

The Jesus Way – Overcoming Doubt John 20

Have you ever dealt with doubt when it comes to the Christian faith? Does it ever seem like belief comes so easily for some & is such a struggle for others?

Maybe you were raised in the church & this all is just what you have always believed... but what about those who haven't grown up in church?

Or maybe you've grown up in the church, but you always felt like you were the outsider, or the one left behind, because you always just had questions...

Maybe you just got dealt a difficult hand in life, and it has just been harder for you to believe all of this... unless/until you can actually see the evidence!

If we are honest, we have all probably asked the question of ourselves, "Do I really believe this?" And we've all dealt with doubt in one way or another!

So what is the "Jesus Way" in dealing with doubt? **John 20:19-20**

- I'm sure for some of the disciples their doubts faded when they saw Him!
- For others, all they needed was to hear his voice, "Peace be with you."
- But maybe others still needed more evidence, so Jesus showed them his hands & side! What would it take for us to believe that Jesus was alive?

We don't know how many of the disciples were there that day, but we're told that at least 1 of the 12 was not present... Thomas **John 20:24**

So where was he?

- Was he running an errand? Why wouldn't have Jesus waited to show up?
- Was he just afraid? We know the other disciples were afraid too... but...
- Had he already given up, thrown in the towel, and returned to his home?

Whatever the reason why he wasn't present for this resurrection appearance, & no amount of convincing was going to alleviate his doubts – Vs. 25.

Why do you think he had such a strong response? Was it just a lack of faith on his part, or might there be other reasons why Thomas may have struggled...

- Did you know that Thomas was a twin? John calls him "the Twin" twice in his gospel, but we have no idea who his twin was! So, Thomas is identified/known by being associated with someone who is unknown...
- Did you also know that other than being listed in the names of the disciples no other gospel writer mentions Thomas' name or tells his story... only John!

- But even in John's gospel, Thomas does not occupy a Peter-like presence... except for his Simon-Peter-like failure! **John 11:16**

- The only other thing we know about Thomas is his questions... what he didn't know or have answers to... **John 14:5**

Maybe you are a Thomas-like follower of Jesus... in the background... only sure or what you are unsure of... filled with questions, doubts, fears...

Everyone else has these faith enhancing experience & you seem to miss it...

What happens next in the narrative? **John 20:26 – "Eight days later..."** Do you ever have those lightbulb moments while reading Scripture when something you missed before now jumps off the page? This was true for me!

Eight days go by since Jesus appeared to all his friends & there's no sign of Jesus for Thomas... What must he have thought... felt... concluded...

Maybe he was just "the Twin"... the nobody... the doubter... the failure...

But Jesus comes... Jesus meets Thomas right where he was... **John 20:26-28**

Jesus meets Thomas in his doubts and provides him with exactly what he needed to turn his doubts into a declaration!

The doubting Thomas declares, "My Lord and my God!" The skeptic becomes the believer... the doubter becomes the declarer... the forgotten one makes an unforgettable proclamation of the true identity of Jesus!

The Jesus way is any way that leads to Jesus!!!

- Maybe your way to Jesus was paved by believing parents...
- Maybe your way to Jesus was paved by growing up in church...
- Maybe your way to Jesus was paved by a significant life-altering event...
- Maybe your way to Jesus was paved by the influence of a friend...
- Maybe your way to Jesus was paved by finding yourself at rock-bottom...
- Maybe your way to Jesus was paved by a life filled with questions & doubts...

Maybe your story is a lot like Thomas' story... but even Thomas' story is a faith story... that led to an encounter with Jesus that forever changed His life!

There is only one way to God – through Jesus Christ... But Jesus comes to us and leads us into this truth in a variety of ways! So no matter the path, be sure of the destination! Doubts & fears are welcome if they lead us to Jesus!

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