
SCRIPTURE: JOHN 20:24-29

MAIN TAKEAWAY

We can be certain that Jesus is alive even though we have not seen or touched Him!

Read: John 20:24-29; John 11:16, John 14:5

Reflection: We often refer to this disciple as Doubting Thomas. Is that fair, or do you think he should be seen instead as Persistent or Determined Thomas? All we know of him is that he was a loyal disciple (see: John 11:16, 14:5). However, he was not present when Jesus first revealed Himself as alive. Notice his quick and worshipful confession of Jesus as his Lord and his God (John 20:28). What a privilege to see the Risen Jesus! And yet, Jesus pronounces a blessing on those who have not seen Him, yet believe (John 20:29).

Discussion: What stands out in this encounter? Do you think Thomas is doubtful and skeptical, or merely incomplete in his faith in the Risen Jesus?

Read: 1 Peter 1:8-9. Peter says we can love, believe, and rejoice even though we have not seen Jesus.

Discussion: Do we demand too much evidence from God in order to believe and trust Him? How often do we ask God to meet our expectations and “show Himself”? Why might it be greater to love the Jesus we have not yet seen? Why might it be more blessed not to see Him now and still believe in Him?

Read: John 20:26 again.

Discussion: Why do you think Jesus immediately says, “Peace be with you”? What is the relationship between peace and believing?

Reflection: We see a tension in this passage. On one hand, Thomas would not believe until he saw Jesus. Jesus knew this and chose to reveal Himself to Thomas. On the other hand, we have Jesus saying it's more of a blessing to believe without seeing.

Discussion: What do we do with this tension? Should we ask God for more evidence? Is it a lack of faith to search, inquire, question? Spend some time discussing this and list some of the doubts you've experienced in your walk with God. These could include:

- Doctrines you find difficult (e.g. Authority of Scripture, Trinity, the Resurrection, Heaven/Hell, etc.)
- Unanswered prayers.
- Personal suffering, the problem of evil.
- Problematic or difficult passages or stories in the Bible.
- A painful church experience.

Application: Jesus meets us where we are, just like He did with Thomas. He is alive, and we can be certain even though we have not seen Him. Thomas did not believe. Jesus showed up, and he believed. Where do you see unbelief in your life right now (finances, health, future, dating/marriage, children, etc.)? How might you face your doubts and move to a place of trust and faith? What do you need Jesus to do for you?

Pray: Pray for an increase of faith. Pray that Jesus becomes more real to you. Thank Him that He does not rebuke us in our unbelief but gently moves us to a place of faith and trust. Praise God for the resurrection and the hope and peace we have in a Living Savior.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:
