



April 8, 2018

Day 1: Read John 20. Jesus' first followers did not merely believe in the resurrection; they saw it firsthand. In fact, they were so convinced of the resurrection that many of them were willing to give up their lives for their belief. In many ways it's easy to be envious of those first disciples. How much easier would it be to believe if you could see and touch this man who died and came back to life? Instead, we are asked to believe the impossible about a man we've never met in person. Did Jesus truly rise from the dead? Is He alive today? And if so, what are the implications for our lives? Don't be afraid to ask questions. Blind faith can often be a weak and immature faith, whereas a faith that is tested and thought-through will be a stronger faith. Write down doubts you have about God or the issues you have about having a faith in Him. Put it on paper.

Day 2: What happens when we die? I mean, how do we really know? What if we have created the idea of God so that we don't feel scared and alone? What if Jesus died but never actually came back to life? 1 Corinthians 15 speaks to this. Death is our enemy. No matter how rich or happy we are, no matter how good or loved we are, we are all going to die. Yet, the resurrection of Jesus declares to everyone for all time that there is hope! Do you have a safe community that you can be real and discuss faith and doubt with? Is there someone in your life who you admire? They live a life of character and faith. How do you think they would respond to your list from yesterday? Do you know how they'd answer? Could you ask them?

Day 3: Read John 20:24-31. When Thomas was told that Jesus was alive, he responded by saying, "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." Can you relate to Thomas? Where is the proof? Are there areas of your faith that you say to God, "Unless I can see for myself, I won't believe?" When Thomas finally saw Jesus alive in person, Jesus didn't reject, shun, or push Thomas away because of his doubt. Rather, Jesus invited him to come and see, to touch, and to place his hands here. Then Jesus told

Thomas, "Don't be faithless any longer. Believe!" If there is an area of your faith in which you struggle with doubt, know that Jesus won't reject you. Instead, He says, "Come see for yourself." Take some time to pray that Jesus would reveal Himself to you today. Full disclaimer - He may answer your prayer and show up in ways you least expect.

Day 4: Where do our doubts come from? What feeds them? Are they driven by fears or past circumstances? Add to your list from Monday. Where did these doubts originate? The more we understand our doubts, the better we will be able to make peace with them. Is it possible to believe in God yet struggle with disbelief? Go back to what you do know about God: His power, His love, and His goodness. How does your picture of God and His character affect your doubts? **Read Mark 9:14-27.** Consider praying back to God the words of the man from Mark 9:24, "Lord, I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" Jesus wants to work in your life, but He is looking for you to have faith in Him. Notice, He wanted the father to express belief before he healed the boy.

Day 5: Once Thomas had the evidence to settle his doubt, he was able to respond in faith, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28). In one pivotal moment Thomas went from doubting that Jesus was alive to believing that He is the living God. **Read Romans 6:5-14.** Once we move from doubt to belief in the resurrection, our lives are able to radically change. Just as Jesus is raised from the dead, so we too are given new life, and not just new life some day in heaven, but new resurrection life here and now. Everlasting life doesn't start someday when we die; it starts when we believe. That doesn't mean that you will never struggle with doubt again. It doesn't mean you won't struggle with sin anymore either. However, it does mean that you have completely changed and will never be the same. What is next for you? Do you have enough evidence to answer your doubt? Or do you need to remain in the doubt for a time? Maybe this week you see that Jesus is asking you to believe? If so, what would that mean for your day today?



April 8, 2018
Reactions to the Resurrection
John 20:24-29

Thomas' reaction to the resurrection was doubt. We typically view this response as _____. But maybe doubt can also lead to something _____.

- 'I will not believe.' – to be _____ in the truthfulness of.

When it comes to doubt, there is a difference between, "I _____ to believe _____" and "I _____ believe _____"

- "I struggle to believe because..." is a very real, emotional reaction which has been expressed and felt by many including: Noah, Abraham, Moses, Gideon, Esther, Job, David, Peter, and John the Baptist.
- God is big enough to handle our _____ and even our _____.

As Thomas explored his doubt, he moved from _____ to _____. (John 20:28) I believe the same can be true for us.

What to do when we doubt:

1. Be honest about your doubts (with God and others).
2. Doubt your doubts more than you doubt your faith.
3. "Don't doubt or be faithless any longer. Believe!" (John 20:27)