

Dear Friend on the journey with Christ!

From Normal to Healthy

Thomas was not with the disciples when Jesus first appeared to them, so he doubted their story, saying *"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."*

When Jesus appears to the disciples again, he obliges Thomas, and says to Thomas, *"Stop doubting and believe."* And Thomas believes.

I think it is normal to have doubts and uncertainty about any reality or idea that cannot be proven scientifically or rationally. Our Enlightenment heritage encourages us to ask questions and "test everything." Who is ever completely certain about these realities? We certainly want to avoid the arrogant attitude that some display as they share all the (questionable) "truth" they have discovered.

When Jesus told Thomas to stop doubting and believe, I don't think he was reprimanding or shaming Thomas. It feels to me like Jesus was encouraging Thomas to choose faith (even in what he couldn't see) because faith is how we join God in the renewal of all things! Faith is the channel through which Jesus' love and power can work.

It's spiritually "normal" to doubt and question and be skeptical of what we cannot fully prove. I think Jesus invited Thomas and is inviting us to move from a normal type of spirituality to a more vibrant, alive spirituality that we gain by choosing to believe.

Jesus expressed that there is a special blessing (joy, happiness, satisfaction, spiritual aliveness) for *"those who have not seen and yet have believed."*

Peter wrote later: *"Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls."*

For Thomas, seeing was believing. It could be said that for us, believing is seeing. So, let's heed Jesus' invitation to stop doubting and believe! We need faith if we're going to see God's kingdom come in our relationships, our families, the church, our neighborhoods, our country, our world.

Let's grow beyond a "normal" type of spirituality and engage (by faith) the more vibrant, alive, "healthy" spirituality that the living Christ is offering to us!

With much love,