

WE HAVE A TWIN IN THOMAS

(John 20: 19-31)

Intro: Have you ever wondered what it would be like to have a twin?

- Brother.

- Sister.

 - #Looks like you.

 - #Talks like you.

 - #Acts like you.

 - *That may be difficult for us to imagine.

 - *It may be even more difficult for:

 - +Family.

 - +Friends.

 - =To imagine.

 - +One of us is usually quite enough.

Thomas was a twin.

- Thomas.

 - #Hebrew.

 - #Aramaic.

 - *Means "twin."

- In the Gospel of John.

 - #Three times.

 - *John 11:16.

 - *John 20:24.

 - *John 21:2.

 - #Gospel writer identifies this member of the 12 disciples.

 - *Thomas called Didymos.

 - +Greek.

 - =Means "twin."

 - *It's like referring to Thomas as:

 - +The Twin called The Twin.

- Whose twin was he?

 - #We don't know.

 - *Scriptures never reveal the identity of Thomas' twin.

 - #Maybe that's just as well.

 - *I would like to suggest:

 - +Each of us think of ourselves as Thomas' twin.

 - =We are Thomas' twin.

 - =We have a twin in Thomas.

I. You Didn't Expect Your Twin To Be Perfect, Did You?

A. Thomas Was Sometimes A Little Slow Catching On.

1. John 14.

- a. Jesus was trying to prepare his disciples for his eventual departure.
- b. "In my Father's house are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go and prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the place where I am going."

-John 14:2-4.

2. Thomas raised his hand.

- a. He didn't get it.
- b. He didn't understand.
- c. He had a question.

"Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?"

#John 14:5.

3. Jesus responded.

- a. "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."
- b. John 14:6.

4. Thomas was a real blockhead, wasn't he?

- a. Or was he?
- b. Maybe we shouldn't be so hard on our twin.
- c. One thing you may have learned from my Bible classes.
 - There's no such thing as a dumb question.
 - Other people might be wondering the same thing.
 - You may never learn if you don't ask.
- d. To ask a question requires a certain amount of understanding.
 - When I went to buy my first computer.

#23-24-25 years ago.

-I didn't know a floppy disk from a hard drive.

#I didn't know enough:

*To ask an intelligent question.

*To know what I needed to know.

e. Thomas at least had the courage to admit he didn't know.

-As Thomas' twins.

#We do well to ask questions when we don't understand.

*At the 8:30 service, I invite questions.

*In our adult Bible class, I invite questions.

*In our 5x5x5 small group, I invite questions.

- f. Thomas wasn't alone in his confusion.
 - Philip chimed in:
 - # "Lord, show us the Father."
 - * John 14:8.
 - Jesus said:
 - # "Hey, what am I? Chopped liver?"
 - # "Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?"
 - * John 14:10.
 - # "You don't see because you don't believe."
 - * "Believing is seeing."
 - + Which brings us to the Gospel lesson for today.

B. Thomas Wanted Show and Tell.

- 1. He didn't want to believe until he could see.
- 2. It was Easter evening.
 - a. Disciples were behind locked doors for fear of the Judeans.
 - What we fear.
 - Who we lock out.
 - Why.
 - # Could be an entirely different sermon.
 - # We'll save that for another day.
 - b. But Thomas wasn't with them.
 - Was he more courageous than the others?
 - # That he wasn't behind locked doors.
 - Was he hiding somewhere else?
 - # We don't know.
 - c. Jesus came.
 - He spoke a word of "peace."
 - He showed them his hands and his side.
- 3. When the others told Thomas that they had seen the risen Lord.
 - a. Thomas could have been the first person in the history of the world.
 - To respond in faith.
 - # To the Easter proclamation.
 - * Of our Lord's resurrection.
 - b. But he didn't.
 - He wanted Show and Tell.
 - # "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe."
 - * John 20:25.

4. That's our twin.
 - a. One who wants something tangible to put his hands on.
 - b. Not so different from us.
 - We're all from Missouri, in a sense.
 - # "Show Me."
 - If the Shroud of Turin could be proven to be the burial cloth of Jesus.
 - # That it dates from the first century.
 - * Instead of the 13th or 14th century.
 - # That the image was indeed of Jesus.
 - # That the imprint was made in the process of resurrection.
 - * Wouldn't that prove that Jesus was raised from the dead?
 - If the tomb of Jesus could be reliably identified.
 - # In the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.
 - # Garden Tomb.
 - # Or some other tomb that was empty.
 - * Wouldn't that be evidence for Jesus' resurrection?
 - If Mary Magdalene had had:
 - # Digital camera.
 - # Cell phone with a built-in camera.
 - # Video camera.
 - If Eyewitness News had had a camera crew on the scene.
 - # At the grave.
 - # When Jesus made his appearances.
 - * Then we would have proof.
 - + That what we believe is true.
 - = It just wouldn't be faith anymore, would it?
 - c. Is Thomas so different from the other disciples?
 - When Jesus came to the other disciples.
 - # That first Easter evening.
 - * They had Show and Tell.
 - Why is Thomas singled out?
 - # Immortalized as "Doubting Thomas."
 - Is that any way to treat our twin?

