

THE EASTER BEATITUDE
John 20:24-29
Banska Bystrica, 5th April 2015

<p>John 20:24-29 Θωμᾶς δὲ εἷς ἐκ τῶν δώδεκα, ὁ λεγόμενος Δίδυμος, οὐκ ἦν μετ' αὐτῶν ὅτε ἦλθεν Ἰησοῦς. ²⁵ ἔλεγον οὖν αὐτῷ οἱ ἄλλοι μαθηταί· ἑώρακάμεν τὸν κύριον. ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ἐὰν μὴ ἴδω ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν αὐτοῦ τὸν τύπον τῶν ἥλων καὶ βάλω τὸν δάκτυλόν μου εἰς τὸν τύπον τῶν ἥλων καὶ βάλω μου τὴν χεῖρα εἰς τὴν πλευρὰν αὐτοῦ, οὐ μὴ πιστεύσω. ²⁶ Καὶ μεθ' ἡμέρας ὀκτῶ πάλιν ἦσαν ἔσω οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ Θωμᾶς μετ' αὐτῶν ἔρχεται ὁ Ἰησοῦς τῶν θυρῶν κεκλεισμένων καὶ ἔστη εἰς τὸ μέσον καὶ εἶπεν· εἰρήνη ὑμῖν. ²⁷ εἶτα λέγει τῷ Θωμᾶ· φέρε τὸν δάκτυλόν σου ὧδε καὶ ἴδε τὰς χεῖράς μου καὶ φέρε τὴν χεῖρά σου καὶ βάλε εἰς τὴν πλευράν μου, καὶ μὴ γίνου ἄπιστος ἀλλὰ πιστός. ²⁸ ἀπεκρίθη Θωμᾶς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ὁ κύριός μου καὶ ὁ θεός μου. ²⁹ λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· ὅτι ἑώρακάς με πεπίστευκας μακάριοι οἱ μὴ ἰδόντες καὶ πιστεύσαντες</p>	<p>John 20:24-29 Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe." ²⁶ Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." ²⁸ Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."</p>
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2Cor 5:16 εἰ καὶ ἐγνώκαμεν κατὰ σάρκα Χριστόν, ἀλλὰ νῦν οὐκέτι γινώσκομεν

2Cor 5:16 Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer.

Psalms 138:2b

תְּהַלַּלְתָּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ עַל-כִּפְּלֵי-שָׁמַיִם אֱמִנָּה

...Thou hast magnified Thy promise above all Thy Name.

[CALVIN]...thou hast magnified thy name above all things by thy word.

OUTLINE

0. INTRODUCTION: THE FAITH IN JESUS OF HISTORY AND THE RESURRECTION

- 0.1. THE POWER/WEAKNESS OF REASON
- 0.2. THE POWER OF THE WORD/TESTIMONY/PREACHING
- 0.3. THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT

1. THE BLESSINGS OF THE UNSEEN WORLD

- 1.1. KNOWLEDGE
- 1.2. IMAGINATION

2. THE BLESSINGS OF THE UNSEEN POWER

- 2.1. SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE
- 2.2. INWARD WITNESS

3. THE BLESSINGS OF THE UNSEEN FELLOWSHIP

- 3.1. INTIMACY
- 3.2. JOY

4. TO REMEMBER

0. INTRODUCTION: THE FAITH IN JESUS OF HISTORY AND THE RESURRECTION

- rationality vs. rationalism → source vs. hindrance to faith → “fear of faith” as a problem of the modern Christianity = we don’t want to neither have to be naïve
- faith – the way from visible reality (this world through the senses) to the *invisible* reality (the spiritual world of God *through His Word*)

0.1. THE POWER/WEAKNESS OF REASON

- scientism – "...the belief that science, in the modern sense of that term, and the scientific method as described by modern scientists, afford the only reliable natural means of acquiring such knowledge as may be available about whatever is real. ...It is understood, of course, that this procedure can never give rise to genuine certainty."¹
- "scientific" Jesus: 18th ct. Reimarus → 19th ct. David Strauss; Renan → 20th ct. Bultmann; Robinson → 21st ct. Crossan; Borg...
- [Lessing: *Über den Beweis des Geistes und der Kraft*] "Ein anderes sind Wunder, die ich mit meinen Augen sehe und selbst zu prüfen Gelegenheit habe; ein anderes sind Wunder, von denen ich nur historisch weiß, daß sie andere wollengesehen und geprüft haben. ... Aber ich, der ich auch nicht einmal mehr in dem Falle des Origenes bin, der ich in dem achtzehnten Jahrhunderte lebe, in welchem es keine Wunder mehr gibt; wenn ich anstehe, noch jetzt auf den Beweis des Geistes und der Kraft etwas zu glauben, was ich auf andere meiner Zeit angemessenere Beweise glauben kann, woran liegt es? ...**Zufällige Geschichtswahrheiten können der Beweis von notwendigen Vernunftwahrheiten nie werden.**"² ([*On the proof of the spirit and of power*] Miracles which I see with my own eyes, and have an opportunity to assess, are one thing; miracles of which I know only from history that others claim to have seen and assessed them are another. ...But if I, who am no longer even in Origen's position, who live in the eighteenth century in which miracles no longer happen, if I hesitate now to believe something because of the proof of the spirit and of power which I can believe on other kinds of evidence more appropriate to my time, why is this so?**contingent truths of history can never become the proof of necessary truths of reason.**)

[BAUCKHAM] At the beginning of the twenty-first century the quest of the historical Jesus flourishes as never before, especially in North America. ...Among current historical Jesuses on offer there is the Jesus of Dominic Crossan, the Jesus of Marcus Borg, the Jesus of N. T. (Tom) Wright, the Jesus of Dale Allison, the Jesus of Gerd Theissen, and many others.³

