

"Doubting Thomas"

If there is ever a topic which is relevant to all of us it's the topic of doubt. Now people doubt all the time **don't they?** Some people who are running late for work often doubt if they will get the kids to school on time or even get to work on time. Some people after losing their job doubt how they are going to pay their bills. After suffering loss some people doubt if they can carry on living.

Even as Christians we doubt if God can meet our daily needs sometimes. Women doubt that men can do the housework as good as they can. Men doubt if women can ever drive a car as good as they can. But if there is one area where most people doubt, even our children. It's doubting if God really exists.

And what I want to do today is try and help our young people to understand that doubting is OK up to a point. Because there is going to come a time when they have to make a decision.

Now not long after Jesus was crucified and resurrected back to life, many people even His own followers doubted that Jesus was alive. And because Jesus knew this was going to happen, He actually showed Himself to many, many people.

But were not going to look at all the people He appeared to, were going to focus our attention on His main followers, especially a guy named Thomas. Now His disciples were probably talking about their time with Jesus, talking about all the good times and the bad times they had together with Jesus.

But probably in their hearts they were thinking that they would never see Jesus again since he was buried in a grave. But **John 20:19** tells us, **"On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, Jesus came and stood among them. Peace be with you!" he said."**

Now if you or I were there we would probably be panicking thinking there is a ghost in the house, but not just any ghost, a walking, talking ghost. But this was no ghost, this was Jesus and John says in **John 20:20**, **"Then he showed them the wounds in his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw that Jesus had risen from the grave"**.

Now again if this was you or I we might to run a mile, but Jesus' followers knew exactly who was in front of them, this was Jesus. And He wasn't dead anymore, He is very much alive.

Let me ask you, **have you ever told someone a true story but no-one ever believes you? Now if someone comes up to you and says, 'hey I saw a UFO last night' you would probably say, 'yeh right, whatever'. Or if someone came up to you and said, 'you will never believe what happened to me last night' 'I was sleeping in my bed when all of a sudden the roof came off our house and Santa Clause woke me up and said, Ho, Ho, Ho Merry Christmas'.**

I don't think anyone would believe you, we all know that Santa comes down the chimney. But what if someone came up to you and said, 'Hey you know that guy whose funeral we attended last week? You will never believe this but we were all in a room and He appeared and spoke to us.'

Would you believe that? I don't think any of us would, and that's what happens next with Jesus' followers. **John 20:24** **"One of the disciples, whose name was Thomas, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"**

Jesus' followers were so excited about seeing Jesus, they couldn't wait to speak to Thomas and tell him. But like we just said, some people will simply not believe you and just doubt everything you've just told them.

"Doubting Thomas"

John 20:25 "But Thomas said, "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."

In other words Thomas asks the very question which many people ask today, 'if you are telling the truth then prove it!' And that's a question that not only many adults ask but it's a question which I know most of you are struggling with.

Is God real? Did God really create the universe? If there is a God then why can't we see Him and touch Him?

Now these are good questions which us adults need to be able to answer to help our children understand. You see kids, the truth of the matter is, we can't physically show you God. We can't say here He is, touch Him for yourself. And that's important for us adults and you kids to understand. Even Jesus' followers couldn't say to Thomas come with us and we will show you Him.

You see loved ones, there are some things which we can't do but only God can do, if He chooses to do so. And that's exactly what happens next in John 20:26, "A week later the disciples were in the house again, and this time Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"

Now notice that the door was locked but Jesus still managed to get in amongst them. You see Thomas doubted His friends concerning Jesus being back alive. Thomas doubted that Jesus was alive, even though Jesus had told them all this was going to happen.

And even when Jesus appears again to them, even with Thomas being there, just to prove that Jesus' wasn't a ghost, Jesus says to Thomas in John 20:27, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side." Jesus was saying to Thomas, 'I know what you were thinking before, you want proof that I'm alive, touch me, feel my scars, I'm alive Thomas, now do you believe me.'

In fact Jesus says to him in John 20:27 "Stop doubting and believe." And do you know what, loved ones, that's the message God wants you to take home with you today. That's the message that God wants to tell you kids today. "Stop doubting and believe."

