

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

THOMAS AND THE RISEN LORD
International Sunday School Lesson
For April 13, 1952. (Easter)

Memory Selection: "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe."—John 20: 29.
Lesson Text: John 11: 14-16; 14: 1-6; 20: 24-29.

Among the twelve disciples of Jesus was a man, named Thomas. The first we hear much of him is in connection with the death of Lazarus. Jesus and the disciples had been away from Judea for some time because of the enmity of the Jews, who had sought to kill Jesus. When word came from Mary and Martha that their brother, Lazarus, was desperately ill, Jesus announced his intention of going to Bethany. Fearing for their own lives, as well as for Jesus, the disciples tried to dissuade him from going. They pointed out the danger, but when it became evident that he was going anyway, Thomas said, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." He was willing to go to the limit with his friends, which called for courage of the highest quality.

While we have come to think of Thomas as a doubter and the term "Doubting Thomas" has come down to us as the personification of one who doubts everything, it is unfair to this disciple to always associate him with his doubts. Thomas had a practical mind and, like many of us, wanted to see the end from the beginning. He had a deep desire to understand the truth that Jesus taught and so, when in the Upper Room, Jesus was trying to prepare his disciples for the events to follow, Jesus spoke of his Father's house with its many mansions. He declared, "I go to prepare a place for you, and whither I go, ye know, and the way ye know."

Thomas did not understand what Jesus was talking about and it is possible that neither did the other disciples, but he was the only one willing to admit it. He interrupted Jesus' discourse with this question: "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?" This was not doubt of the statement of Jesus but an honest inquiry to get the facts. Through his questioning, Thomas called forth one of the greatest and most helpful declarations that Jesus ever made: "I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me."

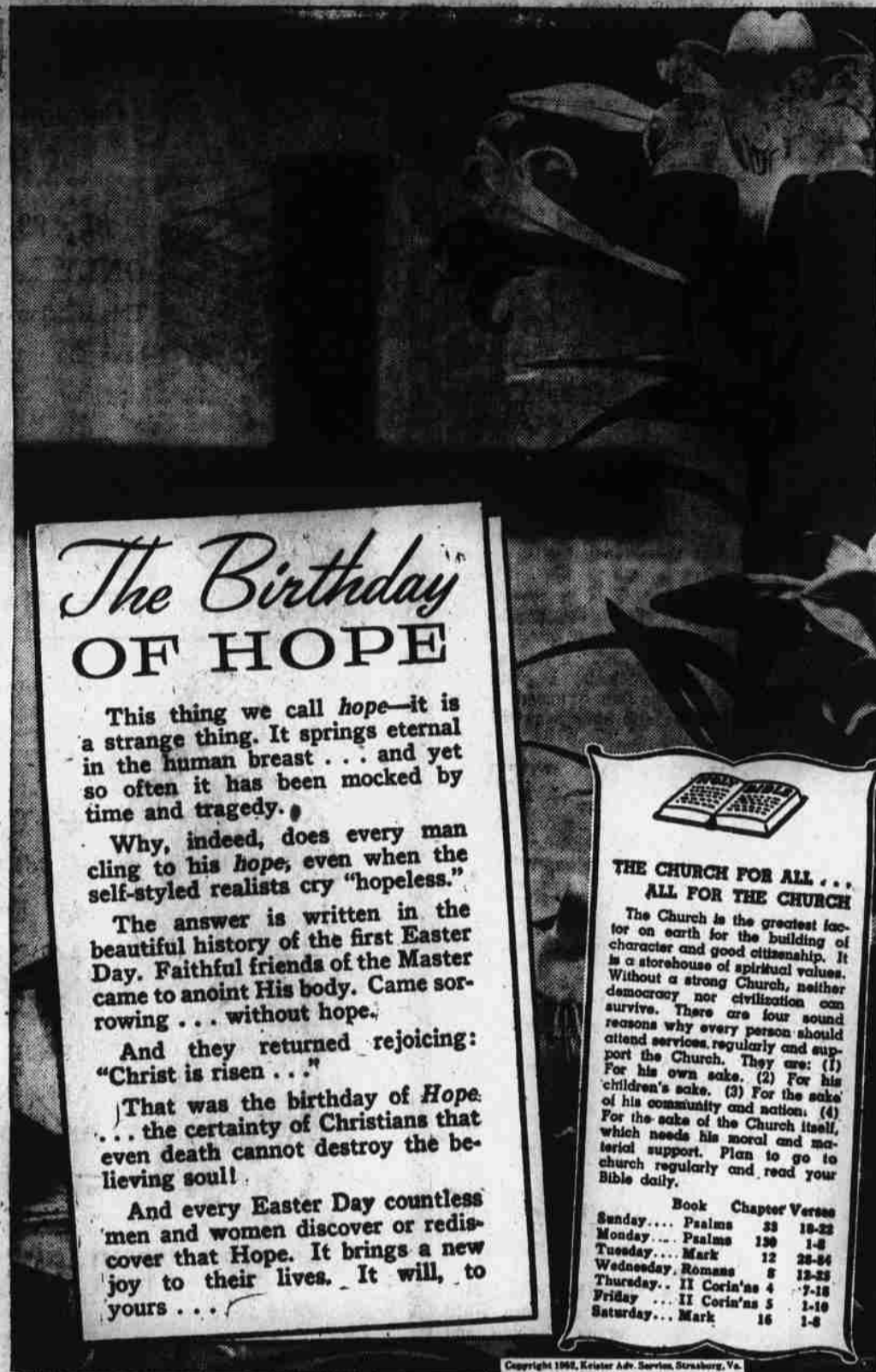
After the resurrection, when Jesus appeared to his disciples, Thomas was absent from the group. We do not know why Thomas was not there or where he was. He was probably wallowing in the Slough of Despondency, with all hope gone, for he believed that Jesus was dead. However, Jesus showed the other disciples the nail prints in his hands and the wound in his side and they were convinced that he had truly risen from the dead. The disciples could hardly wait to find Thomas and tell him what he had missed. "We have seen the lord!" they exclaimed. Thomas was not at all excited. "Except I shall see in his hands the prints of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe!"

