



Message Discussion Guide Week of April 30, 2023

Message: Encounters with Jesus, Part 3: From Doubt to Faith

Key Scripture: [John 20:24-29](#)

Preacher: Tom Parkinson

Message Highlights:

The resurrection of Jesus is the most essential Christian belief. If Jesus is not raised from the dead, then all of Christianity falls apart.

Even as it is the most essential Christian belief, the resurrection is also among the most difficult things to believe.

- Faith is an act of both the head and heart. Even if in our hearts we want it to be true, it's hard to wrap our minds around the truth of resurrection.
- Even the disciples – they who knew Jesus personally and saw the empty tomb with their own eyes – had their doubts about the resurrection of Jesus.

Doubt is a feeling of uncertainty that causes us to question the truth of certain belief or claims.

From the story of Thomas, we learn four important lessons about doubt:

- Doubt is normal – everyone experiences moments when it is hard to believe all the Bible teaches.
- Doubt is a choice – Whether we believe or not is a choice we make based on conditions we feel need to be satisfied for us to believe.
- Doubt is not a sin – Jesus does not condemn us for doubting but meets us in our doubts.
- Doubt strengthens faith – the strongest form of faith has worked through doubt.

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Do you find the resurrection of Jesus hard to believe? Why or why not?
- 2) Have you ever experienced significant doubts in your faith? What caused your doubt? How did you work through it? Did doubting make your faith stronger?
- 3) [Read John 20:24-29](#)
 - Why is Thomas slow to believe the testimony of the other disciples? Is his demand for evidence reasonable?
 - What does Jesus' response to Thomas communicate about how Jesus feels about our doubts?
 - How does Thomas' doubting help his faith to grow?
 - Why does Jesus offer a blessing over those who believe without seeing?
- 4) Do you agree that doubt is a choice? Can it be good to choose doubt over faith? On what grounds can we place our faith in God since we can't know everything with certainty?
- 5) What do you hear in this message that you can apply to your life this week?

Abundant Life Tip: Doubt is normal. When you experience doubt, don't be afraid to name out loud what you are doubting and why you are doubting it. Identify what would need to change for you to believe. Then ask God to strengthen your faith through your doubt.