II. Thomas Had His Good Points.

- A. Thomas Was A Believer.
 1. It took him awhile.
 2. He did want to have Show and Tell.

3. But once he encountered Jesus at the level of his suffering and death.
 - a. Nail holes.
 - b. Spear wound.
 - Thomas responds:
 - #Immediately.
 - #Magnificently.
 - *With a most marvelous confession of faith:
 - + "My Lord and my God."
 - = John 20:28.
 - One in whom Thomas believes.
 - #One who has experienced:
 - *Suffering.
 - *Death.
 - +Of the cross.
4. That's our twin.
 - a. It is not in any old one that we believe.
 - b. But in the one:
 - Who loved us enough.
 - #To give his life for us.
 - Who comes:
 - #To the Thomases of this world.
 - #To us.
 - *In our moments of doubt.
 - #With:
 - *Nail holes.
 - *Spear wound.
 - c. We can't check it out.
 - With Show and Tell.
 - d. In believing we see.
5. One overcast Easter morning.
 - a. I heard this on a radio station (KMOX) in St. Louis.
 - "You can't tell it by looking out the window, but the sun (son?) has risen."
 - b. Was the radio announcer?
 - Giving a weather forecast (sun).
 - Proclaiming the Easter Gospel (son).
 - Both.
6. With eyes of faith we see our Lord raised from the dead.
 - a. In bread and wine.
 - His body.
 - #Broken for us.
 - His blood.
 - #Shed for us.

- At the level of his suffering and death.
 - #We encounter our Lord.
 - *Believing we see.
 - *Seeing we believe.
 - b. In one another.
 - Witness of faith we make.
 - #To one another.
 - #With one another.
 - *When we profess our faith in the words of:
 - +Apostles' Creed.
 - +Nicene Creed.
 - =That's not so much for God's sake.
 - =That's for our sake.
 - Witness of faith we make.
 - #With one another.
 - #To one another.
 - *When you show up week after week.
 - +That's not only for your sake.
 - +That's for our sake.
 - =Witness of faith that you make.
 - Pinchas Lapide.
 - #Jew.
 - *Not a Christian.
 - #Believes that God raised Jesus from the dead.
 - *Why does he believe that?
 - +Because of Thomas.
 - +Because of the others who came to believe.
 - #In his book:
 - *The Resurrection of Jesus: A Jewish Perspective.
 - #Lapide writes:
 - *"When this scared, frightened band of the apostles which was just about to throw away everything in order to flee in despair to Galilee; when these peasants, shepherds, and fishermen, who betrayed and denied their master and then failed him miserably, suddenly could be changed overnight into a confident mission society, convinced of salvation and able to work with much more success after Easter than before Easter, then no vision or hallucination is sufficient to explain such a revolutionary transformation."
 - +P. 125.
- c. It is our twin Thomas who can show us the way.

- B. Thomas Was A Committed Follower of His Lord.
1. Remember the story of Lazarus?
 - a. Brother of Mary and Martha.
 - b. John 11.
 - Gospel from three weeks ago.
 2. Lazarus was deathly ill.
 3. Mary and Martha.
 - a. Sent word to Jesus.
 - b. Concerning his illness.
 4. Jesus was out of the country.
 - a. He had left Judea.
 - Crossed over the Jordan.
 - b. He had been threatened with:
 - Arrest.
 - Stoning.
 - #John 10: 31-42.
 5. When Jesus finally decided it was time to go back.
 - a. After delaying for two days.
 - b. His disciples protested.
 - “Are you nuts?”
 - “Have you forgotten what just happened over there?”
 - “Those people want to kill you.”
 6. Thomas took the lead.
 - a. Not Peter.
 - b. Not one of the other disciples.
 - c. But Thomas said to his colleagues.
 - “Come on, guys, let’s go back with him.”
 - “Let’s go, even if we have to die with him.”
 7. That’s our twin.
 - a. Willing to follow where his Lord would lead.
 - Even to death.
 - b. That’s where our Lord leads us, too.
 - Maybe not to the earthly death of persecution.
 - But in our death.
 - #To find life.
 - *Life through the one with:
 - +Nail holes.
 - +Spear wound.
 - #Believing we see.
 - *Seeing we believe.

Concl: Thank God for Thomas.

- Questioning.

- Doubting.

 - #At times.

- But faithful.

 - #Once he encountered the crucified one.

- Obedient to the end.

Everyone should have a twin like that.

