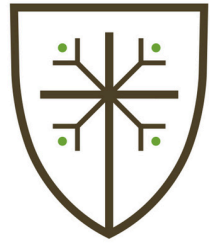


SERMON NOTES



April 12, 2026

SERMON INFO

TITLE

"Conflicted then Convinced"

PREACHER

Rev. Brent Baker

TEXTS

Acts 2:22-32

1 Corinthians 15:3-6

John 20:24-31

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you find that your doubts lean more empirical or intellectual in nature?
2. What questions do you have about faith?
3. What passages of scripture bring you comfort in your doubt so that you, too, may hear and believe?

SERMON IN SUMMARY

Brent continues our journey through the season of Eastertide with an examination of the Apostle Thomas, also called Doubting Thomas, and how the disciple's doubt has implications for the doubt we may experience in our own walks of faith.

Conflicted

In the days following his resurrection, Jesus appeared to many, including his Apostles. The first time Jesus appeared to the remaining eleven, Thomas was not present. Despite the profound experience of the group and their likely passionate relaying of the account to Thomas, Thomas asserted that he would "never believe." The only way his ardent doubt could be overturned was through a demand for an empirical experience: "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side."

If we were in Thomas's shoes, we might feel similarly; we want what our peers, other disciples, have already experienced. Others might demand an intellectual explanation for a miraculous visitation. Yet these demands, fueled by doubt, will never be satisfied. If empirical, felt doubts are alleviated, intellectual doubts may take over, and vice versa. Insatiable doubts such as these belie that doubting perhaps isn't the real issue, but that Thomas, or yourself, or others, when experiencing doubt, may not want to believe. Yet insurmountable doubt can be overcome by an omnipotent God, especially through epiphany.

Convinced

An epiphany is an unmistakable encounter, and Thomas had one with Jesus to alleviate the doubt. However, Jesus waited eight days to do so. That meant that Thomas dwelt in and grappled with his doubt during that span. From this, we know that if Jesus does not address our doubts immediately, he isn't *not* working. The epiphany experience is also a partial entertainment and accommodation of the doubt. Jesus so clearly meets the demand by offering Thomas the opportunity to see and touch the wounds that Thomas not only declares that Jesus is Lord and God, but "*my* Lord and *my* God," meaning that Thomas wholly belongs to Christ. Doubts, when wrestled with healthily and with the Lord, can bring about an even deeper faith.

But what does Thomas's story mean for us almost 2000 years later? Jesus also entertains and accommodates our doubts. We are not left without trustworthy testimony to help our belief. Jesus appeared to so many people that accounts of his resurrection could not be denied. We hear about other historical figures in the same way, so why do we believe them but not Jesus? Gospel accounts and the Bible are the written word of God so that we may read and believe, or hear and believe. If we take the risk and believe what we have heard, then we know that we too will see Jesus, as was promised (theologians have called this the "beatific vision," the hope that faith will become sight of our Lord). Ultimately, the path of your doubts is intended to lead you directly to Him. Often you have to work through your doubts to find Him, or be found by Him. Doubts are not dead ends.