



Sunday Teaching Guide

That You May Believe, Week 6

April 16, 2023

Bible Texts

- John 20:30-31
- John 20:19-20
- John 20:24-29

Important Terms

- **Doubt:** The word used in John 20:27 that is sometimes translated as “stop doubting” is the antonym (opposite) word for “believing.” In essence, Jesus states a double negative: “do not be unbelieving, be believing.”

Sermon Notes

- The Gospel writer John breaks the metaphorical “fourth wall” near the end of his account of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection to indicate what the message of the book is: that you may believe in Jesus and that, by believing, you may have life in his name.
- After Jesus’ resurrection, some of the disciples were gathered together behind locked doors in fear of the Jewish leaders when Jesus arrives among them and tells them “Peace be with you.” Seeing Jesus brings them joy.
- However, the disciple Thomas was not with them and wanted to experience seeing and touching Jesus as well. Jesus later arrived to give proof to Thomas of his resurrection.
- While Thomas sometimes gets a bad rap for being “Doubting Thomas”, Jesus does not condemn him. Instead, Jesus invites him to believe. When Thomas sees and touches Jesus, he does believe and declares, “My Lord and my God.”
- When we see Jesus for who Jesus really is everything changes and Jesus is placed in the position of Lord of our lives. We stop pretending to be god ourselves when we meet the real Jesus.
- The story of Jesus is an invitation to believe, to lean in, to bring our doubt and questions as we explore the way of Jesus. We won’t see Jesus the way Thomas saw Jesus, but we can still see Jesus. If we open our eyes and our hearts, we will see Jesus in the way he works in and through our lives through the power of the Holy Spirit, transforming our lives and the world around us. When we give our lives to Jesus as Lord and God we will see him.

Reflection Questions

- What is a nickname that you have had in the past? Was it warranted? Did you ever want to be free from it?
- What do you think about the disciple Thomas’ nickname “Doubting Thomas”? Do you think this nickname is appropriate or good?
- Do you think humans are natural doubters? Are you a person who questions things?
- When do you have a tendency to doubt? When do you have a tendency to believe without seeing?
- Is there a time in your life in which you grew as a person or believer because of the questions or doubts that you had?
- How do you view the idea that God and Jesus welcome your questions?
- In what ways do you think people change or stay the same after encountering Jesus?
- Are there any areas in which you would like your life to change because of knowing Jesus more fully? How can you rely on others or God to do so?

Prayer for the Week

- Creator of the universe, you made the world in beauty, and restore all things in glory through the victory of Jesus Christ. We pray that, wherever your image is still disfigured by poverty, sickness, selfishness, war and greed, the new creation in Jesus Christ may appear in justice, love, and peace, to the glory of your name. Amen.

Additional Readings

- Acts 2:14a, 22-32
- Psalm 16
- 1 Peter 1:3-9