



*Chris Gaskill*  
Second Sunday of Easter  
April 11, 2010

*Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me?  
Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."  
(John 20:29)*

I read and researched and read again trying to decide what I wanted to say about this incredible statement Jesus made. Of course we all remember doubting Thomas and the story from which this passage comes, but in the midst of my thoughts my mother called and asked a favor of me. She was asked at her church to write a small paragraph on "What Easter means to me" Apparently they were going to use it in their monthly newsletter and have an older person and a young person submit articles in contrast to one another. My mother hesitantly agreed to do this. She said to me she knew in her heart how she felt but didn't think she could say it in words and on paper. She asked me to help her write it. I was willing to assist her but I reminded her that what she was saying was about what Easter meant to her and I'm sure she didn't want my words for then it would be about my feelings and not hers.

I'm going to stop right here and go back to doubting Thomas. Doubt is no stranger to any of us and I think Jesus did not hold Thomas' doubts against him just as he does not hold our doubts against us. Many of us have behaved like Thomas from time to time letting doubts creep in and overshadow faith but we should not be discouraged. Our human frailty is something the Lord understands, confronts and ultimately defeats. I'm sure that Thomas is remembered by many as a doubter, but I believe it is his faith that Jesus recalls. Thomas went instantly from disbelief in a resurrected Savior to certain knowledge that Jesus was not only alive but that He was also Lord and God. When confronted with the living truth, all doubts fled. The darkness of the tomb gave way to the Light of the World!

Now back to my Mom's story. After she had written a few things down she finally had her thoughts together and what follows is what I believe is a simple statement of faith.

#### **What Easter means to me! By Joan Venella**

Having been blessed by being raised in a Christian home, I was taught at an early age the story of Easter. Never quite understanding it then, I still had a great compassion for the sacrifice that Jesus had to make.

As I was growing up, Lent in our family (and eventually with my own family) was very important. Traditionally during Holy Week we mourned... no radio, no parties....it was like losing a member of my family. Very solemn, however I knew it was of extreme importance. Later in my own family we weren't quite as solemn, however we set aside time for weekly family prayer and devotion.

I have always loved listening and learning the beautiful message of salvation although always saddened by the reminder of our dear Savior's sacrifice. But I am full of hope because He made that sacrifice for me and for the world.

I will never be able to thank and praise God enough for this wonderful gift of salvation that has seen me through troubles and through good times. I pray that I may show my love for Him in every word, action and deed for this is God's story of Love --- that Jesus gave His life so that I might have life and have it abundantly. Praise God!!

Today, belief in Jesus is still transforming. But what He did for Thomas, He will do for Christians today. Jesus used his doubting disciple to teach a lesson. In that verse alone, the Savior gave Thomas and the world a concise definition of simple faith believing without seeing. Though we are all doubtful at times, I believe that like my mother, our faith transforms us into believers. Thomas represents the transformation that knowing Christ can make in one's life. Before the resurrection, he had been a follower of Jesus. After the resurrection, he became a believer in Jesus, and that belief transformed his life.

The Lord always keeps His promises and He always does what He says He will do. This story, it seems, is not about doubting or questioning, but about "the grounds of faith". "Jesus urges Thomas to move from a position of unbelief to belief" and gives him what he needs to accomplish this just as he will for all of us.

The Lord is not merely the Redeemer, not only my Redeemer, not only your Redeemer -- He is OUR Redeemer! For the Word of hope and promise is not restricted to those who saw Jesus with their own eyes, but also for those, like you and me, who have not yet seen Him.

That You May Believe: "*And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 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.*" (John 20:30-31 NKJV)