



Sermon Discussion Questions
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Sermon Series: 40 Days of Easter
Week 3: I Doubt It

1. ICE BREAKER: Thomas missed out on a huge moment and had to hear about it from others—classic FOMO. What's a funny or memorable time you missed out on something (a moment, event, or inside joke) and had to hear everyone else talk about it later? How did you react?
2. Read our Scripture for this week, John 20:19-29:

¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

*²¹ Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."
²² And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."*

²⁴ Now Thomas (also known as Didymus^[a]), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵ 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."

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!" ²⁷ 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."

²⁸ Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

²⁹ Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

What do you notice, or what stands out to you as you read this Scripture? Are there any particular words or phrases? How do you think you would have felt if you were Thomas and had missed out initially?

3. Thomas is often labeled "Doubting Thomas," but he is actually very relatable. One author writes, *"Thomas had the mindset of a modern or postmodern person; he could believe a thing only after all the facts were in. He looked not for hopes or dreams or poetry, but for facts, observable facts."*

In what ways do you identify with Thomas' need to see or personally experience something before believing it? How has that affected your faith, or other areas of your life?

4. In the message, we learned that doubt is not the enemy of faith, and that doubt is often what happens when life outpaces faith.

In your experience with faith, how have you been taught that you need to deal with doubt? Does it scare you when you have doubt? Why or why not? What do you most often do with your doubts?

5. When doubt shows up, people often react in three common ways: fake it, walk away completely, or engage honestly.

Which of these responses do you tend to default to? What do you think it looks like to engage doubts honestly and thoughtfully?

6. Sometimes, how we treat our doubts depends on where they are coming from. Doubt may come from weakened faith muscles, from secondhand faith knowledge, or from difficult disappointment.

Which of these sources of doubt have you experienced before? With your group, define each type, and discuss some ways that we can move forward when experiencing them. How might all of us need to 'strengthen' our faith muscles as 'disciples of the internet'?

7. Reread John 20:26-27. Notice Jesus' posture towards Thomas, and the way He speaks to him.

Discuss what this interaction reveals about Jesus' character. How might this affect the way you bring your doubts or questions to Him? Why do you think Jesus returned to recreate the experience that Thomas had missed?

8. Now read John 20:28-29. Thomas' response to Jesus teaches us that eventually, doubt invites a decision. Jesus reminds us that we can believe, even we have not yet seen.

Has there ever been a moment in your life where you felt like you had to make a decision about God, even when you weren't sure you believed completely? How did you do that? In what ways has the Holy Spirit made Jesus real to you?

9. PRACTICE: Often, the most painful doubt begins with "wounded hope," expressed in the words the disciples used on the road to Emmaus - "*I had hoped...*" (Luke 24:21).

Have someone put on some prayerful music. Take a moment to reflect: where in your life have you been saying, "I had hoped..." (for healing, an answer, a different outcome)?

Bring that honestly to Jesus in prayer. What might it look like to continue trusting Him, even if that hope hasn't been fulfilled the way you expected? What invitation is the Lord bringing to you as your next right step?

Share with your group.