

## Title: **It's not too late!**

Text: John 20:19-29; Luke 24:45

Resurrection Sunday Message – Rock of Hope

### Introduction

Get Smart was a TV show in the 60s and made into a movie several years ago. Maxwell Smart is an agent who even though is inept in many ways, seems to always get the guy. Many times, when something goes seriously wrong in his attempt, he would say, “missed it by that much!”

- Basketball last seconds – the shot is missed – not the case in last night’s great win by Gonzaga.
- Building brought down and hits another building
  - Pontiac Silverdome – Detroit lions Dec. 2017
- Getting to the airport just a little late and missing your flight

Last year I missed being together on Resurrection Sunday. We had been two weeks into the lockdown no one was meeting or going to places. There was a shortage of hand sanitizer and toilet paper.

I gave a message in an empty church live streaming through FB to whomever might hear the message of Christ’s resurrection.

I missed the people. I missed the celebration. I missed the food and company we always share during that special time.

I had given a daily FB podcast on the Holy week, while everyone was cooped up in their homes.

We all missed many dynamics of the Day. But I know that many drew closer last year on good Friday as we all were in a every contemplative space.

Many people said they missed the Easter egg hunts, the big feast with all the family together.

Today, I want to talk to you about someone in the Bible who missed Resurrection Day.

But that the TRUTH of this passage and the words of Jesus can change your heart and thoughts. You see, you can be HERE today, on Resurrection Sunday, or watching online, still miss It.

Missing the day is not about missing a church service; it is about missing a personal experience with the risen Christ. To miss the day is to miss the meaning of the day- to miss the resurrection- to miss the real Jesus.

John 20:19-29 tells us a story of a disciple of Christ who missed it. Thomas, known to many of us as “**Doubting Thomas**” missed the appearance of Christ after His resurrection.

- You and I or any of the disciples who went through the same experience would have the same response.

Might I suggest to you a new name for Thomas..." **Missing Thomas.**"

**How about tardy Thomas?**

**How about honest Thomas?**

**The twin – ever feel like there is two of you?**

As a result, he missed Resurrection Sunday. What happens when you miss Resurrection Sunday?

## **1. When you embrace Resurrection Sunday, you gain an encounter with Jesus:**

### **John 20:19-24**

*<sup>19</sup> On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" <sup>20</sup> After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.*

*<sup>21</sup> Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." <sup>22</sup> And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup> If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." <sup>24</sup> Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came.*

Verses 19-23 describe a post-resurrection appearance of Jesus to His disciples. It was the Sunday evening after the crucifixion of Jesus. His disciples were scared and confused, they had locked themselves in a room in fear that those who had murdered Jesus would soon be looking for them.

All of a sudden, Jesus appears to His disciples. The Bible says that, "Jesus came and stood in their midst..." Notice this, Jesus was dead, they were scared, the doors were locked and Jesus appears to them! It's clear that he came into the room even while the doors were still locked.

They encountered Jesus. When you encounter Jesus...

And understand that like Thomas, if Jesus and His words are not ruling your heart and mind, you will miss these in your lives.

### **a) He gives you peace- 19-21a "peace be with you..."**

Christ can offer peace like you've never known. He provides peace that comes only from a right relationship with Jesus Christ. You know the appearance of Jesus must have brought peace to the disciples' troubled hearts. They were worried, confused, frustrated, heart-broken, afraid and upset. But the presence of Jesus had brought peace.

He showed them "His hands and His side" and the Bible says that the disciples "rejoiced when they saw the Lord."

## **b) He gives you meaningful purpose- 21b “as the Father has sent Me, I also send you...”**

Not only did Jesus offer peace, He also gave them a purpose. Now the Christ had been crucified and resurrected, He had a task and assignment for His followers. He commissions them to go and be “Jesus” to the world. He gave them a purpose and a commission. And this group of people turned the world upside down with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

## **c) He gives you power- 22 “receive the Holy Spirit...”**

Jesus then “breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’” In this powerful act, Christ provided the strength and power they needed to fulfill His commission and task.

## **d) He gives you relational practice- 23 “If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven;”**

He provided them with such power that they were able to preach and teach about the forgiveness of sins and salvation through Christ. He gave them a key to life in the power of forgiveness.

What an awesome encounter with Christ...the disciples were radically and eternally changed as a result of this encounter. They were transformed from fear to courage, from sorrow to joy and from hopelessness to purpose.

### **Thomas missed it!**

<sup>24</sup> *Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came.*

But the Bible simply says in verse 24, “Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came...”

In other words, He missed the encounter with Jesus. Thomas missed this incredible experience because ...he missed the truth of the resurrection of Christ.

And as a result, Thomas didn’t experience what they experienced; he didn’t encounter what they encountered. You see, when you miss the point of Easter- when you don’t understand the resurrection- you miss this!!

