

**Title:** Doubting Your Doubts

**Passage:** John 20: 24-31

### **Sermon Summary:**

The Apostle Thomas has been known throughout the centuries as "doubting Thomas." However, we see in this passage that his doubts were honest ones and stemmed from a wrong understanding of Jesus' ministry as the Messiah. Through patience and compassion Jesus revealed Himself to Thomas in a way that put his doubts to rest and made him declare one of the clearest confessions of Jesus' divinity in all the Gospels. This narrative reminds us that when we deal with our spiritual doubts in a way that is honest and sincere, and when we humbly seek to understand the truth as it's clearly revealed in Christ and His Word, we will discover it, because ultimate truth is found in the person of Jesus Christ

### **Introduction**

Doubt - vice or virtue?

Luke 1:18

And Zechariah said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years."

Luke 1:34

And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

Faith without doubts is like a body without antibodies.

- be defenseless to trials, or
- collapse against any skeptic

Doubt can be a step towards Christian maturity

- finding answers to your doubts can strengthen your faith.

Doubts - different types

- Immediate refusal
  - Like an atheist. Doubt that is a result of systematic moral choice (one's heart refuses to submit)
- Gradual
  - Doubt result of accumulation of thousand of little choices contrary to God or compromising
- Theological misunderstandings
  - Doubt result of wrong expectations of God or theological misunderstandings of God.

**Passage:** John 20:24-31

Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe." Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although 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, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but

believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

## EXPOSITION

### Overview

- I. The cry of a disappointed doubter
- II. The adulation of an astonished doubter
- III. The role of a converted doubter

### I. The cry of a disappointed doubter (v. 24-25)

#### John 20:24-25

Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."

*Thomas - the reluctant doubter*

#### John 11:14-16

Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died, and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

- Thomas' response lacked sincerity

#### John 14:5

Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?"

- Thomas interrupted Jesus as he talked about leaving.

*Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came.*

- Why was Thomas not with the other disciples? He felt hopeless and wanted to grieve in seclusion

*So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord."*

- The disciples rejoiced at seeing Jesus.

*But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."*

- Other disciples also doubted (didn't didn't believe women who first saw Jesus, didn't believe Jesus that he would return as stayed in locked room, etc.)
- Uniqueness of Thomas' doubt:
  - misunderstanding of who God was and who Messiah was to be
  - Misperception: Messiah was one who was to immediately restore the world order with peace
  - But the crucifixion and death of Jesus threw this upside down.

Question: do we doubt God because of wrong theology or wrong view of God?

- Answer: consider doubting your doubts
  - If you doubt God and His existence, what is the source of those doubts? Truth or lies.

Why people fall away from Christianity (Tim Keller):

- Wrong view of salvation
  - Think salvation is based on how good we are.
  - Truth: have a right view of who God is
- Wrong view of suffering
  - Think once become a Christian, will have less and less problems.
  - Truth: as become a Christian, you will have even more troubles or more sufferings. It is part of God's plan for your eternal good and His glory
- Wrong view of the Bible
  - Think contradictions in the Bible is barrier to faith
  - Truth: Smart people have evaluated every angle. Consider thoughtful evaluation of alleged contradictions based on your own.

Jeremiah 29:13

You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.

## **II. The adulation of an astonished doubter (v.26-28)**

John 20:26-28

Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although 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, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"

*Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked,*

- the setting of Jesus appearance
- Eight days later = Thomas had time to think and hear what had been happening with Jesus post-resurrection appearances.

*Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe."*

- Jesus appears and was very gracious when He approaches Thomas

*Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"*

- Titles point to full deity of Jesus (using these terms otherwise was blasphemy and deserved death)
  - My = Jesus is personal to Thomas

### 2 Corinthians 6:2

For he says,

*"In a favorable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you."*

*Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*

### **III. The role of a converted doubter**

#### John 20:29-31

Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

*Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."*

- Jesus blessing to those who come to Jesus by faith

#### Romans 10:13

For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

#### Romans 10:17

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

*Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

- Truth: many objective facts exist that point to the veracity of Christ.

#### John 14:6

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

If Christ didn't resurrect from the dead, then we are

- liars,

### 1 Corinthians 15:15

We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised.

- Still in sins

### 1 Corinthians 15:17

And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.

- Most pitied among the world

### 1 Corinthians 15:19

If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

- True faith isn't just belief but relying upon the truth

## **Applications**

If you are a Christian and struggle with doubts based on theological understandings:

- Re-evaluate your understandings of who God is (His holiness)
- Examine closely who God is (evaluate the

### Acts 17:11

Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

### James 1:25

But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

If you are a Christian and struggle with doubts due to contradictions in the Bible:

- Doubt your doubts.
- Examine the theology, understanding of God, that you are holding onto whether they are actually based on truth or instead on your personal preferences / biases.

### 2 Corinthians 13:5

Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!

If you are a Christian and struggle with doubts due to sufferings

- Meditate on Scripture on meaning of trials:
  - James 1; Romans 5, 8; 2 Corinthians 1; 2 Corinthians 12; Hebrews 12; 1 Peter 3; Revelation 21; Job
- None of your suffering is wasted. God is doing something with your suffering.
- Read biography's (Ex: Tortured for Christ)

If you are a Christian who doesn't have doubts but hear others with doubts.

- Have compassion
- Give reasonable arguments in response to doubts.

#### 2 Peter 1:3

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,

If you are not a Christian, doubt your doubts.

- Christianity is the most reliable and trustworthy belief system that someone could ever hold.

#### Psalms 96:5

For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the LORD made the heavens.

- If don't believe, then examine deeply because eternity is at stake.

#### Hebrews 9:27

And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment,