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WILL GOD SUPPLY ALL MY NEEDS?

~ Scripture: John 20:24-31 ~

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INTRODUCTION [Setting the stage; Biblical background]

There are many recorded appearances of Jesus following His resurrection. More than a dozen are recorded in the New Testament. God was validating through many witnesses that Jesus, indeed, was risen from the dead.

Last week, we saw Jesus inviting His disciple's to a breakfast which he himself fixed [John 20]. Yesterday morning, the United Methodist Men's group simulated this breakfast. We arrived early in the morning, when the sun was brilliantly rising in the sky, to the smell of smoke rising from the fire pit and the delicious sight of trout & salmon bar-b-queing. Wow, what a breakfast. . . followed by Tom recounting for us the point Jesus wanted to make to his disciples in the original setting.

This week, we back up one chapter to **John, chapter 20**, and read of another appearance:

²⁴Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it."

²⁶A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

²⁸Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

²⁹Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

³⁰Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹But these are written 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' body was unique after His resurrection. He didn't seem to be subject to the same laws of nature as before. He could come through doors without opening them; He would just show up and disappear at will. You never knew when he might just "be there". Ever think you were alone and then have a strange sense that someone else was there?

But Jesus was not a disembodied spirit. He was not a ghost or apparition, because he could be touched and could eat—again demonstrating that His resurrection was *literal & physical*.

The Word says the Jesus did all these things and many others (too many to record in one book) *“in the presence of his disciples”* (eyewitnesses) so that we may believe!

Believe what? Believe that *“Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God”* [v. 31].

That’s pretty important. Just place yourself there:

- You’ve witnessed all the incredible events leading up to the crucifixion. . .your head is still reeling. . .then there’s the empty tomb and these strange appearances of Jesus.....
- You’re still trying to make sense of Jesus being risen from the dead. I mean, people don’t just do that!
- So, Jesus shows himself several times to his disciples, his followers, and to as many as 500 in one setting—so there would be no mistaking that He was alive. . . so that we might believe and have our lives changed as a result.

Yet we don’t [believe, that is]. Even when it’s right under our nose, we still persist in unbelief. We’re just like **THOMAS!**

Now, let’s not be too hard on Thomas. Sure he doubted. But wouldn’t you, had you been in his shoes? Some people need to doubt before they believe. I think of C. S. Lewis—a skeptic who, by his own testimony, came “kicking & screaming” into the Kingdom of God.

If doubt leads to honest, sincere questions. . .and questions lead to answers. . .or to an acknowledgment that there are some things we’ll never know on this side of eternity. . .and we gain some acceptance – then doubt has done a good work.

We just can’t afford to get stuck in our doubts. . .or to get stubborn. Then doubt harms our faith.

Here’s the thing I like about Thomas: Despite his skepticism (Jesus had appeared a week earlier, and he had not been there to witness it himself), Thomas hung in there with the other believers and with Jesus himself.

- He didn’t separate, or pull back, or isolate.
- He stayed in fellowship.
- He kept moving, and eventually came to a high point of faith, when he declared:
“My Lord and my God” [v. 28].

Like I say, we shouldn’t be too hard on Thomas because we’re just like him. We’re visual by nature. Seeing is believing. Having tangible evidence makes it much easier (palatable, reasonable) to believe.

Have you ever wished Jesus could be among us in a physical way—so you could see Him, touch Him, hear His words? Aren’t there times when you wish you could sit down with Him and have Him speak directly to you about what you’re going through?

Certainly we want Jesus’ physical presence—as did Thomas. But God’s plan is wiser! He has not limited himself to one physical body OR to one place at one point in time. He wants to be present with each of us at all times. That’s why He sent the Holy Spirit. You can talk to Him. . . find His words in the Bible. He can be as real to you as he was to Thomas. He can still address all of our needs through what He left us in His Word (the Bible).

Do you believe that this morning?

- Do you believe that *“God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus”*? [Phil. 4:9]
- Do you believe that *“your (heavenly) Father knows what you need before you ask Him”*? [Matt. 6:8]
- Do you believe that *“we have a great high priest who has gone into heaven (in) Jesus the Son of God”*. . .and that although we can’t see him, we can still come before him *“with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need”* [Hebrews 4:16]

What about this colossal list of needs we “dropped” into the stream a couple weeks back? We’ve reprinted the booklet “*My Greatest Need Right Now*” that appeared as an insert in the bulletin a couple weeks ago. Hang onto it; it may become a valuable reference tool.

I’ve divided them up into three categories.....

[The entries with stars * occurred several times, perhaps worded a little differently.]