0.2. THE POWER OF THE WORD/TESTIMONY/PREACHING

- "Psychology of testimony" → more than "facts" → above description you get (1) interpretation, (2) personal attitude, (3) implications → doctrine, (4) guidance
- God's word → Ps 138:2; **Rom 1:16 I am not ashamed** of the gospel, for it is **the power**...
- **Dt 30:11-14** "For this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. ¹² It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' ¹³ Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' ¹⁴ **But the word is very near you.** It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it.
- **Rom 10:6-10** But the righteousness based on faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'"(that is, to bring Christ down) ⁷ or "'Who will descend into the abyss?'"(that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). ⁸ But what does it say? "**The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart**" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); ⁹ because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with **the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.**

[LLOYD-JONES] "Let us realise that the word of faith which is preached is a word which is nigh us, and even in our mouth. There is nothing we have to do but believe, as the Philippian jailor did. Let us never forget that 'the common people heard him [Christ] gladly'. Let us never forget what the Apostle says to the Corinthians: 'Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men. . . are called' [1 Cor. 1:26]. Thank God! We do not have to drag Him down or lift Him up. He has done it all! He has come; He has done the work; He has risen again. So that all you and I have to say is

*Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come!*

¹ WELLMUTH, J. J. *The Nature and Origins of Scientism*, Milwaukee : Marquette University Press, 1944, pp. 1, 4.

² LESSING, G. E. *Lessings Werke*, Salzburg : Das Bergland Buch, ??, p. 1037-39.

³ BAUCKHAM, R. *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, Grand Rapids : Eerdmans, 2006, p. 1&3.

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I do not understand fully - 'Many a conflict, many a doubt'. It does not matter. Go as you are, cast yourself upon Him, and He will receive you. Oh, the tragedy that the Jews were rejecting this and attempting the impossible!⁴

0.3. THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT

- the *word in power* (1Cor 2; 1Cor 4)
- **1Cor 2:4** ...and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in **demonstration** of the **Spirit and of power** (ἐν ἀποδείξει πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμεως)
- **1Cor 4:20** For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power (οὐ γὰρ ἐν λόγῳ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλ' ἐν δυνάμει)
- **1Thess 1:5** ...our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in **power** and in the Holy **Spirit** and with full conviction (ἐν δυνάμει καὶ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ [ἐν] πληροφορίᾳ πολλῇ,).
- **Heb 2:4** God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

1. THE BLESSINGS OF THE UNSEEN WORLD

- seeing – only physical reality
- **2Cor 4:18** ...For the things that are seen are transient (πρόσκαιρα), but the things that are **unseen** are eternal (τὰ δὲ μὴ βλεπόμενα αἰώνια).
- **Heb 11:3** By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.
- → awareness of the unseen realities

1.1. KNOWLEDGE

- Elijah and his servant (**2Ki 6:17** Then Elisha prayed and said, "O **LORD**, please **open his eyes** that he may see." So the **LORD** opened the **eyes** of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.)

1.2. IMAGINATION

- **Ps 16:8** I have set the LORD always before me (יְהוָה לְנֶגְדִי תָמִיד); because he is at my right hand...
- spiritual imagination (1Cor 2)
- **John 3:3** "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

What do you set before you? News, movies, fears? Or God and what He says in His Word?

2. THE BLESSINGS OF THE UNSEEN POWER

- seeing → forgetting (Out of sight, out of mind.)
- → ability of *reviving* the experience with words
- you can *remember* words (**John 15:7** If you abide in me, and **my words** abide in you...)

2.1. SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

- **James 1:18** Of **his** own will he brought us forth by the word of truth (βουληθεὶς ἀπέκύησεν ἡμᾶς λόγῳ ἀληθείας), that we should be a kind of firstfruits of **his** creation.
- **Gal 3:1-2** ...It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified (οἷς κατ' ὀφθαλμοὺς Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς προεγράφη ἐσταυρωμένος). ² Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?
- **Col 1:29** kopiw/ avgwnizo,menoj kata. th.n evne,rgeian avtoutou/ th.n evnergoume,nhn evn evmoi. evn **duna,mei**

Spiritual experience/believing through the Holy Spirit is the lasting grounding for faith. Believing through senses (seeing, feeling etc.) is a "second hand" believing. What we need is the contact with a spiritual Person, and sensations hinder us from having a spiritual fellowship with the Spirit of God. Visualization = idols.

⁴ LLOYD-JONES, D. M. *Romans 10*, Edinburgh : The Banner of Truth Trust, 1998, p. 88.

2.2. INWARD WITNESS

- **1John 5:10** Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. ἔχει τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἐν ἑαυτῷ
- **Rom 8:16** The **Spirit** himself bears witness with **our spirit**...

3. THE BLESSINGS OF THE UNSEEN FELLOWSHIP

- act of believing → expression of trust → fellowship
- → accommodation of the Triune God inwardly
- communion – you can *hear* Him (**Ps 35:3** ...Say to my soul, "I am your salvation!")
- **1Pt 1:8** Though you have not seen him, you love him. (ὄν οὐκ ἰδόντες ἀγαπάτε,)

3.1. INTIMACY

- **John 14:23** "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and **we will come** to him and make our home with him."

3.2. JOY

- **1Pt 1:8** Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory,

4. TO REMEMBER

- The word of God/preaching makes me aware of the unseen world of God.
- Saving faith in Christ is created in my heart by the word of the gospel, by God's living Word
- The communion with Jesus in the Spirit is possible only through the word giving me the assurance and joy in the Spirit.