

6223U

THE DISCIPLES OF THE LORD

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Study #4 Thomas - 'Lord, we know not whither Thou goest'

Reading: John 14&15

Well, the life of Thomas! Now Thomas is a very interesting person. I suppose most of us know Thomas as the 'doubter', and I suppose perhaps a slightly better way of describing Thomas would be not that he was just the 'doubter', but that he was Thomas the 'pessimist', because that was really the fundamental sort of character that Thomas had. He was essentially by nature a pessimistic person. How would you describe a pessimistic person, by the way? What do they tend to focus on? pessimistic people always see the problems, don't they? they always see the negatives. They are always uncertain about things in life, but you see, the thing is this, we can't help what we are by nature, and some of us by nature tend to be more pessimistic than optimistic; of course, pessimists always think that they're really realists, don't they? but in fact, they are pessimists, they focus on the negative rather than on the positive aspects of life. Remember, the whole story of these disciples is that it doesn't matter what our background is, the truth is designed to change us irrespective of where we've come from.

Now it's interesting that the life of Thomas occurs exclusively or the story that we have on Thomas is exclusively in the gospel of John; everything that we really know about Thomas as a person occurs in the gospel of John, because you see, the key to the gospel of John is the theme of God manifestation, that's what John's gospel is all about and God manifestation is all about how the truth is designed to work in us to change our character. So John finds Thomas an interesting person to write into his story, because his gospel is all about learning to manifest the Father, not ourselves. Then given the strength of the truth working in us, we **can** do things that we maybe originally thought that we couldn't do in our own strength. Now remember as we said before, Christ didn't make any mistakes in the men that He chose to be the twelve; and He chose Thomas to be one of them, so although Thomas was a pessimist, the Lord knew that here was a man, that if he could only get the secret of the truth to work within him, he would be able to overcome his nature, and become a brave warrior for the truth.

Well, let's come to John 11, where the story of Thomas first starts and let's see if we can pick up the spirit of the man here. John 11 (remember the story of Lazarus here) in John 11 verse 7, 'but after that, the Lord said to His disciples, let us go into Judea again; His disciples say unto Him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone Thee; and goest Thou thither again?' That was quite true, in fact, if you come back to the gospel of John 8, we're told in the very last verse of John 8, it says, the Lord having spoken to

them, 'Then took they up stones to cast at Him: but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by'. Actually, you'll notice an interesting connection between the last verse of chapter 8 and the first verse of chapter 9. Verse 1 of chapter 9 says, 'And as Jesus passed by, He saw a man which was blind from his birth', do you see the repetition of the phrase 'passed by'; the end of chapter 8 says, 'going through the midst of them, and so passed by', and chapter 9 verse 1, 'And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man..', it's quite interesting actually because Jesus is trying to escape, isn't He? from those who were endeavouring to kill Him; even though He was trying to escape, there was something at the very moment that He was trying to get away, there was something that compelled Jesus to stop! and that was a man in need, a blind man. So that little phrase connects chapter 8 and 9 and shows us how that the need of that person aroused the compassion of Jesus, at a very dangerous moment in His own life.

So they took up stones to stone Him, John 8 verse 59; over the page in John 10, you'll remember in verse 30 that Jesus had said, 'I and my Father are one', and therefore verse 31 says, 'Then the Jews took up stones again, says the record, to stone Him', so no wonder when we get to John 11 verse 8 when He says, 'let's go back to Judea again, His disciples say, 'Look, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone Thee, and goest Thou thither again?' Judea was a very dangerous place at this time for Jesus, but it wasn't just for Christ, was it? it was therefore, a dangerous place for the disciples to be, of Christ, because by virtue of their association with Him, and of the antagonism that was being aroused against the ministry of Christ, therefore the disciples themselves were now under threat if they came into the region of Judea. So the disciples were not very happy with this suggestion. The surprising thing about this story is, that of all the disciples to rally the others together and say, 'it doesn't matter, let's go anyway', it's Thomas.

