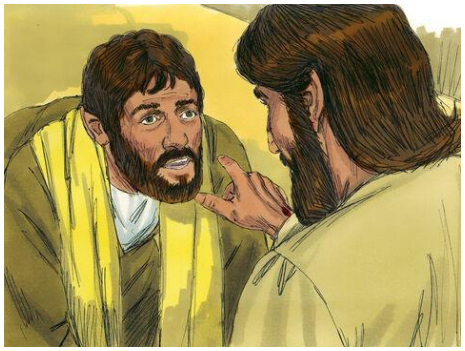
DOUBTING THOMAS John 20:24-29



I've been given this nickname:
Doubting Thomas.
It's hardly fair.
But I've a horrible feeling its going to stick and stay with me the rest of my life.
I've only done what you would probably have done.
Why have I been so condemned for disbelieving the impossible?
Perhaps, yes, I could have been more trusting.
But, watching from a safe distance, I saw him die, saw his body taken down, removed to a sepulchre.
Jesus was dead and buried.
Everyone knew just that.

And then Mary came and told us she had seen him, - indeed he'd spoken to her.
He just appeared to the other ten, suddenly, -through locked doors, he was there.
Flesh and blood can't do that.
I told them straight, - unless I could put my finger in the wounds in his hands, my hand in the hole in his side, I would not believe.
"Doubting Thomas" they all said.

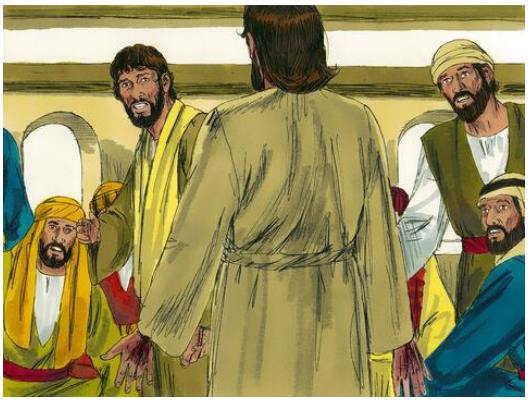
What do they expect? What would you have said?
Yes, I was there when he fed what must have been well over five thousand people with just a few loaves and fishes.
I was there when we were nearly sunk in the storm, - he just stood up and stilled the tempest, - and all the boats were suddenly safe.
He even once walked on the water to reach us in the middle of the sea.
I don't know how he did it.
I'd been with him three years, and I still don't understand.

People healed of all kinds of sickness;
The deaf, the dumb, - hearing, speaking normally, straightaway;
Those leprous as snow, suddenly with full flesh;
A withered arm stretched out, complete and whole.
And, yes, even the dead brought back to life!
That ruler of the synagogue's daughter, - she only twelve years old, - alive.
The widow's son at Nain, - being carried out on the bier: after a few words from Jesus, up he gets.
The impossible resurrection of Lazarus, - dead four days and half decomposed. Yet there he was coming out of the tomb in his graveclothes, set free, restored..
Yes, I saw and witnessed all of them.
Each one dead for longer than the one before.
But to resurrect yourself! When you've died, when you're dead, there's nothing to carry on,
no other help available.
That's it. The very end.

Alright, - I've used the word impossible for Lazarus. But looking back it's all been impossible.
Turned upside down everything I'd ever learned and expected.
How can I really believe what's happened.
More deeply, do I want to believe what's happened?

I look back over the three years.
Has it all been just a trick of the imagination? A dream in which I'm still taking part?
I know what I've seen but does that mean all those miracles were true? Dreams seem true…
I've been carried along with my friends, with the crowds.
I even said we would die with him when he returned to Jerusalem to wake Lazurus.
But then the capture, the trial, the cruel crucifixion. It was too much for most of us. When darkness fell, we knew it was the end.
When we heard a heavy stone had been rolled across his sepulchre I could take no more.
I cried and ran nowhere, and cried and cried.

What could I have done? What should I have done?



What is there to believe anymore?
We have gathered again together
I feel like a leper among these other ten disciples.
They are full of excitement.
They keep saying, “Jesus is risen. Jesus is risen”.
Is he though?
One of them cracks a joke, and they all laugh, looking at me.
Oh Jesus, if you really are there, please show yourself.
Help me believe.

The laughter suddenly stops.
I feel his presence, and tremble.
Dare I face this moment?

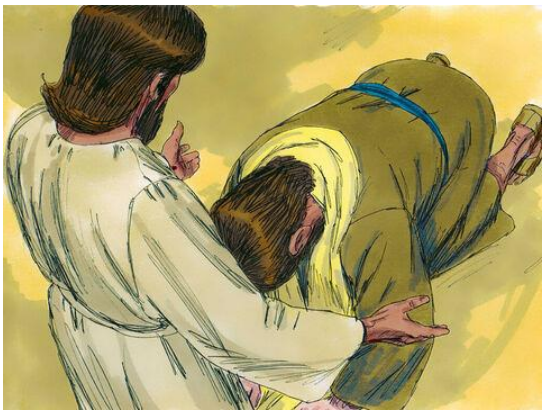
“Peace be unto you”

His words create the peace they speak of.
Memories return of his serenity, dominion.
But is this still a dream? I dare to look at him.
He looks at me, knowing my thoughts:

“Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing.”

I look at his outstretched hands, see the holes. He shows me his wounded side.
I feel the guilt again of not being with him, hear again the cheering crowd!
Remember once more my selfish tears of defeat.
What more proof do I need?
I stare at the holes in his hands, his hands and fingers somehow moving without restriction!
How is it possible? Is this really all true?
Is this just a further test to make me doubt what I can at this moment see?
His unchanged physical presence shouts out at me. What I had demanded. Jesus looks into my eyes with love.

I sink to my knees.
Three years flash before me; my whole life whips through my consciousness;
It’s going to change all over again.
This really is he. He’s done it.
Proved life everlasting, a life unrestricted by matter.
Proved what he’s always said.
The kingdom of God really *is* within you. Within me!
Not miracles, but divine revelations flood my being.
A reality I had been scared to accept, and dared not believe.



It <u>is</u> Jesus, right there in front of me! Resurrected in the flesh.
I have truly seen. Can I doubt any more?

“My Lord and my God”

Jesus puts his two hands further forward, seeking mine. His grip is warm, forgiving.
With love and understanding he lifts me up, both physically and symbolically.

“Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they which have not seen, and yet have believed”

Oh blessed indeed! Jesus is risen. He is alive!! Everything he has said is true!
I have seen and touched. No longer seeming dreams, but witness to Life, as Jesus knows it! He has shared and proved his reality, a kingdom no longer far off. Yes, here at hand. It is wonderful.

But, am I brave enough, confident enough, to go in?

Ken G Cooper March 2005/2021