On the following Sunday, eight days after the resurrection, Thomas was with the rest of the disciples, when Jesus appeared in their midst. After the customary greeting, "Peace be with you," he turned to Thomas and offered him the proof that he had sought. "Reach hither thy finger, and see my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into my side; and be not without faith but believing." We do not know whether Thomas took advantage of the opportunity to touch the sacred wounds or not, but we rather think he did not now need that proof. The sight of his Master and his blessed voice were enough to dispel any questioning that Thomas may have had. "My Lord and my God!" he exclaimed.

Through the questioning of Thomas, a beautiful truth has come down to us, when Jesus declared: "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet believed." Alexander MacLaren has said: "Believing is not credence only, but trust. The object of the Christian's faith is not a proposition; it is not a dogma nor a truth, but a Person." We should remember that it is not a sin to doubt. They come to all of us—they even came to Jesus' closest friends. However, it is a sin to doubt and do nothing to solve the doubt. Jesus will help us to solve our doubts just as he helped Thomas.

One of the early Christian writers had this to say of Thomas: "He who was at first one of the weakest and most incredulous of all the apostles became, through Christ's condescension to satisfy all his scruples and the power of his divine grace, the most active and invincible of them all; travelling over almost parts of the world, and living without fear in the midst of barbarous nations, through the efficacy of that Almighty power which can make the weakest vessels to perform acts of the greatest difficulty."

(These commentaries are based on the International Sunday School Lesson Outlines, copyrighted by the International Council of Religious Education, and used by permission.)



The Birthday OF HOPE

This thing we call *hope*—it is a strange thing. It springs eternal in the human breast . . . and yet so often it has been mocked by time and tragedy.

Why, indeed, does every man cling to his *hope*, even when the self-styled realists cry "hopeless."

The answer is written in the beautiful history of the first Easter Day. Faithful friends of the Master came to anoint His body. Came sorrowing . . . without hope.

And they returned rejoicing: "Christ is risen . . ."

That was the birthday of *Hope*. . . the certainty of Christians that even death cannot destroy the believing soul!

And every Easter Day countless men and women discover or rediscover that *Hope*. It brings a new joy to their lives. It will, to yours . . .

THE CHURCH FOR ALL . . . ALL FOR THE CHURCH

The Church is the greatest factor on earth for the building of character and good citizenship. It is a storehouse of spiritual values. Without a strong Church, neither democracy nor civilization can survive. There are four sound reasons why every person should attend services regularly and support the Church. They are: (1) For his own sake. (2) For his children's sake. (3) For the sake of his community and nation. (4) For the sake of the Church itself, which needs his moral and material support. Plan to go to church regularly and read your Bible daily.

Day	Book	Chapter	Verses
Sunday	Psalms	23	13-25
Monday	Psalms	130	1-8
Tuesday	Mark	12	28-34
Wednesday	Romans	8	13-25
Thursday	II Corin'thians	4	7-18
Friday	II Corin'thians	5	1-10
Saturday	Mark	16	1-8

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Perquimans Church Services

HERTFORD BAPTIST CHURCH
C. W. Duling, Pastor
Sunday School, 9:45 A. M.
Morning Worship, 11:00 o'clock.
Evening Worship, 8 o'clock.
Mid-week Services, Wednesday at 8 P. M.

BETHLEHEM CHURCH OF CHRIST
Joe Brickhouse, Pastor
First Sunday
11 A. M. and 8 P. M.

BURGESS BAPTIST CHURCH
Colon Jackson, Jr., Pastor
Church services second and fourth Sundays at 11 A. M.
Sunday School at 10:00 A. M.
Church service 7:45 P. M. second and fourth Sundays.

PERQUIMANS CHARGE CHURCHES
H. M. Jamieson, Pastor
First Sunday:
New Hope Church, 11:00 A. M.
Oak Grove Church, 7:00 P. M.
Second Sunday
Winfall Church, 11:00 A. M.
Cedar Grove Church, 10 A. M.
Woodland Church, 7:00 P. M.
Third Sunday
Oak Grove Church, 11:00 A. M.
New Hope Church, 7:00 P. M.
Fourth Sunday
Cedar Grove Church, 11:00 A. M.
Woodland Church, 10 A. M.
Winfall Church, 7:00 P. M.
Fifth Sunday
Woodland Church, 11:00 A. M.
Prayer Meeting each Wednesday at Winfall Church, 7:00 P. M.

ANDERSON'S METHODIST CHURCH
R. M. Gradeless, Pastor
Church School, 10:00 A. M.
Morning Worship, 11:00 A. M., second and fourth Sundays.

WOODVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH
James F. Burke, Pastor
Church Services on second and fourth Sundays at 11 A. M.
First and Third Sundays at 7:45 P. M.
Sunday School 9:45 A. M.

UP RIVER FRIENDS CHURCH
Elizabeth White, Pastor
Sunday School, 9:45 A. M.
Church Services, 11 A. M.
Christian Endeavor, 6:30 P. M.

BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. Bennie Crawford, Pastor
Sunday School, 10 A. M.
Preaching first and third Sundays at 11 A. M.
Preaching second and fourth Sunday evening at 7:30.

PINEY WOODS FRIENDS CHURCH
No Pastor At Present
Sunday School, 10 A. M.
Morning worship—11:00 A. M.

Go To Church Your Church