



# **From Doubt to Faith**

## **John 20:24-31**

# INTRODUCTION

Doubt is a powerful thing. It creeps into our minds; eating away at what we think we know.

Doubt can erode our self-confidence, causing us to pullback from both opportunities & challenges. I changed my major in college from chemistry to biology because I doubted that I could handle the demands of a chemistry major.

Doubt can cause us to become fearful and anxious about the future. There were only a couple of times in my growing up that my parents left us with a baby sitter. On the first occasion, that I can remember, I began to doubt that my parents were coming back. I resisted going to sleep until they came home.

Doubt can undercut faith and lead us into skepticism. Many people have struggled with the question, what if the Bible isn't true? Many people today have opted for skepticism rather than faith.

Doubt can also be a positive catalyst to lead us to new discoveries. Doubt can make us struggle with what we think we believe. If we will wrestle through our doubt, we can come out the other side with a much stronger faith.

Thomas struggled with doubt. He had placed his hope for the future in Jesus, and now that hope was dashed. He was deeply hurt, and he was unwilling to buy into some feel good, false hope. Thomas' struggle was genuine; not a cop out, or path of least resistance. God led Thomas from doubt to faith.

## **Study 1: John 20:24-25**

Thomas was not present the first time Jesus appeared to the disciples. Thomas often is given a bad reputation as a doubter, yet the evidence is that Thomas was a fully committed follower of Jesus.

1. Look at John 11:16. How did Thomas demonstrate his commitment to Jesus?

2. Look at John 14:5. How does this passage show the inquisitive nature of Thomas?

3. What caused Thomas to doubt the report of disciples?

4. Why might Thomas have been skeptical?

5. What kind of evidence was Thomas looking for?

## MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. We all have doubts about our faith from time to time. What are some of your doubts?
2. Thomas wanted tangible proof before he would set aside his doubts. What kind of proof do you need to deal with your doubts?
3. How might the fear of further disappointment add to a person's skepticism?
4. In what ways can doubt be used as an excuse for unbelief? Look at 2 Peter 3:3-4.
5. Thomas was willing to openly express his doubts. What keeps people from expressing their doubts?
6. Why is it important to honestly examine our doubts?

## **Study 2: John 20:26-28**

A week later, Thomas was with the other disciples when Jesus appeared for a second time.

1. What was still true of the disciples a week later, even though they had seen Jesus? What is the significance of the locked door?
2. Why would John stress the fact that the door was locked when Jesus appeared to the disciples?
3. How did Jesus specifically address Thomas' doubts?
4. What was Thomas' response to seeing Jesus for himself?
5. How would this event have affected the other disciples?
6. What does Jesus second appearance tell us about Jesus' relationship with His disciples?

## MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. Why do people hold onto their skepticism even after they have seen the truth?
  
2. In what ways can fear of others get in the way of faith in Jesus?
  
3. What kinds of “proof” has Jesus offered to you that can validate who He is?
  
4. How would you address the doubts of another person regarding faith in Christ?
  
5. Thomas did a 180 and fully embraced the reality of the resurrection.
  - a. What doubts do you still have about the resurrection?
  
  - b. What will it take for you to fully embrace the reality of the resurrection?

## **Study 3: John 20:29-31**

Instead of belittling Thomas for his skepticism, Jesus addressed his doubts. Jesus affirmed Thomas' confession of faith.

1. What did Jesus say was the basis of Thomas' belief?
2. What about Jesus' message to Thomas has implications for us?
3. What is John's point in verse 30?
4. What was John's stated purpose for including the events he did include in his gospel?
5. Throughout his gospel, John placed a heavy emphasis on belief. What does it mean to truly believe in Jesus and in the reality of the resurrection?

## MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. Jesus said that we who believe without seeing are more blessed than Thomas. In what ways is this true?

2. John recorded selective “miraculous signs” from Jesus.

a. Why did he select the ones that he did?

b. How does what John recorded affirm the other Gospels?

c. How can knowing that there was more to Jesus’ life than has been recorded add to your faith?

3. John’s goal is that we would believe that Jesus is the Christ. What is the difference between believing the facts and believing in the sense John speaks of?

4. How can the following verses help you deal with your doubts? 1 John 1:1-2, Acts 4:13, 1 Peter 1:3-9, Hebrews 11:1

## **Study 4: Luke 24:36-43**

Thomas was not alone with his doubts about the resurrection. All of the disciples struggled with unbelief.

1. Look at Luke 24:11. What was the response of the disciples when the women told them about the resurrection? Why did they respond this way?
2. Look at Luke 24:19-24. What was the attitude of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus concerning the resurrection?
3. What was the first reaction of the disciples when Jesus appeared to them? What does this tell us about the expectations of the disciples regarding the resurrection?
4. How did Jesus address their surprise and unbelief?
5. Why would some doubt what they were seeing?
6. How did Jesus further demonstrate His reality?

## MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. What is your first response to news that seems too good to be true?
2. What blinded the two Emmaus disciples from accepting the reality of the resurrection?
3. What blinds people today from accepting the reality of the resurrection?
4. If you were with the disciples in the upper room when Jesus appeared, how would you have reacted?
5. How would you react if Jesus physically showed up at a worship service on Sunday morning?
6. Jesus gave the disciples tangible proof that he was real. How does this negate the idea that Jesus' resurrection was only spiritual?
7. What evidence can you look at to affirm the reality of the resurrection for yourself?