

BELIEVING IS SEEING

We walk by faith, not by sight (II Corinthians 5:7).

Which comes first: the chicken or the egg? The question leaves many of us scratching our heads. Does the egg produce the chicken or does the chicken lay the egg? And does it even matter?

While we may dismiss such a question when it comes to the barnyard, we dare not take the same posture when it comes to salvation. Which comes first: faith or reason? Do we reason our way to faith or do we believe our way into rationality? To state the same question in different terms: Does what we see determine what we believe or does what we believe determine what we see? Is seeing believing or is believing seeing? This is a question of momentous importance. Our very salvation hinges on the answer we give. Whether we are aware of it or not, each one of us assumes one answer or the other. Easter Sunday is a good time to examine those assumptions.

Many today pretend that they would put their faith in Jesus Christ if only they had more evidence, more data, more time to consider. "It's not that I *won't* believe," they say. "But I *can't*. There's just not enough proof." I have to admit, at first glance, the argument sounds solid... even pious. But such reasoning echoes that of those Pharisees who stood mocking as Jesus died, saying, "Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may **see and believe**" (Mark 15:32). First, show us the evidence! *Then* we'll believe. Really? Just how much evidence would it take? An empty tomb, perhaps?

An alternative path to certainty is laid out in John Chapter 11. In a cemetery near Bethany, Jesus showed a humbler audience the true way to knowledge. Lazarus had been dead for four days. His sisters, Mary and Martha were grieving when Jesus finally showed up. Both women greeted him with the same complaint: "Lord, **if** you had been here, my brother would not have died" (John 11:21, 32). Rather than trying to explain the reason for his delay, Jesus spoke directly to the "if" of their unbelief by offering the "if" of faith. "Did I not say to you, **if you believe, you will see** the glory of God?" (John 11:40. NASB). Suddenly, Martha got it. She didn't need a resurrection to produce faith. She needed faith to produce a resurrection!

Dear friend, perhaps you are sitting on these pews this Easter Sunday morning thinking, "If only Christ would reveal himself to me, *then* I would put my trust in him. If I could only see, *then* I would believe." Would you let me speak bluntly? You've put the chicken and the egg in the wrong order. You don't need more time, more data or more evidence. Thinking you do, only insures a future of continued unbelief. This morning, why not take a humble step of faith? First believe, *then* your eyes will be opened. Jesus is alive! Today, *if* you believe... if you believe... if you believe... then you too can see the glory of God!

Pastor Stan