

## **Our Doubts**

John 20:24-29

PW Emerson – 05/5/2019 – Ten:27 Ministries

### INTRODUCTION

Do you ever have doubts? About God? Jesus? Faith? Etc?

### **ASK**

What do you do with your doubts? How do you handle them?

Jesus, who tells us about so many things in life, tells us how to handle doubts.

John 20:24-29

Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it." A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

What nickname is Thomas often known by today?

**DOUBTING THOMAS**

However, the reality is that Thomas got a bad rap.

- Matthew 28:16-17

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted.

We see that other disciples doubted too.

- John 11:16

Then Thomas (called Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

In referring to the possibility of Jesus being stoned to death, Thomas says to the rest of the disciples, let's join Jesus. Thomas had faith and character.

- John 21:2-3

Simon Peter, Thomas (called Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. "I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you." So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

- When Jesus was arrested on Thursday night, ALL disciples ran – not just Thomas.
- Which disciples were present for the crucifixion? NONE – not just Thomas.
- Matthew 24:26

So if anyone tells you, 'There he is, out in the desert,' do not go out; or, 'Here he is, in the inner rooms,' do not believe it.

In regards to the return of Christ, Jesus cautions the disciples to have healthy skepticism – and Thomas does!

When it comes to doubting or believing, Thomas is no better or worse than the rest of the disciples.

- Thomas shouldn't be doubting Thomas alone,
- Peter – THE ROCK – who denied Jesus when the Cock Crowed 3 times ... maybe he should be known as CROWING PETER
- The apostle John – refers to himself as “The disciple whom Jesus loved” – sounds pretty arrogant to me ..... yet we don't call him UNHUMBLE JOHN

What if we had nicknames based on our less-than-shining moments

- Phil – The funny one?
- Brandon – One who stands out! – Dressy Brandon

OK – back on track with doubts .....

People tell me ALL THE TIME, “I don't feel like a good Christian because I have doubts.”

- Almost EVERYONE HAS DOUBTS!!!!

If not having doubts was a prerequisite for being a Christian, Christianity would have died out 2000 years ago.

The question is not

- Do we have doubts ..... Rather
- How do we handle our doubts?

## I USE DOUBT TO FIND ANSWERS

### IF

- Doubts lead to questions
- Questions lead to answers
- Answers are accepted,

Then doubt has done a good thing.

### WHEN

- Doubt becomes stubbornness
- Stubbornness becomes a lifestyle

Then doubt harms faith

### Mark 9:17-27

A man in the crowd answered, "Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not." "O unbelieving generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me." So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth. Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?" "From childhood," he answered. "It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us." "If you can?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for him who believes." Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my

unbelief!" When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the evil spirit. "You deaf and mute spirit," he said, "I command you, come out of him and never enter him again." The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, "He's dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up.

The man

- Believed – thus he went to Jesus for help
- Had doubts – because Jesus' disciples couldn't help him
- So – he asked Jesus for help – which would overcome his doubts

One of my favorite books to use with the confirmation group is *The Case For Christ*

- The author Lee Strobel had more than doubts; he was trying to prove Jesus was not the Messiah
- But he took an open-minded stand
- He asked all sorts of questions – including all the tough questions
- By the time he was done, he was convinced Jesus is the Christ

His doubts lead to answers – which led to belief.

People have said to me – I wish I had your faith.

- I have doubts from time to time.
- I find many ministers have doubts – if they're wrong, they've gone out on a limb quite far.

The disciples ALL had doubts

- What sets the disciples – you and me – apart from non-believers?
  - Our doubts led to belief
  - We are willing to be on the journey
    - We continue to look for answers
    - We read God’s Word
    - We call out to God
    - We live out God’s call

That’s why

- Doubting Thomas
- Crowing Peter
- Funny One Phil

Are all followers of Christ!

Think of the doubts you have.

- What questions come to mind?
- Who can you talk to for help in alleviate your doubts?

Now go do it!

## II DO NOT BE AFRAID

Doubt comes from fear – fear of being wrong ... fear of being made fun of .... ???

The disciples ALL needed proof because they were afraid – of being killed

- Their leader – Jesus – who they thought was the Son of God, had just been killed
- Stephen stood up and was stoned to death for his faith
- Many Pharisees and other leaders were still hot to find Jesus’ followers
- Saul was actively seeking out Christians to KILL THEM!

FEAR is a very powerful motivator

I read a survey that asked people what they are most afraid of:

- 54% being in a car crash
- 53% having cancer
- 50% inadequate Social Security
- 49% not having enough money for retirement

What did God do with the disciples’ fears?

- He addressed them head on
- He gave them a mission
- Gave them everything they needed to fulfill the mission

And how does history remember those people?

AS SAINTS!

In other words, the disciples weren’t controlled by their fears

- They moved forward **IN SPITE OF** their fears and did GREAT things for God

Bill Clinton’s Biography

- Running for president – LOTS of Fear

- Fear of rejection
- Fear of failure
- Fear of being attacked

But I was determined not to let my fears dictate my actions

David & Goliath Story – what was the reaction of the army of Israel?

I Samuel 17:24

When the Israelites saw the man, they all ran from him in great fear.

DAVID did NOT let fear dictate his action. He stood firm!

- David may have been afraid ...

But if so, he didn't let that fear control his actions

When it comes to helping people,

- Many Christians have a heart for reaching out
- Most don't act, rather think to themselves, I'm sure someone will come along

That someone is US!

Story at Fat Lorenzo's

- Mom with son
- We helped mom clean up mess
- We paid for meal

Ten27ministries.org - Luke 10:27

Could have let fear of what other people would think stop us from acting

Romans 8:15-17

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Do not be afraid.

III Be at PEACE!

Verse 26

A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"

Jesus says to EVERYONE in this piece – Peace be with you

Peace is so important and needed by all that in Hebrew it is a greeting still used today – Shalom!

John 14:27

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

## **ASK**

When you are troubled or in turmoil – what gives you peace?

- Being alone in nature
- Being grabbed by God
- Shutting out the world so I can hear God!
- 

Today more than ever I see people worn out, ragged, tired, leading chaotic lives.

We need peace.

Some churches have a “Passing of the Peace”

- Peace be with you!
- And also with you!

## **DO IT NOW!**

Philippians 4:7

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

This is often referred to as a peace that passes all understanding

## **CONCLUSION**

Let me meet you on the mountain, Lord,  
Just once.  
You wouldn't have to burn a whole bush.  
Just a few smoking branches  
And I would surely be ...your Moses.

Let me meet you on the water, Lord,  
Just once.  
It wouldn't have to be on White Rock Lake.  
Just on a puddle after the annual Dallas rain  
And I would surely be...your Peter.

Let me meet you on the road, Lord,  
Just once.  
You wouldn't have to blind me on North Central Expressway.  
Just a few bright lights on the way to chapel  
And I would surely be...your Paul.

Let me meet you, Lord,  
Just once.  
Anywhere. Anytime.  
Just meeting you in the Word is so hard sometimes  
Must I always be...your Thomas?

Norman Shirk, April 10, 1981, KQ (Dallas Seminary)

The resurrection removed all doubts for his disciples.

You and I should move past our doubts and fears and serve God in bringing Peace to the  
World!