



SPRING 2023 // WEEK 3

Life Group Questions

Easter Here and Now // April 29-30, 2023

The Resurrected Jesus and Our Doubt // John 20:19-31

Introduction

In this week's text, the risen Jesus makes two appearances to his disciples—one with Thomas absent and one with him present. Our focus is on the second appearance of Jesus and his interaction with Thomas. From Thomas' encounter with Jesus, we will learn some valuable lessons about belief.

Processing our doubts can be very challenging, and it is important to do so in a community of those pursuing Jesus and seeking to grow in their faith. Many times, thinking through our doubts leads us to greater faith. In addition to your discussion with your group here are some more resources you may find helpful.

Books

The Case for Christ: A Journalist's Personal Investigation of the Evidence for Jesus by Lee Strobel

The Case for Faith: A Journalist Investigates the Toughest Objections to Christianity by Lee Strobel

Letters from a Skeptic: A Son Wrestles With His Father's Questions About Christianity by Dr. Gregory A. Boyd & Edward K. Boyd

Doubting: Growing Through the Uncertainties of Faith by Alister McGrath

Dealing With Doubt by Gary Habermas

If I Really Believe, Why Do I Have These Doubts? by Dr. Lynn Anderson

Podcasts

Stand to Reason

Cold Case Christianity

Websites

www.reasonablefaith.org

www.garyhabermas.com

To think through the main ideas in the sermon and prepare for your discussion together, we invite you to look over all the questions on the following pages and write your thoughts down before you meet with your group. Due to preferences over a wide range of groups, we do not expect you will cover every question each week.

Warm Up *(Suggested time: 30 min)*

1. What is the best thing that has happened to you this week?

2. What is something you were completely certain of until you found out you were wrong?

3) What is the difference between doubt and skepticism?

Can doubt ever be useful? Explain your answer.

How should we deal with our doubts about our faith? Is there anything in this week's passage that helps us address our doubt?

4) How would you define belief (e.g., believing charity is good or believing a promise your friend makes)? Is it more than merely accepting something as true? Explain. (Look at John 20:30-31 as you consider your answer).

How would you characterize Thomas's belief?

Personal Spiritual Exercises

Just like physical exercises help strengthen and stretch our bodies for healthy living, these spiritual exercises are meant to move us spiritually in ways that may be new so we might experience inner growth. Since God longs for us to experience Him with our whole selves—mind, body, spirit—we invite you along each week to strengthen your souls with suggestions and prompts. **Next week in Life Group, take a few moments to share how the Lord may have used this exercise in your life.**

Prayer Focus: As Thomas found resolution of his doubt through his encounter with the risen Jesus, so too can we. Spend some time this week talking to Jesus about any doubts you have about the truth of the Christian message. Be honest about your doubts. Like the father who asked Jesus to heal his demon-possessed son (Mark 9:14-27), make this request, "I do believe, help me overcome my unbelief."

Scripture Focus: Every day this week read and reflect on a different account of people whose doubts were removed because of an encounter with Jesus.

Day 1: John the Baptizer doubts whether Jesus is the Messiah (Matthew 11:1-6).

Day 2: Peter's doubts prohibit him from walking on water (Matthew 14:22-33).

Day 3: Nathanael doubts Jesus is the Messiah (John 1:43-50).

Day 4: A Samaritan woman doubts Jesus is the Messiah (John 4:1-29).

Day 5: Disciples of Jesus doubt his identity (John 6:53-69).

Day 6: Martha doubts Jesus can raise her brother from the dead (John 11:38-44).

Day 7: Re-read Jesus' appearance to Thomas (John 20:24-29).

Prayer *(Suggested time: 20 min)*

A significant part of "coming together" is being open and honest with our lives. Sitting in a group of people for prayer may be new or it may be familiar to you. If you would rather not pray aloud when it is your turn, feel free to pray silently and then say "Amen" aloud signaling the next person in the group to pray. Whether or not you choose to verbalize your prayer, everyone is a participant in sharing this time before God together.

Take a few moments to prepare a prayer request. What did the message, working through the above questions or the discussion cause you to notice about your own relationship with Jesus? Would you be willing to share your prayer request with the group?