**Belief in the resurrection and the power of its meaning is essential to a true encounter with Christ!**

## Argumentation

There were at least five Resurrection appearances of Jesus on that first day of the week: to Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-18), the other women (Matthew 28:9-10), Peter (1 Corinthians 15:5, Luke 24:34), the two Emmaus disciples (Luke 24:13-32), and the disciples here in our story. And Thomas missed them all! He missed the encounter with Christ because He missed Easter...He missed the meaning of the resurrection.

## Illustration

Don't you hate the stories that begin with, "Man, you sure did miss it. Too bad you weren't there. There's no way to describe it. You just had to be there."

## Application

Have you had an encounter with the risen Lord? If so, it radically changes you from the inside out! But when you miss the truth and reality of the resurrection, you miss out on a true, personal encounter with Christ. That encounter brings peace, purpose, power and practice.

## 2. When you embrace Resurrection Sunday, you gain an experience in faith:

### John 20:25-29

*<sup>25</sup> So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."<sup>26</sup> A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"<sup>27</sup> Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."<sup>28</sup> Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"<sup>29</sup> Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."*

### a) You may struggle with faith and believing.

Notice what Thomas says in verse 24, "Unless I see...and [touch]...I will not believe..."

The Bible says that they **"were saying to him..."** or **"they told him."**

- This gives the indication that they kept on telling him over and over, yet he was unwilling to listen or believe.

He was so certain of Christ's death that he would not believe their report.

Thomas uses strong language here to say, **"I will not believe."**

- He says literally, I absolutely, positively will not accept this unless the conditions of my proofs are met.

- Unless- what would it take for you to believe
- Sometimes the strength of a praying grandma, stories placed on a Sunday school board is not enough when we face the problems we live with in adult life.
- You see, some of you have heard the reports of others about what Christ has done for them...
- yet you still doubt. Only God can change your heart and mind.
- That's exactly what He did for Thomas.
- Yet Thomas missed the chance to live in true faith and accept the testimony of those who had seen Christ.

### **b) Jesus will meet you right where you are.**

- A special appearance from Jesus to Thomas
- "Stop doubting and believe."
- Thomas had unbelief – He know what he had said, and He provided the proof that Thomas longed for.
- You see, God is not hiding from you, He is not afraid of your questions.
- But Thomas missed an experience in faith because he had to have proof.
- Thomas wasn't the only one who missed an event. Jesus was late to Lazarus death. – Sometimes you can learn from God in his absence as you do in His presence. Jesus wept – You are God. You're supposed to dry tears not cry tears.
  - We want to define God and ourselves by our worse moment – what if God does not heal

### **c) Place your faith in Christ**

- notice how Thomas responded, once he realized that Christ was really risen from the dead.
- He proclaimed, "**My Lord and my God.**" This is the strongest statement in any of the gospels to the deity of Christ.
- The greatest proclamation comes from the greatest doubter
- He is Lord and He is God, but notice this, Thomas makes it personal! He is my Lord and my God!
- Stop becoming an unbeliever and become a believer.
- You are more than your labels and past
- Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. Luke 24:45

### **Belief in the resurrection and the power of its meaning is essential to a true assurance of faith!**

- God is to be experienced through faith.
- That's the way He has designed life to work. We know Him, experience Him and follow Him through faith.
- Yet Thomas missed the experience of faith because he demanded proof.

IL- \*Jesus family tomb- not one serious archeologist backed up, in fact, they deny it; not even the Jewish archeologist that excavated the tomb itself.\*

## **Application**

You see, for Thomas to doubt meant:

- that he had forgotten the words of the prophets in the OT,
- he had forgotten the teachings of Christ Himself,
- he ignored the experience of others and still didn't believe.

And the truth is, that we ignore all those same signs today.

- to disbelieve what the Bible so clearly teaches.
- We ignore the prophecies in the OT,
- discount the teachings of Christ and
- dismiss the experience of others and demand the scientific method to prove God "I must see/touch to believe."
- We can't grasp the peace that He brings
- The Purpose He gives
- The Power he gives
- The Practice of forgiveness

You might say, Jesus is a prophet, a teacher, a good man, - you missed it by that much!

You might say you believe in Jesus, that he is the son of God... or that he is God – The devil knows this to be true as well, the demons know this to be true. It is not enough – you are missing it by this much.

Don't miss this opportunity to believe in Christ through faith. God will meet you right where you are and change your life! Then you can say with Thomas, "My Lord and my God."

## **Conclusion**

Don't miss Easter! Don't miss the reality of the resurrection, the life-filling power of the empty tomb and the risen Christ who stands ready to bring new life to your heart.

You can be HERE today, but still be a million miles away from experiencing Easter. It's not a Sunday service; it's a change of life!