

CITYWEST CHURCH

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STEWARDED RESURRECTION PART 2

TOUCHING RESURRECTION

4 One of the twelve disciples, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin),^[c] was not with the others when Jesus came. **25** They told him, “We have seen the Lord!”

But he replied, “I won’t believe it unless I see the nail wounds in his hands, put my fingers into them, and place my hand into the wound in his side.”

26 Eight days later the disciples were together again, and this time Thomas was with them. The doors were locked; but suddenly, as before, Jesus was standing among them. “Peace be with you,” he said. **27** Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don’t be faithless any longer. Believe!”

28 “My Lord and my God!” Thomas exclaimed.

29 Then Jesus told him, “You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me.”

John 20:4-29 (NLT)

The faith of Thomas becomes the climax of the Gospel of John; more can be said, but it is the doubt and response of Thomas that is left on.

Throughout the Gospel of John, Jesus has triumphed over sickness, sin, evil men, death, and sorrow. Now with Thomas, Jesus conquered unbelief.

Thomas, known as doubting Thomas, is not just wrestling with a few emotions; he has made the claim that unless I get proof, I won’t believe.

Even as disciples he has walked with for years try to tell him the truth of the resurrection, he makes it clear he won’t believe until he sees.

But what Jesus does with Thomas doesn’t just alleviate doubt, it reveals the new world God is building.

1. JESUS MEETS HONEST DOUBT.

They told him, “We have seen the Lord!”

But he replied, “I won’t believe it unless I see the nail wounds in his hands, put my fingers into them, and place my hand into the wound in his side.”

John 20:25 (NLT)

Thomas often gets labelled “doubting Thomas.”

But if we’re honest—he’s just saying out loud what many of us feel quietly.

He doesn’t want blind faith.

He wants real, embodied, tangible truth.

Jesus doesn’t reject him. Jesus meets him.

Eight days later, Jesus comes back, specifically for Thomas.

Frederick Buechner writes:

“Doubts are the ants in the pants of faith—they keep it awake and moving.”

Thomas’ doubt wasn’t the end of his faith, it was the doorway to a deeper one.

2. RESURRECTION IS PHYSICAL, NOT JUST SPIRITUAL

Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don’t be faithless any longer. Believe!”

John 20:27 (NLT)

Jesus doesn’t just appear—He invites touch.

Why?

Because the resurrection is not an idea. It’s not just a spiritual feeling.

It is physical, embodied, real. The risen Jesus still has scars.

That means:

- *The material world matters*
- *The body matters*
- *Creation matters*

N. T. Wright says:

“The resurrection affirms the goodness of the created world and God’s commitment to redeem it—not abandon it.”

This pushes against how many of us think.

We often assume:

- *Spiritual = good*
- *Physical = temporary or less important*

At this point, it’s important we name something that has shaped thinking for centuries—often without us realising it.

*There’s an ancient belief called **Gnosticism**.*

At its core, Gnosticism taught that:

- *The spiritual is good*
- *The physical is bad*
- *Salvation is about escaping the material world*

But this is not Christianity.

In fact, the early church strongly rejected this as heresy.

Why? Because the gospel tells a completely different story:

- God **created** the material world and called it good (Genesis 1)
- Jesus **became flesh** (John 1:14)
- Jesus was **physically resurrected**
- And God's plan is to **renew creation**, not abandon it (Romans 8:21)

Irenaeus of Lyons, one of the early defenders of Christian truth, wrote against Gnosticism saying:

“The glory of God is a living man; and the life of man consists in beholding God.”

In other words—

God is not against the physical world. He is committed to redeeming it.

So when Jesus invites Thomas to touch His wounds—

He is not just proving He's alive...

*He is declaring that **resurrection is physical, embodied, and restorative.***

But the resurrection says: God is not scrapping creation—He is restoring it.

Abraham Kuyper famously said:

“There is not a square inch in the whole domain of human existence over which Christ... does not cry: ‘Mine!’”

That includes:

- *Your work*
- *Your home*
- *Your body*
- *Your city*
- *Your everyday life*

3. JESUS REDEEMS, HE DOESN'T DISCARD

Think about this:

Jesus could have come back without scars.

Perfect. Untouched. Untarnished.

But He didn't. He chose to carry the marks of crucifixion into resurrection.

Why?

Because resurrection is not the erasing of history, it is the redeeming of it.

Jürgen Moltmann writes:

“The risen Christ is the crucified Christ. His wounds are not removed—they are transformed.”

This is deeply personal.

It means:

- *Your past is not wasted*
- *Your pain is not meaningless*
- *Your story is not over*

God doesn't discard broken things. He restores them.

And not just spiritually, but in real, tangible ways.

4. SEEING RESURRECTION IN THE MATERIAL WORLD

“My Lord and my God!” Thomas exclaimed.

John 20:28 (NLT)

Thomas' declaration is not just belief, it's surrender.

His eyes are opened.

And suddenly—he sees reality differently.

This is where it lands for us:

If resurrection is real, then God's redemption is breaking into the real world.

Not just heaven someday, but earth, now.

Alister McGrath says:

“The resurrection is the pledge that God will renew all things, not abandon them.”

So where do we look?

We look for signs of resurrection in:

- *Restored relationships*
- *Acts of justice and mercy*
- *Beauty, creativity, and work*
- *Healing, growth, and renewal*

These are not random good moments.

They are echoes of resurrection.

5. BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO LIVE BY FAITH—IN THE REAL WORLD

Then Jesus told him, “You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me.”

John 20:29 (NLT)

Jesus is speaking about us.

We don't physically see Him, but we are called to live as if resurrection is true.

Not in theory. But in practice.

Dallas Willard said:

"The greatest issue facing the world today is whether those who identify as Christians will become disciples."

And disciples live differently.

They:

- *See purpose in the ordinary*
- *Bring hope into broken spaces*
- *Live with confidence that God is at work*

CONNECT GROUP QUESTIONS

Where are you pretending to have faith instead of bringing your honest doubt to Jesus?

Have you reduced your faith to something internal—while ignoring God's redemption of the physical world?

Where have you assumed God wants to remove something—when He actually wants to redeem it?

Are you training your eyes to see where God is restoring the world around you?

Does your everyday life reflect belief in a risen, redeeming Jesus?