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OUT WITH DOUBT

Many people prefer to believe comfortable lies rather than be faced with uncomfortable truth. "*Deceive me, don't disturb me.*" In John 20, the disciple Thomas was a doubter. Seeing was believing. But when he came face to face with the risen Jesus, all doubt disappeared.

There was Jesus, resurrected, alive! In verse 27, Jesus says "**do not disbelieve, but believe.**" Stop doubting, and believe. Thomas did just that. He says to Jesus, "**My Lord and my God.**" With this one phrase Thomas goes from classic skeptic to world-class believer. It is an astounding testimony of faith. He uses the Greek words that recognize Jesus as the LORD God of the Old Testament, and the New Testament's ultimate expression of the one true GOD. It's an echo of John 1:1 - Jesus IS God.

Thomas personalized this with MY Lord and MY God, an unusual yet exemplary confession that some theologians call the clearest highest profession of faith anywhere in Scripture. And Jesus accepts his worship, because He IS God - worthy of all faith and worship and obedience and love and trust.

Thomas expresses personal faith not just in the resurrection of Jesus, but in His divine identity. He is the risen LORD GOD. Perhaps Thomas had been paying attention after all, in John chapters 1-19, where Jesus expressed His words and works to demonstrate His divinity. And today, after three years of following Jesus as a disciple, Thomas truly believed. When did YOU believe?

Jesus answers, "**Have you believed because you have seen Me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.**" He's talking about YOU and me here, as He prayed in John 17:20. All the disciples saw and heard Jesus' words and works. But we didn't. We believe THEIR eyewitness testimony. Are YOU a believer like Thomas, in Jesus Christ as LORD and GOD? If so, like Thomas, that's the work of the Holy Spirit, applying His truth to your heart and mind and will. He has regenerated you from spiritual death to life, rescuing you from the darkness of unbelief into the light of His truth and grace.

"Blessed" here means not just great happiness or joy, but being spiritually blessed by God - having received the undeserved favor and grace of God. That's what overcomes doubts and fears and skeptics and rebellion against God. That's the reason John wrote his gospel - so YOU will believe, like Thomas.

He writes, "**now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book.**" John chose a few representative signs - turning water into wine, feeding the 5,000, healing the lame and blind, raising the dead, and then His own resurrection. Things only God can do.

In verse 31 John declares, "**but these things are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.**" Jesus is the personal name of the real person. Christ is His title, denoting His mission to save His people from their sins. Son of God is His divine identity. Not just a miracle-worker or great teacher. God Himself, risen from the dead.

Romans 10:9 says "*if YOU confess with your mouth, Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.*" This is not just an intellectual exercise, or assent to facts. It is believing with your whole being, mind, heart, will - being born again by the Holy Spirit. 1 Peter 1:18 says "*though you do not now see Him, you believe in Him and rejoice with joy inexpressible, full of glory.*"

The change from doubter to believer is a supernatural change - that transforms your whole life, forever. You not only receive the spiritual resurrection life of Jesus, but also His mission. You now help others come to faith, so that for them too, "believing will be seeing." Walking by faith, not sight.

Doubts are common, and must be overcome with faith. Doubts are often due to errors in thinking about God and His Word and His promises. But God is faithful. He does fulfill His promises. You can trust His Word. Only as you trust and obey Him, will you experience the blessedness of believing in Him - abundant life here and now, which lasts forever with Him. Doubt is daily. But you choose to believe.

Facts strengthen faith. The more you understand God's Word, the stronger your faith. The more you experience His truth in your life, the stronger your faith as you trust and obey. Feelings follow faith. Begin by believing what God says about Jesus is true - this is how you "**have LIFE in His name.**"