Now fancy that coming from Thomas, (do you see verse 16); 'Then said Thomas which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with Him'. Now you see, Thomas is a very strange mixture! Here is a man who has deep doubts, yet despite that doubt, he displays on this occasion, strong courage. Here was a man of little imagination and yet who has enormous loyalty to his Lord; and of all the disciples it would have been Thomas that was probably the last one we would have expected to have rallied all the other disciples around Christ, and said, 'Come on, let's get going!' Now do you think Thomas said this because he was by nature a brave person? 'well, come on, let's go, we can face it!' Oh, no, not Thomas! Thomas was scared stiff, that's what Thomas was like, Thomas saw all the problems, Thomas could see the stones, and yet it's Thomas of all the disciples that said, 'well, we're going to go anyway!' In fact, I'll tell you how Green's translation renders verse 16, see if you can capture the spirit of Thomas's words here. 'Then said Thomas who's called Didymus unto his fellow disciples, **'let us go, even we, that we may die with Him'** ; or as Young's Literal says, **'we may go, we also, that we, we, may die with Him'**. Do you see the spirit of Thomas? he actually was very frightened of what he suggested, there was no bravery here, he wasn't doing it out of raw courage, Thomas wasn't a courageous person. But

over and above his fear of the stonings of the Jews, was **his love for the Lord**. He **saw** the danger but he felt that they should be **loyal**. A tremendous spirit here of a man who by nature, didn't really want to go into Judea at this time; shows the relationship that he had with Christ, but there's a key word that we want to underline in verse 16, and you need to take a pencil and just do this, it's the word 'die' because that's a negative word and that's the mark of the pessimist and every time that Thomas opens his mouth and speaks in the record, you'll find he always speaks in the negative. Thomas doesn't realize that, of course, but he does; every time Thomas opens his mouth, **he always speaks in the negative**, and here's the negative word here, 'let us go together that we may **die**'; Thomas saw the danger and the negative side of life. The problem was this: really what Thomas had done here was a marvellous thing! He felt the danger that was threatening them all, and yet he also decided that they ought to be loyal to Christ. But he didn't quite understand what 'to die with Christ' meant, because he didn't understand what sort of death that Christ Himself was going to experience.

He lacked understanding of the principle of **sacrificial death**; you see, Thomas saw death as **defeat** not triumph. Thomas saw death as **negative** not positive, Thomas saw death as **loss of life**, with no gain on the other side. When Thomas said, 'let's go that we might die', Thomas only sees **disaster** not good; 'ah, Thomas, you haven't yet understood what sort of death our Lord is going to; and God willing, this very day, aren't we? we're going to focus on the fact that the death of Christ, far from being a negative thing, was the **positive triumph** of all His labours. Thomas didn't understand that! Never had any comprehension of death in a positive way, at all!

Well, that's the first time that Thomas occurs in the record. John 14 is the next time that Thomas speaks; he only appears 3 times but they're just enough to give us a sketch of the spirit of the man. In John 14, of course, we're in the Upper Room, and we're told in verse 1, 'Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions or abiding places; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself: that where I am, there ye may be also. Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto Him, Lord, we know **not** whither Thou goest;' (see the negative word there, it's the word '**not**', isn't it?) 'We know **not** whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?' Now the fact of the matter is, they did know the way, and the disciples ought to have known the way!

If you come back to chapter 13 which we've already looked at, we know the way that Jesus was going, because in chapter 13 and verse 33, the Lord said, remember? 'Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek Me: and as I said unto the Jews, whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say unto you'. So He was going on **the way of obedience** to His Father. Now it's interesting that the way of obedience, of course, the way that Jesus was going on, that the others couldn't follow at this stage, was the way of death, but it wasn't a **negative death**! it was a positive death because the Lord was going to say, verse 34, 'A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another as I have loved you' and that was all going to be shown in the way that

Jesus was travelling on, it was the way of love, wasn't it? it was a death that was prompted by a love that He had for His disciples. 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends'; the way that Jesus was going on, was the way of **submission** to His Father's will. The disciples had ought to have known that! so you see, when in John 14 verse 5 Thomas says, 'Lord, we know not whither Thou goest', well, they ought to have known, because Jesus's whole life had been spent to demonstrate that way! So the death that was coming was going to be the final positive outworking of obedience to His Father. Jesus had spent all his life putting to death the flesh, and when He finally hung upon the cross, it was going to be the positive declaration of all that His life had stood for from beginning to end. But you see, Thomas didn't understand that! Thomas could only see death as a negative thing! Isn't it interesting, we're on the subject of death again, the Lord's referring to the way of His death and that sort of subject fascinates a pessimist, doesn't it? Morbid things! pessimists love that sort of stuff, but Thomas didn't really see the positive side of the Lord's work.

