BELIEVE, WELL, THEY HAD **SEEN** THE LORD. THEY WANTED THOMAS TO BELIEVE BASED ON WHAT THEY **TOLD** HIM. HE WAS SIMPLY SAYING THAT HE WAS JUST LIKE THEM - "JESUS SHOW ME, THEN I WILL BELIEVE." WHAT A HUGE LEAP OF FAITH IT TOOK TO MOVE FROM JESUS' CRUCIFIXION & BURIAL TO RESURRECTION! EMOTIONS ALL OVER THE PLACE! EVEN FOR US, EASY TO COMPREHEND CRUCIFIXION & BURIAL BUT THEN THAT LEAP OF FAITH TO RESURRECTION. **WOW!** EMOTIONS ALL OVER THE PLACE.

YOU WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT THOMAS WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE EASILY CONVINCED BY HIS COMRADES IN THE FAITH. HE HAD PRETTY MUCH LIVED WITH THOSE OTHER TEN DISCIPLES OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS. YOU CAN GET REALLY CLOSE AS A GROUP OVER THAT PERIOD OF TIME. TO HAVE BEEN FORGED TOGETHER BY THE AWESOME PRESENCE & POWER OF JESUS' MINISTRY & MIRACLES - **WOW!** HOW MUCH MORE COULD A PERSON WANT? BUT THOMAS WAS A SHOW ME KINDA GUY. NO AMOUNT OF VERBAL CONVINCING WOULD DO - THE EVIDENCE OF TEN WITNESSES SHOULD HAVE BEEN ENOUGH - MORE THAN ENOUGH FOR ANY COURT ROOM. BUT THOMAS WAS NOT MOVED - RIGHT STUBBORN ABOUT IT TOO! YOU EVER BEEN STUBBORN LIKE THAT?

A PASTOR OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CASA GRANDE, ARIZONA DESCRIBED HIMSELF AS "A PRESBYTERIAN BY EARTHQUAKE." HE EXPLAINED THAT HIS GRANDMOTHER, A STUBBORN BAPTIST, MOVED THE FAMILY FROM IOWA TO CALIFORNIA MANY YEARS AGO. A PRESBYTERIAN PASTOR VISITED HER & INVITED HER TO COME TO THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

"I AM A BAPTIST," HIS GRANDMOTHER SAID, "AND IT WILL TAKE AN ACT OF GOD TO GET ME TO CHANGE." WHILE THEY WERE VISITING, AN EARTHQUAKE SHOOK THE HOUSE. WHEN IT WAS OVER SHE TOLD THE PASTOR, "OKAY, I WILL JOIN." SHE HAD ASKED FOR AN ACT OF GOD TO GET HER ATTENTION & SHE GOT IT.

THOMAS ASKED FOR AN ACT OF GOD - FOR JESUS TO SHOW HIMSELF - & HE GOT IT! THEY WERE ONCE AGAIN SHUT UP IN THE HOUSE & JESUS MIRACULOUSLY PASSED THROUGH THE WALLS IN HIS RESURRECTED BODY - ONCE AGAIN SHOWING THEM & US THAT THE MOLECULAR STRUCTURE OF HIS RESURRECTED BODY WAS NOT THE SAME AS THE MOLECULAR STRUCTURE OF OUR PHYSICAL BODIES - - I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU - BUT THIS PHYSICAL BODY OF MINE SIMPLY WILL NOT PASS THRU THE DOORS OR WALLS OF THIS SANCTUARY. THERE WAS SOMETHING GREATLY DIFFERENT ABOUT JESUS' RESURRECTED BODY - BUT IT WAS STILL RECOGNIZABLE FOR THEIR BENEFIT & CARRIED THE SCARS FROM HIS CRUCIFIXION.

I IMAGINE THAT DURING THE EIGHT DAYS A'WAITING THAT THOMAS HAD THIS TREMENDOUS STRUGGLE GOING ON IN HIS LIFE. A STRUGGLE BETWEEN WHAT HE HAD SEEN (JESUS' DEATH & BURIAL) & WHAT HE HOPED FOR - TO SEE HIS RESURRECTED LORD. A HUGE STRUGGLE BETWEEN HIS MIND & HIS HEART - HOW GREAT A BATTLE GROUND CAN LIE BETWEEN THE TWO! HIS HEART & MIND HAD BECOME DARKENED BY THE STRIFE OF INDECISION & DOUBT. HE HAD BECOME PARALYZED & COULD NOT MOVE ON. SUCH A DARKENING DESPAIR CAN BECOME ITS OWN SYSTEM OF DEFEAT. EVERYBODY AROUND SAYS, "YOU CAN DO BETTER, JUST BELIEVE. YOU CAN DO IT, JUST TRUST GOD." LIKE THAT HELPS A LOT WHEN IT ACTUALLY CAN COMPOUND YOUR DILEMMA.

