

Greeting to all the Saints at Manatee Life,

**SCRIPTURE:**

Ezekiel 34:30 (MSG) – Larger reading Ezekiel 34:17-31

*"They'll know, beyond doubting, that I, God, am their God, that I'm with them and that they, the people Israel, are my people." Decree of God, the Master."*

**STORY** written by Norman Shirk:

Let me meet you on the mountain, Lord,  
Just once.

You wouldn't have to burn a whole bush.

Just a few smoking branches

And I would surely be... your Moses.

Let me meet you on the water, Lord,

Just once.

It wouldn't have to be on White Rock Lake.

Just on a puddle after the annual Dallas rain

And I would surely be... your Peter.

Let me meet you on the road, Lord,

Just once.

You wouldn't have to blind me on North Central Expressway.

Just a few bright lights on the way to chapel

And I would surely be... your Paul.

Let me meet you, Lord,

Just once.

Anywhere. Anytime.

Just meeting you in the Word is so hard sometimes

Must I always be... your Thomas?

**REFLECTION:**

What would it take... just once... to break through the walls of our heart? What barriers in our thinking does it really take for God to become real? What mountains need to move? What oceans of doubt must be crossed? How many times must he stand at our door and knock before we release ourselves into the gift of faith?

Reasonable doubt is one thing because it drives us deeper in a search that will change the world. But doubt for doubt sake is just plain sad... or at least that is my opinion.

Most pastors have met individuals who are so "me centered" that moving beyond themselves would become a world-shaking experience. The "me centered" individuals are doubters just for the sake of argument... again this is just my opinion. They want us to argue with them. They want to be the center of attention. They want our focus to be

upon them. They cherish the conversations... and the more we argue, try to convince, discuss the faith... the more they “doubt” just for doubting sake.

E. Stanley Jones advice went something like this: “Go to the non-believer and make your case for Christ. If they refuse to change then leave. Go back a second day with a different approach and make your case for Christ, if they refuse then leave. Finally, go back a third day with an entirely different presentation and if they still refuse to accept Jesus this third time, then move on to someone else and leave them to those who follow you.”

God is not without a witness in this world. God has provided more evidence than we will ever need to believe in him. All we have to do is open our eyes. He comes knocking at our door more than just once.

Most of the doubters that I have met are people who feel that they really do not need anyone or anything in this life. They are miserable inside, but they wouldn't dare show their vulnerability to anyone. They view faith as a weakness, a crutch, just something to prop them up.

What is sad is they are missing out on the incredible joy of knowing Jesus. We all doubt at one time or another. There is nothing wrong with doubting as long as we just don't leave it there. May our doubts lead to a deeper faith and a more trusting heart.

**QUOTE:**

*“The fundamental cause of the trouble is that in the modern world the stupid are cocksure while the intelligent are full of doubt.”* – Bertrand Russell

**PRAYER:**

We believe Lord, but we need your help with our unbelief. We want to be like Moses, Peter, or Paul, but we are more like Thomas that we can even imagine. Come one more time and knock at our heart's door. May we be sensitive to your knock and answer it this time.

And the faith journey continues, Pastor Jim  
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***Worship this Sunday either in-person in the safe environment of our sanctuary at 10:30 OR via our FaceBook page (Manatee United Methodist Church) by 1:00 on Sunday OR via YouTube when the service is posted on Monday morning.***

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