



## An Easter Confession: "My Lord and My God!"

*"Thomas said to him, 'My Lord and my God.'"*

(John 20:28)

On the night of the last supper Thomas refused to accept Christ's words about his resurrection. Our Saviour had comforted his disciples, *"In my Father's house are many rooms ... I am going there to prepare a place for you ... I will come back and take you to be with me."* Thomas had replied, *"Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"*

Do you see his problem? If death is the end for Christ, how will he know where Christ is going? Even though Christ told him on more than one occasion that he would arise from the grave, Thomas would not make the resurrection part of Christ's redemptive work. In his mind, the grave would be a bottomless pit out of which Christ would never climb. That's why he says on the Sunday following Easter, *"Unless I see the nail marks in his hands, and put my finger where the nails were ... I will not believe it."*

A week later, Christ appeared in their midst again. He addressed Thomas, *"Put your finger here; see my hands ... Stop doubting and believe."* To that gracious and loving command Thomas answered, *"My Lord and my God."* Thomas' words are not blurted in surprise and disbelief. His confession is a cry of faith. He had eight days to mull over the witness of the other apostles, along with Christ's past teaching. He knows what he's saying and why he says it.

"My Lord": that isn't a new title for Christ. Before his death the disciples had called him "Lord." Thomas himself had addressed Christ that way; he'd said, *"Lord, we do not know where you are going."* Now that old name acquires a greater meaning in light of the resurrection. "My Lord," says Thomas.

He is acknowledging, *"You have dominion over my life. You chose me and you bought me with your precious blood. Even this confession of mine is all your doing because no one can say that Jesus is 'Lord' except by the Holy Spirit."*

Before seeing the Lord, Thomas had struggled with this confession because he saw his Master laid in the tomb. If death was victorious, how could Jesus be both Lord and God? If there is no resurrection, then he cannot be God, for with God nothing is impossible.

And if he is not God, then he can no longer be Lord. But now in full assurance Thomas adds to his confession,

*"You are **my** God. In you I see the power of the living God. Now I understand what you meant when you said, 'If you had known me, you would have known my Father also.' You do not need to show me the Father because I see that the Father dwells in you and you in the Father."*

*"You are my Lord. You say to one, 'Go' and he goes. You say to another, 'Come' and he comes. Speak Lord, for your servant is listening. You are my God. In your victory over death I can clearly see that you are the Son of God. As my God you demand my undivided trust. As my God you are able to forgive my sins. As my God I must praise and glorify your great name."*

That Easter affirmation is the simplest yet highest expression about the truth of the gospel and the certainty of the resurrection. Christ's appearance to Thomas and his confession affects each one of us personally. Upon that event our belief stands or falls. By drawing that confession from Thomas, Christ is displaying his concern for the church. How? The teaching of the apostles was to become the foundation of the church, and all its members had to proclaim not only the death of Christ but also his resurrection. We see through the eyes of the apostles, we hear with their ears, we feel with their hands, that Christ who was dead is now alive. Thomas' confession was recorded for our sake. Those words are a mighty revelation that the Head of the church will gather us, his members, in the unity of the true faith.

Thomas saw the living Lord and only then did he believe. For him, *seeing* was believing. And he was blessed, but Christ responds to him, "*Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.*" Blessed are those today who profess about Christ, "*My Lord and My God*" based on the confession of Thomas, preserved in the Scriptures. Without having seen Christ, we love him. Without having touched him, we trust him. For us, *hearing* is believing. Faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ. By the grace of God the resurrected Christ is proclaimed to us in the gathering of God's people every Sunday again.

How much richer we are than Thomas! We can say "*My Lord and My God*" without having to put our finger in the scars of his hands. But we do not boast in ourselves, since it is the Spirit of the exalted Christ who works this confession in our hearts through the Word. If he is our Lord, let us obey his will. If he is our God, let us hallow his name. What our eyes have not seen, our ears have heard. Be assured that in hearing you are blessed, because if you hear (and believe) Christ now, you will see him later. You have his promise that you will see him coming on the clouds in glory. On that day the power of his resurrection will be visible to all. For the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive will be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air.

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