You see, pessimists are those who see **trial as negative!** Whereas the truth of the matter is, that trial is a positive agent, isn't it? that God brings upon us in developing our character. It's not how pessimists see it, 'why did this have to happen to me?' 'why have I got these problems?' 'why have I got all these worries in life?' A pessimist never sees trial as a positive thing, 'well, I'm sure there's some reason why this problem's happened, I don't know what it is, but maybe God's trying to teach me something out of this; now what can I learn? what principles are there from the Word that could affect how I should react to this problem?'

Well, you'll remember that the record says in Mark's gospel, that when the Lord was finally taken in the garden of Gethsemane, all the disciples forsook Him and fled. I can just see that moment when they all scrambled helter-skelter down the mount of Olives, dashing between boulders and trees and into the inky black darkness of safety away from the soldiers and the torches and the lanterns and the staves. Of all the disciples that ran away that night, I can just imagine that of all the disciples, it would be Thomas who was probably affected the worst! because you see, Thomas was the sort of person that when a disaster struck in life, his whole world would feel as if it were shattered. Have you ever met someone like that? who's a pessimistic person and something really terrible happens to them, they don't just go down, do they? they go really down. They really hit rock bottom, and it was as if Thomas's whole world had come to an end because the disciples had never really understood, had they? the **sacrificial death** of Christ. Thomas was one of those ones who would have been deeply affected by that.

Now what would a pessimist do when his world is shattered? What's the likely thing for a pessimist to do, do you think? Blame it on everyone else! sulk! yes, can you think of another word for that? that sounds a little bit childish; what's another word for sulk? Brood! and how do they brood? on their own. They retreat into themselves and brood on the miseries of life, and on why everything's gone wrong. Now do you want to see Thomas there? John 20, here he is, here's our pessimist, **all by himself brooding in a**

corner! and that's the worst possible thing that a pessimist can do. Now in John 20 verse 19, it says, 'Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and said unto them, Peace be unto you. And when He had so said, He showed unto them His hands and His side. Then were the disciples **glad**, when they saw the Lord. Verse 24, 'But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, **was not with them** when Jesus came.' Now the record doesn't say why Thomas wasn't there, but it seems to me to ring true, that that's exactly what we would have expected of a pessimist. Because that's what people do, you see, that are of a pessimistic nature, they retreat into their own little shell and brood. You know, that's the worst possible thing for a pessimist to do; do you think a pessimist ever solves their own problems by brooding? they get worse and worse, don't they? Then there's a good lesson for all of us, you see, because we all, by the way, could be Thomas at times. There might be some people who by nature are pessimistic, but all of us have moments in our life, when we're a bit Thomas, and a bit down, and the worst possible thing for us to do is to withdraw into ourselves, because we'll never find the answer to our problems inside ourselves. Do you know where the answer lies? when we've got problems and we're down and we're depressed? the answer lies, John 20, **among the disciples**. That's where you've got to be! in the ecclesia, that's where you'll find the answers; in the company of other people who are positive in the truth, that's where the solution is to be found, never by yourself! Why wasn't Thomas with them? and so if you feel you have a tendency to pessimism or to feeling depression at times, don't ever leave the meeting! You'll never find life's answers away from the meeting; those people say, 'I'm upset, I'm unhappy, something's been said to upset me, I'm not coming to the meeting! I don't think I'll go!' Well, you'll never solve problems that way, the answer lay with the disciples.

Well, they must have said something to Thomas because at least, in verse 25, 'They said', well they passed the message on, because verse 25 says, 'The other disciples therefore said unto Thomas, 'Thomas, we've **seen** the Lord. **BUT**, there's our little word there, well, welcome to the pessimist again, do you see the word 'but', that's a negative word, isn't it? **'but** he said unto them, **except** (oh, there's another negative word) and then he said, **'except** I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will **not** believe'. Do you see all the words of the pessimist there? the whole of Thomas' speech here is in the negative; he focuses absolutely and completely on the negative, and it all starts with the word 'but', there's always a 'but' with Thomas, isn't there? Ever come across someone like that? it doesn't matter what you say to them, there's always a 'but', 'yes, but...' But what about this? but what about that? some people are built that way; the truth's designed to change us, you see.

