

GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide
SB 09.10.2023

DEFEATING DOUBT - John 20:19-31

Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles or observations stood out to you from this week’s message? Discuss with your group.

Pastor Daniel tells us “Honestly, I feel sorry for Thomas. How would you like to forever be linked with your weakest moment? Peter denied the Lord, but we don’t call him ‘denying Peter.’ The truth is, ‘Doubting Thomas’ could just as easily have been dubbed ‘Believing Thomas.’ The Bible records several instances where he demonstrated great faith, but he is much better known for his bouts with doubt. I’m so glad the Bible deals honestly with Thomas’ struggles with doubt because it shows us what to do when doubt creeps into our lives. The name Thomas means twin. We’re never told who his twin was, but that’s ok, because I think I already know. It’s me. Perhaps it’s you too. Like him we struggle with our faith at times. That’s why I’m thankful for him. They say one of the best ways to approach the study of a subject is to go to an expert in the field. Well, the most famous expert on doubt also happens to be one of Jesus’ disciples. So, let’s see what we can learn from him.” Let’s get into our lesson...

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

1. What struck you most from Pastor Daniel’s sermon?

Digging Deeper in God’s Word: Life Lessons

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 20:19-22

1. Why were the disciples afraid of the Jews? Did their fear display a lack of faith? Why or why not?

The disciples, connected to the high-profile ministry and ensuing controversy involving Jesus, had what could appear to be legitimate cause for concern after their Master was violently and publicly executed. Yet, they also had witnessed His power, heard Him foretell His death, and even seen His resurrected form. Their fear, then, was most likely rooted in their continued confusion concerning the plans of Jesus. Though they had faith in His power, they did not yet comprehend His purpose, so they hid and doubted.

2. Why do you think Jesus said, “Peace be with you”? Why do you think He showed the disciples His hands and side?
3. What can we learn about Jesus’ resurrected body from these verses?

Jesus proved to His disciples that He was not a ghost but was physically present with them. The marks of His wounds were ample evidence that He was the same Jesus who was crucified, the same Jesus they knew. He had been bodily resurrected. Scripture does not answer all the questions believers might have about Jesus’ resurrected body. In some ways, His resurrected body was the same as His body before His death, but in other ways it was different.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 20:23-29

John reported how Thomas (called Didymus) came to believe that Jesus had been resurrected. Didymus [Did ih muhs] is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew name Thomas, both meaning twin. Thomas was courageous and loved Jesus. He had expressed a willingness to die with Him (see John 11:16). Nevertheless, he had difficulty accepting things on hearsay. He wanted tangible proofs and precise definitions of spiritual matters (see John 14:5). Thomas wanted to experience the truth for Himself, rather than to take someone else’s word for it.

1. If you could have tangible proof of one supernatural truth, what would you choose? Why? How do you grow your faith in this area without tangible proof?

“PROMISES” in 2023

2. Why do you think Jesus appeared a second time in the upper room to visit His disciples?
3. What words express Jesus’ care for Thomas? What is unusual to you about Thomas’s response to Jesus? How would you have responded?
4. What did Thomas mean when he said, “My Lord and My God?” What does this tell us about who Jesus really is?

When at last presented with the opportunity to touch the scars and verify the resurrection of Jesus, Thomas either lost the nerve or the need. Instead of doubting and inspecting, Thomas responded to the sudden appearance of Jesus by worshipping. He may not have been as skeptical as he thought he was. At the words of Jesus, he set aside his demands and spoke with newfound faith..

5. What are the blessings for those who believe without seeing? How have you experienced this?
6. Why is it important that we continue to act in faith, even though we can’t always see the outcome?

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 20:30-31

1. What was John trying to communicate in vs 30-31?
2. Why is this important?
3. What are the biggest intellectual objections you and/or other people have with believing the identity and work of Jesus? How do these verses (and other passages) answer those objections?

Applying God’s Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

Jesus may not appear bodily in the room right now, but like they were for Thomas, His words are all you need. They are all you need for faith, and they are all you need for blessing. Put yourself in the position to hear from Jesus and the blessings He provides will follow.

1. Is there something in your life you are afraid of right now? What do you think Jesus would say about it?
2. Are you experiencing doubt in your heart right now? If so, concerning what? How can you make time to hear from God this week?
3. How can our group pray for you as a result of this discussion?

PRAYER: Thank God for the finished work of the cross and the power of the resurrection. Pray that your group values the voice and presence of God. Pray that He strengthens their faith to the degree that others are strengthened by them and that He blesses them to the degree that others are blessed by them. Pray for the needs mentioned during the application time.

“Show mercy to those whose faith is wavering. Don’t condemn them. Don’t call them heretics. Don’t tell them that they need to have more faith. Show mercy to them.” {Jude: 22}