Because when we all finally stop doubting and believe that Jesus really did die and was buried and was resurrected from the grave our response will be the same as Thomas' in John 20:28, "Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

Guys I wished I could just ask Jesus to suddenly appear in front of you so that you would believe in Him today, but I can't and you guys know that I can't. And do you know what? Jesus knew that I wouldn't be able to do that, He knew that no-one would ever be able to do that today.

That's why He says to Thomas in John 20:29 "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." Do you know who Jesus is talking about here when He says to Thomas, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

He's talking about you and me. Jesus says you think those people who were living when He was alive were blessed. You think that Thomas and all the others who saw Jesus after He came alive from the grave were blessed! Jesus says, blessed! Not as blessed as you and I who have never even seen Him.

You see guys when push comes to shove, its all about faith.

"Doubting Thomas"

Hebrews 11:1 "To have faith is to be sure of the things we hope for, to be certain of the things we cannot see."

Jesus is telling us that it takes faith to believe in Him, it takes faith to know that Jesus is well and alive today. In fact in many ways, we need more faith than the people we read about in the Bible, **why?** Because none of us have ever seen Jesus, none of us have ever reached out and touched His side.

A young boy named Steven asked his father, "How do you know there is a God?" "Why do you ask that question? Do you doubt the existence of God?" asked the father. "Well, I heard one of my school teachers say that we could not be sure that there is a God. Is there any way really to know?" "Well, my boy. Do you remember the other day that you were laughing about Robinson Crusoe's dismay at discovering that there were other persons on the island beside himself? How did he discover them? Did he see them?"

No, he discovered one track of a bare foot in the sand, and he knew that it could not be his own. He knew that only a human being could have made it, and he knew that whoever made it could not be far off, for the tide had not yet reached it.

All those things he knew to be true, although he had not seen a human being within miles of the island. And the knowledge was all gained from a mark in the sand. "If one print of a bare foot in the sand is absolute proof of the existence and presence of a human being, what are we to suppose when we see the prints of the Master's shoe, covering the whole wide world?"

We see on mountain and valley the print of the fingers of God. We see a million plants and flowers and trees that only God could make grow. We see all the rivers and the springs of the world fed from invisible specks of atmospheric moisture.

What do all those things mean, those millions upon millions of footprints on the clay of the world? They mean God living, present, ruling, and loving! They mean God and nothing else!" Now Jesus may not appear before us physically but He has left us with something to help us believe, the Bible.

John 20:30+31 "In his disciples' presence Jesus performed many other miracles which are not written down in this book. But these have been written in order that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through your faith in him you may have life."

Jesus left us His word, the Bible to help us to stop doubting and believe in Him. **Why is it that people are quick to believe in Santa Clause but struggle to believe in Jesus who is very real? Why it that people believe in the tooth fairy but struggle to believe in Jesus who gives us real gifts? Why is when people go on the internet and believe everything which is in their but struggle when it comes to believing in the Bible?**

You see guys Jesus wants us to believe in Him so that He can give us life. Because the TV can't give you eternal life in heaven. Santa Clause won't offer you eternal life with Jesus. Guys the church here has said this many times to you all and we really want you to understand this point this morning.

We would love each and every one of you to become Christians one day, we really would. But and this is a big but, we can pray and help and guide you all in the right direction but we can't make you become Christians. That is your choice and your decision.

Now how many of you have ever seen the film, King Kong?

"Doubting Thomas"

I love that film especially the part near the end when the ape finally finds Darrow in the city, picks her up and heads for Central Park where they have a few minutes to themselves playing on a frozen lake.

But when army start shooting at him Kong climbs up on the top of Empire State Building. And its then that the air force starts to attack him. Darrow screams to them to stop but finally the big ape falls to his death. And at the very end of the film, around the dead body of Kong a large crowd have gathered when someone says, "The airplanes got him", but someone else turned around and said, "No, it wasn't the airplanes", "It was beauty killed the beast".

Darrow the lady in the film really loved King Kong, even though He was big and ugly. And do you know what guys? It's the same with Jesus. He sees us ugly with sin but He too proved how much He loves us because He was willing to come to the world to die for us. And I hope and pray that one day you all too will stop doubting and start believing.