Now you see what Thomas says in verse 25, 'But he said unto them, except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails AND put my finger into the print of the nails, AND thrust my hand....' do you see what Thomas is doing, he's building up a whole lot of things. He says, I want this, I want this, and I want this, and I want all this extra

evidence; they've already told him they've seen the Lord, but Thomas says, that's not good enough for me, I want this and this and this and this added as proof. Now, don't you think that Thomas wanted to believe that Christ was raised? wouldn't Thomas want to believe that the Lord was alive? Why does Thomas make all these extra demands above all the other disciples? why did he do that? Well, you see, it was because he was a pessimist, and he was by nature a negative person. He wanted to believe! oh, he did, but Thomas had the evidence of Christ's death, he'd seen a man dead on a stake, and he'd seen it with his own eyes. He had seen a body taken into a tomb and he'd seen the stone rolled over that tomb. Thomas had seen that! he says, it's not that I don't want to believe, but I've seen the evidence that this man is dead, and he believed his own eyes and ears. That's what pessimists do, they believe their own eyes and ears (what I've seen and I know) now if you want to prove to me that that's wrong, that's fine, but you'll have to have mighty good evidence; I want this and this and this, he didn't just want what the other disciples had done when they said they had seen the Lord, he wanted to add touch, didn't he? He wanted to add touch to sight, and you see what he says at the end of that verse, it's very interesting! Do you see how this is the mark of a pessimist? he says, except I shall do this, and do this, and do this, **I will not believe**'.

Now do you know what Thomas should have said? What he should have said was, 'well, if I can do this, and I can do this, and I can do this, I **will** believe', isn't that what we should say? but that's not how a pessimist works! A pessimist says, **except** I can do this, and this, and this, I will not believe; Thomas focuses on what he won't do rather than on what he will, that's a mark of a pessimist. Do you see that phrase there, 'I will not believe', Boulanger tells us that it's an emphatic negative in the Greek, it should be rendered, 'except I can do these things, **I will never, never believe**', that's what Thomas said. I will never, never believe! and do you know another thing that Boulanger says about that emphatic negative? Boulanger says it's quite interesting, that every single time that that emphatic negative, that double negative has ever been used by someone in the record, they've never, ever done what they said they would do! Any time someone has used that emphatic negative, they've never actually done what they said they would do. By the way, that's going to work its way up in this story as well.

Well, verse 26 of John 20, 'After eight days again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them!'; well at least Thomas has learned his lesson and he's back in the meeting. He's starting to come back, and that's a good thing, isn't it? at least he's back where he should be! he's back amidst the disciples, he's back in the ecclesia: that's where you'll solve life's problems not out brooding on your own. 'Then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then said He to Thomas, Thomas, reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not **faithless**, but believing' (and of course, as the word really means 'faithful', which is what the word 'believing' (4103) means; be not faithless, but **faithful**. So do you see what the Lord did in verse 27, He used the language of Thomas. Thomas said, unless I put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe; Jesus walks into the room (by the way, the door was shut so that was interesting, wasn't it?) He walks into the room through

the shut door and says, Thomas reach hither thy finger and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust...', those were Thomas' own words. Jesus uses Thomas' own words back to him. How did Jesus know? Imagine what that would have done to Thomas, that the Lord who he hadn't seen yet alive, had knowledge of the very words he'd spoken. Thomas, I know your thoughts is what the Lord is saying, isn't it? I know your thoughts.

In verse 28, 'Thomas answered and said unto Him, My lord and my God'. What a strange thing for Thomas to say, he said, My lord and my God, where did Thomas get that from? what made Thomas say that? Zechariah 12 actually chapter 13, I suppose, just for connection, remember in chapter 13 verse 6, 'One shall say unto Him, what are these wounds in thine hands?' so Zechariah has this prophecy about the man with the wounded hands, isn't that the very man standing before Thomas, the man of Zechariah? Come back to chapter 12 verse 10, 'And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and mourn for Him', but do you see the change of pronouns. They shall look upon **Me** whom they have pierced, says God, and mourn for **Him** (as a son)'. If you read Zechariah 12 verse 10 carefully, God says that the nation pierced Him, God, they shall look upon Me whom they've pierced and mourn for Him, the Son; and Thomas said, as he looked upon the man in front of him, the man of Zechariah with the wounded hands, whom the nation had pierced, he says with a flash of inspiration, 'my Lord and my God', because what he saw in the man standing before him, was the man of Zechariah who was **God manifest in the flesh!** They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced and mourn for Him. God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself! and with a flash of inspiration, I believe, Thomas, his mind went back to the pierced man of Zechariah and saw the One who was at once both God and man, and said, 'My Lord and My God.' What a remarkable thing! that was a marvellous thing for Thomas to say, wasn't it? a flash of inspiration in that moment as the wounded man stood before him.