HEALTH / PHYSICAL / MATERIAL CONCERNS

1. A healthier lifestyle, starting with weight loss ***
2. Physical & psychological healing for a family member
3. Acceptance of a physical condition. . .ability to cope with pain *
4. Acceptance of the changes that aging brings
5. Quit a destructive habit (i.e.: tobacco)
6. Help in getting past my grief
7. Ability to budget our current resources and manage our finances *
8. Stop worrying every minute of every day (about family, health, children, money)*
9. Confidence in making a business decision
10. Job security and career satisfaction *

PERSONAL and RELATIONAL CONCERNS

1. Forget the past and move on
2. Learn to love myself
3. God’s intervention in a severe marriage crisis that seems hopeless *
4. Difficulty in my relationship with my [family member] *
5. A life partner to share the journey *
6. Loneliness. . .and to know what God has in store for me
7. Start all over again and get good school reports
8. The ability to keep a calm manner and put away anger
9. Wisdom in leading our [son, daughter] in making life decisions *
10. Balance between work and home life
11. A spouse who shares my faith **
12. Healing of a broken heart. . .and eventually to believe again in life & love

SPIRITUAL CONCERNS

1. Truly understand the deep love God has for me...and let that overflow to all I meet
2. God to touch my soul and give me peace; I’m sad, sick and tired
3. **A stronger faith and trust in God for all my needs and the needs of my family**
4. Fulfill the purpose God has for me *
5. Consistently spend time in prayer and in God’s Word *
6. Stand up for Christ and my moral values at work *
7. Listen to Your plan for me
8. Patience to continue praying about situations that don’t seem to change
9. Let go and give up to God a problem that is too big for me to solve
10. Strength to resist temptation
11. Freedom from habitual sin
12. Trust God for my future—there are so many unknowns

This is just a sampling. I am struck by the heart-felt honesty and the commonality. I mean, how many here wish their spouse or son or daughter or parent shared their faith? By the way, a team of *prayer warriors* is forming to pray for each of the needs in this booklet over the next six weeks.

LOSE WEIGHT

The one need that seemed to be mentioned most often was “to lose weight”.

It was stated in various ways:

- “To establish healthier eating habits”
- “To modify my lifestyle to include more exercise and weight loss”

- “Will power to lose weight”
- “To lose weight and have patience with my children” □

I realize this may not be your greatest need at this time. However, I want all of us to see how God’s Word addresses a very down-to-earth need. . .and besides, these principles may well apply to a need you are facing at this time.

Let’s go to [Psalm 139:14-16a](#) – ¹⁴I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. ¹⁵My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, ¹⁶your eyes saw my unformed body.

When we are tempted to feel worthless and hate ourselves, this verse sets our attitude right. We’ve got to have as much respect for ourselves as our Maker has for us. Remember, God’s Spirit is ready to work with us. He knows us because He made us!!!

[I Corinthians 3:16-17](#) – ¹⁶Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? ¹⁷If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple.

Seeing ourselves in this way is a powerful motivation to make changes as we seek to put away destructive habits.

[Philippians 4:11b-13](#) – ¹¹I

have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ¹²I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ¹³I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

Contentment is a key to any attempt at overcoming a harmful habit.

When we see ourselves going overboard in any area—eating, drinking, spending, pursuing pleasure—it’s a pretty good sign something’s out of place in our heart (i.e.: discontent). We feel empty inside; we’re trying to fill a void (“*a hole in our soul*”).

So, praying to find contentment (or, acceptance of circumstances, acceptance of things we can’t change) is a good first step. It’ll take us to an “*attitude of gratitude*”.

[v. 13](#) doesn’t mean supernatural strength. The power we receive in union with Christ is sufficient to do His will and face the challenges that come with that.

[Hebrews 13:5-6](#) – ⁵Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” ⁶So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.”

This passage is also talking about contentment (i.e.: keeping lives free from the love of money). When he says, “*I will never leave nor forsake you*”: even if we fail, he is still going to be right there with us.

[II Peter 1:3, 5-8](#) – ³His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. . .⁵For this very reason, make every effort to add to your **faith goodness**; and to goodness, **knowledge**; ⁶and to knowledge, **self-control**; and to self-control, **perseverance**; and to perseverance, **godliness**; ⁷and to godliness, **brotherly kindness**; and to brotherly kindness, **love**. ⁸For if you

possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Here Scripture gives us a progression. . .a series of steps:

- FAITH = It's where we begin (and end)—with God. . .trusting that God is greater than anything we are facing. . .God is all around, underneath, above, beside and within us.
- GOODNESS = Refers to our motives. We can do the right thing for the wrong reason. It's easy to become narcissistic (which is self-love, self-admiration). There's a fine line between "feeling good about yourself" and "making self the object of admiration.
- KNOWLEDGE = Find out what works (through reading, consulting, researching).
- SELF-CONTROL = It's going to take discipline. But see, that's tucked in among all these other things. As you follow Christ who guides us by his Holy Spirit, you will develop self-control.
- PERSEVERANCE = Hang in there! It won't happen overnight.
- GODLINESS = Let this whole venture draw you closer to God. Remember, His desire is to build strong, godly character in you.
- BROTHERLY KINDNESS = How many people have you known who are trying to make major changes in their lives and they get cranky, hard to live with, drive you nuts? We need to cut each other some slack.
- LOVE = Primarily for God, his creation, yourself as part of that creation, people & things He has put in your life. Nothing and nobody is perfect. Just give God time + room to work, and you'll be amazed!

CONCLUSION

The process is painfully slow at times. Sometimes things get worse before they get better. I talked to a man the other day who told me: "*I went to church, and things got worse.*" That happens.

You've just got to give God time + room [next sermon series]. Stay in fellowship (like Thomas).

You can't see a child grow; and you can't see things change. But you can trust His heart, even when you can't see His hand.