

## Thomas' Transformation John 20:24-29

I have become fascinated with the morphing process of a butterfly as I compare it to a Spiritual transformation for Christians. Last week I shared that in order for a caterpillar to become a butterfly “it must want to fly so much that it’s will to give up being a caterpillar.” This is true for Christians. You must want to follow Christ so much that you are willing to make your own sacrifices as you say “goodbye” to your old self and “hello” to Christ. But then, I became curious as to what actually happens inside the chrysalis/cocoon to create such a transformation. In my research, I discovered that the tissue that makes a caterpillar look like a caterpillar is literally dissolved by enzymes leaving a pool of goo (my term). Inside this goo, the cells are regrouping to form imaginal discs. These discs grow to become the actual body parts of the butterfly. I find this fascinating because, as we experience our own spiritual metamorphosis, we experience a very similar process. Let me explain.

Last week, we witnessed the Disciples locked in the upper room with fear and confusion running rampant. Once Jesus appeared, their fears were calmed and their hearts were once again filled with joy and excitement. Today, we return to that same upper room, but this time, we follow the life of Thomas. According to the Gospel of John, Thomas was

not part of the “group” when Jesus appeared. He heard the wonderful and reassuring words, but struggled to understand this sudden transformation in his brothers. How could they be so excited? What did they mean Jesus was alive? I picture Thomas as leaving the Disciples as caterpillars and returning to see butterflies; something was different. It was as though there had been some radical change in the other Disciples. He still didn’t trust their words, but he was at least willing to engage in the conversation and see their proof.

The proof came when Jesus appeared with the words, “Peace be with you.” It was at that point that Thomas became a pool of goo. He melted with awe as he said, “My Lord and my God!” Thomas was speechless; but alert to his surroundings as he tried to regroup his thoughts and emotions. He felt his fears, doubts, and questions leave his soul. This radical transformation was opening his eyes to a new world. He was no longer hungry just to be with Jesus and learn from Jesus. He was beginning to crave showing others that Jesus was alive, but different. Thomas had neither the need nor the desire to touch see the holes in Jesus’ hands or touch the wound in Jesus’ side. He was no longer seeing Jesus’ his friend, but a new Holy and Divine Jesus. Thomas was mesmerized. He was beginning to understand what it meant to die and be born again. He was a

new person because he had seen the Holiness of Christ. This was not something he could gain by hearing the words of the other Disciples; he had to experience it for himself. Now he was hungry for more. He was developing his own imaginal disc as he joined the new journey with the others; together they were becoming the new body of Christ for the world.

In the metamorphosis of the butterfly, once the cells regroup into these imaginal discs, they feed on the nutrients that are left in the pool of goo. Their hunger devoured all it could, as quickly as possible. In our Spiritual life, we do the same. Once we say goodbye to the old self and embrace Christ alive in our own Spirits, we become overwhelmed with learning and sharing the joy in our hearts. To the unbeliever or those who struggle to believe, this new found love for God can be extremely overwhelming. It's as though these newborn Christians want to fly before they have full use of their wings. They can see the world through their thinning cocoon but they don't have their wings yet. This is a good image for me of young Christians. I've seen them so excited they can't wait to take the world and shake it into relationship with God. But, there are others who are so terrified of the change they just want to stay in their cocoon; keeping Jesus to themselves. I believe Thomas and the Disciples are showing us both forms of transformation. Now, the question for me, is how

do I Spiritual leave my fears, find belief and trust in God, and show the world the beauty of God's transformation?

Maybe that's jumping ahead too quickly. Before I can morph into a Disciple, I first need to dissolve of myself, regroup, and develop my own part of Christ's body. It is this part of the transformation that creates the entity of what we know as the church. Paul shares that we are one body in Christ with many parts. For the church, all Christians are the imaginal discs feeding on biblical study, hands on ministry, the sacraments and other nutrients from God's pool of goo. I don't believe it was the proof that transformed Thomas. I believe it was seeing Holiness of Christ that opened his eyes and turned him into a pool of goo. What is it for you that has made you a true believer in Christ? I invite you to look for the Holiness of God's Spirit in you that can help you to create your own pool of goo and imaginal disc. You are a vital part of the body Christ.

In order to help us grow and develop into our piece of Christ' body, Jesus gives us all the nourishment we need in the sacramental pool of goo. The bread and the cup are filled with the nutrients of God's unending love, grace, mercy, and forgiveness. In it you will find the covenant that God made with Abraham to never leave God's people, the promise from God to make us one with each other and one with Christ, and the bond between all

Christians that we are one, together with the Holy Spirit, to be the body of Christ for the world. This is the food that nourishes your soul to help us grow stronger so we can let go of our old self and soar on the wings of God. This is what a Spiritual chrysalis/cocoon means to me. Amen.