

Jn20:24 Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.

20:25 The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

20:26 And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!"

20:27 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."

20:28 And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

20:29 Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

20:30 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book;

20:31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

[From today's sermon.

Again the disciples had firmly closed the door. They were still in fear.

This passage often speaks of the unbelief and conversion of Thomas, but it is clear that the other disciples were no better.

Thomas was in a situation where he had missed meeting the Risen Lord because he had not been present at the meeting, and he was in agony because he could not take the testimony of the other disciples that they had met the Risen Lord at face value and believe it. Perhaps it was the pressure from the witnesses to believe what he had heard that made his heart harden, or perhaps it was his nature, but he declared that he would not believe unless he saw with his own eyes, even if he had to put his hand in the Lord's wound to confirm it. He said that he would not believe unless he put his fingers in the nail marks on the Lord's palms and his palms in the side of his hands. If the Lord were here, He would be too afraid to do such a thing. However, the reason why he would not believe unless he went that far may be because he had seen the other disciples who were still afraid of him even though they had seen him.

In any case, the Lord appeared to them again and stood in the middle. The Lord hears Thomas' words and tells him that he can do as he likes until you believe. Thomas bows down (as he probably would have done). Our Lord and our God is always with us.

This is the last service of April. I hope you are busy with the Golden Week holidays, with

families returning home, rice planting, and so on.

Today, I would like to read from the Word of God about the disciples going through the time between the Lord's resurrection and Pentecost.

20:24 Thomas, one of the twelve disciples, who is called Dedmon, was not with them when Jesus came.

20:25 When the other disciples said to him, "We have seen Him," Thomas said to them, "I will never believe until I see the nail prints on His hands and put my finger into His nail prints and my hand into His side.

20:26 After eight days Jesus' disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. All the doors were shut, but Jesus entered and stood inside, saying, "Peace be to you.

Here comes Thomas, one of the 12 disciples.

Here we are told of his unbelief and conversion, and even after eight days, even though he saw the Lord's resurrection, stood in the center of them, blew on them, encouraged them, ate the fish and the Lord showed Himself to them, and even though the Lord said, I will send you, and whosoever sins are forgiven, go, the door was still closed and locked as before. I think that the other disciples, who were afraid of their fellow Jews, were no better than the other disciples. Thomas originally saw Jesus going to a village in Bethania, only three kilometers east of Jerusalem, without fear of persecution, as mentioned in John 11 below. He even said, "Let us go and die with Him.

John 11:1 Now there was a certain sick man. Lazarus, a man of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.

11:2 This Mary was a woman who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped His feet with her own hair; and sick was her brother Lazarus.

11:3 The sisters sent a man to Jesus, saying, "Lord, just now one whom you love is sick.

11:4 When Jesus heard it, He said, "This sickness is not as though he were dying. It is for the glory of God, and that the Son of God may be glorified by it."

11:5 Jesus loved Martha and her sisters and Lazarus.

11:6 When He heard that Lazarus was sick, He stayed where He was still longer.

11:7 Then He said to His disciples, "Let us go again to Judea.

11:8 The disciples said, "Teacher, the Jews were about to stone you to death just now, and you are going there again?"

11:9 Jesus answered, "Is there not twelve hours in a day? If you walk in the daytime, you will

not stumble. 11:10 But if he walks by night, he will not stumble; for he sees the light of the world.

11:10 But if he walks by night, he stumbles. For there is no light in him.

11:11 So He said, and then again He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus is sleeping, and I am going to wake him up. I am going to wake him up.

11:12 And the disciples said, "Lord, if he is asleep, he will be saved.

11:13 Jesus said that Lazarus was dead, but the disciples thought He meant that he was asleep and at rest.

11:14 Then Jesus bluntly said to them, "Lazarus is dead.

11:15 And I rejoice for your sake that I was not there. 11:15 And I rejoice for your sake that I was not there, that you may believe. Then let us go to him.

11:16 Then Thomas, who is called Dedmon, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go and die with our teacher.

Therefore, if he would go so far as to release the extraordinary words that he himself would not believe unless he inserted his finger into the nail-pierced wound of the Lord and his palm into that deep wound in his side, then look firmly, and those who met him were then as fearful as ever, If the disciples were as fearful as ever afterward, it is thought that he was compelled to say so by watching the other disciples, that such a thing was just an illusion, that they were just thinking that they had met the Lord, but in fact they had not.

Why was Thomas not with the disciples on the day of the resurrection? We have no way of knowing. We do not know why Cleopas and the other disciple left Jerusalem on that day to go to Emmaus, away from the fellowship of the other disciples, where they were in the midst of an argument.

