



DISCUSSION GUIDE

Easter – Our Faith is Not Blind

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Main Idea – Just as Jesus was faithful to His promise to rise from the grave on the third day, He is faithful to you. It is okay to question God. He will answer and remove any doubt you might have. God will prove to you He has never left your side.

To doubt is normal; but don't do it

- Each of us, at times, doubts God.
- Hardships cause us to question Him. We may begin to doubt He even exists. Or, we might ask God, ‘Why did you let this happen to me?’
- Oftentimes, doubt is caused by fear. But, the Bible tells us that doubting and fear are evidence our faith needs to be strengthened at that moment.

James 1: 5-8 – If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

Jesus will be faithful to strengthen your faith

- We may not always understand our circumstances, but Jesus is always faithful to bring us to victory and knowledge of everything.
- Jesus suffered, was crucified, and rose from the grave so that when you suffer you will also be victorious. **Proverbs 3: 5-6 – Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.**
- God will lead you step-by-step through your troubles. He will meet you in the middle of the mess, but He will not leave you there. In fact, God will actually minister to you in the midst of your doubt. **John 14:1-4 – Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know.”**

Some respect for Thomas

- The Apostle Thomas is often called “Doubting Thomas” because he said he would not believe Jesus had come back to life unless he touched His wounds from the crucifixion. **John 20: 24-25 - Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, “We have seen the Lord.” So he said to them, “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.”**
- It is possible his “doubt” came from a strong personality that was actually very devoted to Jesus’ ministry. Thomas may have been so invested in Jesus’ ministry that he expected a personal experience with Jesus; not something based on another’s testimony.
- For example, there is evidence Thomas might have been one to ask Jesus direct questions when he didn’t understand something. **John 14: 5-6 – Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”**
- Thomas may also have been one to encourage others to follow Jesus even if it meant death. **John 11:16 – Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with Him.”**

Jesus was faithful to Thomas’ needs

- Jesus gave Thomas the personal experience for which he had asked. **John 20: 26-29 – (v.26) And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, “Peace to you!” (v.27) Then He said to Thomas, “Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.” (v.28) And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!” (v. 29) Jesus said to him, “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”**
- Jesus met Thomas at the exact place of his doubts, and led him back to full faith and confidence.
- In verse 29 (see above) Jesus also promised to bless you and me – even though we have not physically seen Jesus – at our places of doubt.

It’s okay to ask God questions

- Sincere faith does not prohibit sincere investigation. It’s okay to express your doubts to God.
- Faith is simply asking God to join the conversation.

- He will answer your doubt with proof. **Hebrews 11:1 – Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.**

Don't hide your scars; use them

- Jesus did not hide His scars. In fact, He used them to demonstrate what He had overcome.
- You have been healed and redeemed. **Isaiah 53:5 – But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.**
- Don't hide your physical or emotional scars. Use them as testimony that God heals and is faithful to His promises.

Reflective Questions for Easter 2019 Message

1. Think back to a time you doubted God. If you wish, *briefly* share that story with others who may be in your study group.
2. Did God eventually give you proof that cancelled out your doubt?
3. Pastor Stephen hypothesized that Thomas may actually have been one of the more committed disciples. If that is so, why is it that someone who is most enthusiastic about something can also suffer from the strongest doubt?
4. Jesus willingly wore His scars on His new resurrected body. What does that tell you?