THEN OUT OF NOWHERE JESUS MIRACULOUSLY APPEARED IN THEIR MIDST. "**PEACE BE WITH YOU.**" BY HIS VERY SPOKEN WORD, JESUS CALMED THE TURMOIL CHURNING IN THOMAS' GUT. HE HAD HEARD THOSE WORDS CALM AN ANGRY SEA OF GALILEE, TAME THE EVIL SPIRITS OF LEGION, CALL A DEAD LAZARUS OUT OF HIS TOMB & MUCH, MUCH MORE. JESUS SPOKE WITH AN AUTHORITY & POWER THAT INVOKED ITS OWN DIRECTIVE - **PEACE** - PEACE BE WITH YOU. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN OVER A WEEK, THOMAS' SOUL WAS NOW AT PEACE. EIGHT DAYS PLUS THREE DOES NOT SEEM LONG, UNTIL YOU ARE THE ONE IN A LIVING HELL WHILE IT PASSES.

THEN JESUS PUT THOMAS TO THE TEST. OKAY, SHOW-ME-MAN, PUT YOUR FINGER IN MY HANDS, MY SIDE, MY FEET. THOMAS MUST HAVE BEEN EMBARRASSED THAT HIS DISBELIEF HAD BEEN REVEALED TO THE SAVIOR. AWKWARD TO EVEN BE IN THE PRESENCE OF THE SAVING LORD. SPOKE OUT BOLDLY FOR PROOF WHEN JESUS WAS NOT THERE - NOW THAT JESUS WAS THERE HE WISHED TO BE INVISIBLE - YET, **JESUS CALLED HIM OUT**. JUST LIKE HE CALLS US OUT - THIS HAPPENED FOR ALL US SHOW-ME KIND OF PEOPLE. PUT YOUR PLACE IN THAT OF THOMAS. JESUS NEXT TO US - PLACE YOUR FINGER - HERE, HERE & HERE. THROUGH OUR OWN FAITH WE PARTICIPATE WITH THE SHOW-ME-MAN. JESUS SHOWS US THRU THE CORRIDORS OF TIME & SPACE - THE GLORY THAT THOMAS NOW EXPERIENCED. ALLOW THAT GLORY TO FLOW INTO YOUR OWN FAITH.

THROUGH THE WITNESS OF THOMAS JESUS SHOWS US AGAIN & AGAIN - THRU THE EYES & TOUCH OF THOMAS - THAT HE HAD RISEN INDEED! "BE NOT FAITHLESS," JESUS SAID, "BUT BELIEVING." THOMAS GOT WHAT HE ASKED FOR & WAS MOVED TO FAITH, "MY LORD & MY GOD!" IT DOES NOT MATTER THAT THERE WERE EIGHT DAYS OR TWO THOUSAND YEARS, WHAT MATTERS IS THE

TIMELESS NATURE OF FAITH. JESUS IS WHO HE SAID HE IS OR NOT - THE SIMPLE CONFESSION OF "MY LORD, MY GOD" CONFIRMS THAT JESUS WAS MORE THAN A CARPENTER, MORE THAN A RABBI WHO LIVED LONG AGO - JESUS IS GOD'S SON. DO YOU NEED TO SEE? LOOK THRU THE EYES & TOUCH OF THOMAS. PUT YOURSELF IN HIS PLACE

THEN JESUS DECLARED, "BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HAVE NOT SEEN & YET BELIEVE." YEP THAT IS US'NS. JESUS CALLS US OUT TODAY - WHAT SAY YOU? HAVE YOU BELIEVED? BELIEVING IN WHAT IS NOT SEEN MEANS WE BEHAVE AS IF WE HAVE SEEN THRU OUR EYES OF FAITH. FAITH IS TAKING THE FIRST STEP EVEN WHEN WE DO NOT SEE THE WHOLE STAIRCASE. JESUS CALLS US OUT TO TAKE THAT FIRST STEP.

THERE MAY PERHAPS BE SOMEONE IN THIS ROOM FOR WHOM THIS SEEMS SO NOT REAL. SOMEONE IN THIS ROOM IS STILL MAKING LIFE DECISIONS AS IF THERE WAS NO SAVIOR FOR THEM. JESUS CALLS YOU OUT, "BLESSED ARE YOU WHO HAVE NOT SEEN & YET BELIEVE." GO AHEAD & BE LIKE THOMAS - HE IS THE PATRON SAINT OF ALL US SHOW ME KIND OF MEN & WOMEN.