Now come back to John 20 because here's another remarkable thing! because you'll see the paradox of what happened here. You see, Jesus came before Thomas and showed him the wounds in His hands; He showed him the tokens of His sacrifice, and here's the paradox. The marks of Jesus' crucifixion were **exhibited in a resurrected man**; the marks of His death were now seen in a resurrected body. Here's the lesson that Thomas had to learn, it was of **that death which can lead to life!** There's the paradox! and by the way, did Thomas ever reach hither his finger and touch the nail hole? did he take his hand and thrust it into the side of Christ? NO, he didn't, did he? but he said unless I do that, I will never, never believe; he never did what he said he would do, did he? he believed anyway!

In verse 29 Jesus said unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed'. Of course, we have in verse 29, the last of the beatitudes, isn't it? 'Blessed are they that have **not seen** and yet have **believed**', and that includes us, because here we have a group of

people that never have seen the man with the wounded hands, who never have seen the resurrected Lord, but we believe that He was resurrected because of our understanding of the Father's purpose in the Son. We know that God had a responsibility to raise Him from the dead, because of the purity of His life and the perfection of His obedience; and we **know** that Christ was raised, but we've never seen Him and we didn't need to see Him like Thomas; 'blessed are they, who have not seen and yet have nevertheless believed'. So you see, Thomas had to learn a little bit about sacrificial death, didn't he? the whole of the story focuses on death, 'let us go that we may die with Him'; 'we know not the way of death that you're going in'; and now finally, a dead man walks in to confront him, but the dead man isn't dead, He's alive, and the death of Christ was actually a positive thing, all positive, and that was quite foreign to Thomas' thinking, but he had to learn that lesson, didn't he? in order that his character might be changed.

Come over to John 21! Now you'll remember that in John 21 that we had some disciples that went fishing, oh, by the way, perhaps before we do that we should come back to Mark 3, just see whereabouts Thomas fits in the record. Mark 3 verse 16 here's our order again, now this is Mark's order so where does he place Thomas? Well, we've got Peter-1; James and John, 2+3; Andrew-4; Philip-5; Bartholomew-6; Matthew-7; Thomas-8. So Thomas is #8 in the record.

Come back to Matthew's gospel, Matthew 10! Matthew-7 and Thomas-8; alright in Matthew chapter 10 we have Matthew's order, 'Now the names of the 12 apostles are these: Peter-1; Andrew-2; James-3 and John-4; Philip-5; Bartholomew-6; Thomas-7; and Matthew-8'. What's the difference between Matthew and Mark? Thomas 8 in Mark and 7 in Matthew, and who's #8 in Matthew? Matthew, so when Matthew writes his own gospel (he was actually paired to go off with Thomas) and, of course, being the modest sort of chap he was, he swapped it round and put Thomas ahead of himself. But in fact, when you read Mark and Luke, it's clear that Matthew was #7 and Thomas #8 but when Matthew writes his own gospel record, he says 'ah well' and puts Thomas ahead of himself. It's what we would expect, it's one of those little touches, isn't it? that gives us the proof that Matthew really was the writer of Matthew. It's one of those little secret signatures that tells us that Matthew was the writer.

Now come and have a look at John 21. So Thomas is always about #7 or #8 in the record whichever one we take, now look at John 21 verse 1 and we're told in verse 1, 'After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias, and on this wise showed He Himself. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples, (who I believe, were Andrew and Philip)', but where is Thomas? Why, he's #2, now that's a big change. Do you see what that is telling us, it's telling us that here's the disciples all gathered together and Thomas was amongst them, but you see, Thomas wasn't just there, **HE WAS THERE!** you see, this is a changed man, he's right up near the top of the list now; he's right in the midst of it all! He's a changed man because he's the man now that's seen the resurrected Christ, and seen someone who's

broken the power of death, how could that ever be? and if God's got the power to raise a dead body from the grave, then why hasn't God the power to work in my life as well? Thomas is beginning to understand the secret of God manifestation.

