



The Book of John

Session 15: John 20:19-31

Today we will be looking at a man who carried a demeaning nickname “Doubting Thomas”. Was it a true label or was it he just needed physical proof?

Our goals this week:

- To see and experience the disciple’s emotions when they see Jesus while hiding in the upper room.
- To understand why it is important to forgive so that we will experience peace.
- To get a better understanding of why Thomas “doubted”.

Question: If you could express one doubt in your faith, what would you say it was?

Read John 20: 19-23

In vs. 19, we see the disciples meeting behind locked doors. They were afraid of the Jewish leaders. If they could crucify Jesus for his truth, they could be next.

Question: Speaking truth can come with a price. Potential loss of a relationship or jeopardizing a position at work or with a friend. Describe a time in your life when speaking truth came with a cost.

Isn’t it interesting that Jesus actually speaks to their fear when he first sees them? “Peace be with you”. God’s peace always overcomes our fears.

Question: What do you fear in life? We don’t like to express fears between men, yet we have them. Share a fear and then express with each other where you can find the peace.

Jesus shows the disciples his wounds and his side. He was giving them physical evidence of what he endured. He still carried those scars.

Question: When you see the scars of Christ on a picture or on a figure representing him, where does it take you inside? Does it bring strength and courage in your faith?

Jesus's disciples had not yet received the baptism of the Holy Spirit (see Acts 1:4-5 and Acts 2:1-4). The Spirit dwelt with them in the person of Jesus, but now the Spirit would be on them (John 14:17).

Question: How have you experienced the filling or baptism of the Spirit? How does he speak into each day?

John records in his gospel the dark corners of the disciples who followed Jesus. Thomas was exposed as a pessimist or a doubter, yet Jesus met him in his darkness. He confronted his doubt so he might believe. Just like he does with us.

Read John 20:24-29

Question: Thomas takes a big hit with doubt, yet we see his devotion and character exposed in John 11:16. What are loyalties attached to?

We see in this encounter the depth of Thomas's deep devotion to Christ. In his mind they were headed into a stoning. Without Jesus, "Let's all die". His profound love for Jesus shows up again in John 14:1-5.

Question: Thomas's pessimism shows up. "We don't know where you are going. How will we know the way?" Have you ever lost your way in life? Have you ever asked Jesus, "Please, just show me the way"?

For some reason Thomas missed out on seeing Jesus with the other disciples. Why did he miss out? Did his pessimistic outlook take over, so he went to himself?

Question: Have you ever been in this place like Thomas? Pessimistic thoughts take over? Feelings of aloneness, betrayal, or even rejection? The devastation of the moment just overtakes you.

Again, let's not be too hard on Thomas. The other disciples didn't believe Jesus rose from the dead (see Mark 16:10-11). It wasn't until they could see Jesus themselves, that they could believe. Jesus shows up 8 days later to speak to Thomas face to face.

Question: Jesus walks right through locked doors. They were still hiding. Jesus meets Thomas. He shows him his wounds only he tells Thomas to physically touch him. How does our unbelief rob us of blessings and opportunities of moments?

The Lord was gentle with Thomas. He didn't rebuke him. He understood Thomas's weaknesses and doubts.

Question: Jesus understands our weaknesses and our doubts (see Hebrews 4:15). How have you experienced Jesus's patience and understanding in your life? How is he meeting you right where you are?

Jesus tells Thomas "Blessed are those who believe without seeing". "That's us men".

Question: Walking by faith and not by sight is affirmed in Hebrews 11:1. Express to other men today in your small group. What do you believe in Jesus?

Read John 20:30-31

John couldn't begin to record all the miracles he saw while following his Rabbi – Jesus. The same occurs today even in our life what we've experienced in Christ!

Your assignment: Share with someone this week "What I believe in Jesus". How are you a disciple in Christ?

Next week: Read John 21:1-19