The resurrected Jesus stood in their midst many times. Yes, Jesus was and still is in the midst of his disciples, of those who believe in him. But there are times when I am uninformed and my conviction wavers as to whether that Jesus is really in the middle of the church and whether He is in the middle of my whole being.

In the midst of such a fellowship of disciples, Thomas clearly wanted to confirm that most important thing with all his powers of observation and reason. He was even angered that the others had seen it and were not at all clear afterwards, and he vowed that he would confirm it clearly and, when he had done so, he would then risk his life without any hesitation at all.

20:25 When the other disciples said to him, “We have seen the Lord,” Thomas said to them, “I will never believe until I see the prints on his hands and put my finger into his prints and my hand into his armpit.

I believe that this extraordinary process of his confirmation is the reverse of his extraordinary determination to confirm that it is indeed Jesus and to believe in Him, and once he has done so, he will go forward without hesitation.

We don't often push ourselves that far, do we? Even when we pray and pray because we are disappointed if it doesn't come true, we probably limit our requests to the extent that they are feasible. Just as when we ask our parents for a gift, we consider their financial situation and make a request that is feasible and just enough to be heard, do we not make such an insured request to God?

But Thomas did not think about whether or not he would be disappointed if the vision fizzled out; he continued to ask Jesus to the point of touching His substance. He continued to seek Jesus to the point where he could touch His substance, and if there was no substance, he was done with Him.

20:26 After eight days Jesus' disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. All the doors were closed, but Jesus came in and stood inside and said, “Rest.

Then a week passed. The disciples are afraid to close the doors again. Thomas is with them this time, perhaps on Sunday, a week after the day of the resurrection, and his eyes are wide open with the thought that this is the time.

Jesus stands in the middle of them again. And just like the previous week, He says, “Peace be with you. He is in the middle of the church, in the middle of our whole being, and He prays for peace, peace, and harmony there. Without the Lord in the center, there is no peace, peace, or harmony. The world today is a testament to this. No matter how powerful a group of people may seem to be, it is futile if the Lord is not in the center.

20:27 Then He said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and look at My hand. Stretch out your hand and put it in my side. Do not be an unbeliever, but a believer.

The Lord was deeply listening to what Thomas was saying, to his desire and prayer to be reunited with the real Jesus, to confirm his faith more deeply than anyone else, and then to offer his life to the Lord.

The Lord asked him to put his finger into the wound in his hand that had been pierced, to put his palm into the armpit where he had been split, and to confirm and be convinced. But the Lord said, "Don't be one who doesn't believe.

But the Lord said, "Do not be unbelievers, but be believers.

This is a powerful message from the Lord to us today.

Don't be unbelievers, but believers.

Don't be unbelievers, but believers.

Don't be unbelievers, but believers.

Whether we see it or not, whether we are led or not, whether we are told or not, a black cloud always immediately springs up in our hearts. But Jesus tells us, "Do not become unbelievers, but become believers.

Do not be unbelievers, but believers."

20:28 Thomas answered Jesus, saying, "My Lord and my God!

20:29 Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen Me? Blessed is he that believeth not seeing.

Let us together give thanks for the courage and faith of Thomas, who came to the Lord for our faith, and let us also come forward to the Lord with courage and faith, believing and bowing down, and confessing together with thanksgiving and admiration.

My Lord and my God.

My Lord and my God.

My Lord and my God.

The Lord is before us as we bow down. In the center of this church, in the center of our reality, He certainly lives.

Blessed are those who believe without seeing. If this testimony is enough for us, if Thomas

has so thoroughly confirmed the Lord on our behalf, isn't it enough for us to have this record?
And we can believe without seeing it, can't we?

20:30 Jesus performed many other signs before His disciples that are not written in this book.

20:31 But I have written these things so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing so, you may have life in His name.

'I have written these things that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing so, you may have life in His name.'

To believe in Jesus, My Lord and My God. Believing in His words and works, believing that the living Jesus is the One who overcomes all our difficulties and brings us salvation, the God of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the One who gives us eternal life, we wish to be those who believe, hope, pray, testify and act for forgiveness sent by the Lord.

◇Prayer; Heavenly Father, thank you for today's worship. The disciples were fearful of turning away from faith in either direction, but Jesus patiently led them to believe so that they could believe and have life. Thank you so much for leading us to continue to believe, to believe without seeing. Please guide all sufferers into God's salvation and peace. Please bless our families and the people in our community. We pray in the name of the Lord Jesus. Amen.