So they all decide to go fishing and how many fish do they catch? the answer is at the start they catch nothing, **until**, until what happens? until Christ gives them direction. The lesson of John 21, of course is, that toil in one's own strength brings nothing; but under Christ's direction is fruitful, and the lesson that Thomas needed to learn from John 21, and listen to this in terms of the words of a pessimist, a pessimist focuses on what he can't do, here's the lesson for Thomas, **'I can do all things through Christ who strengthenest me'**. Where does that come from, by the way? Philippians 4, quite right! I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST, and that's the lesson that Thomas had to learn and, of course, in Acts 1 which is the very next chapter, is Thomas there? Yes, he is, because in Acts 1 verse 13 we're told, 'And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas'; so in fact, Thomas is #6 even in this record; he's definitely moved up a rung or two from where he was when the order of the apostles started off, and he's there in Acts 1.

So you see what that tells us:

1. Thomas was a witness of the crucified Christ.
2. Thomas was a witness of the resurrected Christ.
3. Thomas was a witness of the ascended Christ.

He saw it all! Thomas saw the whole story, he needed to! It was exactly what Thomas needed, to give him the faith and the conviction to walk out and become someone who was courageous for the truth, despite his own feelings of inadequacy and doubt and uncertainty that plagued him; he was by nature a pessimist, but he was given the secret here to learn to trust in the strength of the Father and in the power of the Word and in the power of prayer, to lift himself up and above his own inabilities, to do what he felt he could never in fact do in his own strength; he could through Christ.

You know, you can just imagine Thomas, can't you? in some of those incidents in the record, remember when they came through the village of the Samaritans and the Samaritans refused to receive them for the night, remember that? John said, 'would you like us to blast them to pieces with fire?' I can just imagine Thomas saying, 'I knew we shouldn't have come this way, I thought we'd have problems!!! we should never have come through the area of the Samaritans, it was the wrong thing to do!' Can you see Thomas saying that? Or a certain episode when Peter hops out of the boat to walk to Christ, and the wind comes and the waves are up and Peter begins to sink, and there's a shriek, and I can just see Thomas back in the boat saying, 'he should never have got out the boat, never would have got me out there! knew he'd sink! thought that would happen!' There was another occasion when Jesus fed 5,000 remember? in the days of Philip and Andrew and the loaves and fishes, and remember all the disciples went

round with a basket to collect up the fragments, remember? and I can just imagine one of them coming up to Thomas and saying, 'look, I've got a basket half full of fragments already; Thomas would look at it and say, no, it's half empty!' Pessimists always focus on the negative, don't they?

Thomas couldn't help himself, he was just made that way. Now there are some people like that in ecclesial life; 'let's have a gospel proclamation effort', oh, I don't know if we've got the resources to do that! I don't know if we've got time! I don't know if we've got the money! do you think it's the right time to do it really?' Let's do this, and let's do that, 'oh, I'm not sure about that, you know'; well let's invite all these people, 'oh, well, do we have enough seats? will there be enough food?' There are some people who always focus on the negatives in ecclesial life, they're pessimists, aren't they? Now the truths designed to change us from that! the truth's designed to make us look on the positive side of life, not because we trust in our own abilities, Thomas would never ever do that! You see, Peter had a problem, Peter was too confident in his own abilities, Thomas would never be like that; Thomas always distrusted his own abilities by nature, but what he had to learn was that there is a way of trusting in God, and relying on the strength of the Word and on the comfort of our fellow disciples, to help us to do things that we might not have been able to do ourselves. Thomas had to learn those lessons!

He must have learnt those lessons because he's one of those 12 that went out, and in the words of Acts, turned the world upside down, and we believe, lost his life preaching the truth. Good old Thomas, he lost his life, he ended up offering his life as a sacrificial death for the truth; he was a martyr for the truth, imagine Thomas doing that? So he must have been changed, mustn't he? he must have been changed by the experience of the One that we come, in fact, to remember this day. The One that we will commemorate in bread and wine, this morning, the man with the wounded hands, who said to Thomas, 'Thomas, reach hither thy fingers and behold My hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into My side; and be not faithless, but faithful. Thomas, blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed!'