

A close-up photograph of two hands, one dark-skinned and one light-skinned, holding a silver smartphone. The hands are positioned as if they are about to touch or are just touching the screen of the phone. The background is a light-colored, patterned fabric with a subtle geometric or floral design.

I DON'T WANT
TO GO THROUGH
YOUR PHONE

S E R M O N G U I D E

No Limits with Pastor Delman

I Don't Want To Go Through Your Phone

John 20:19-29

INTRODUCTION

NOTES

Recently, I watched a young couple have conflict over their cell phones. They were clearly on a dinner date, but as the meal progressed, their smiles and laughter soon turned to tension. The young woman looked over her boyfriend's shoulder and said, "Michael, don't make me go through your phone. Why are you always texting like you got something to hide?" What that experience highlighted is just how important trust is in relationships. When people do not trust one another, they are activated and alarmed by behaviors that trigger their suspicions and activate their doubts. But when you trust the person you are with, you don't feel the need to go through their phone. And so, just to be clear, this sermon is not about going through your partner's phone. It's about the anxiety that is created when people go through things in their relationship with God that shatter their confidence and break their trust in Him. We experience things in life that cause us to question God, encounter circumstances that lead us to wonder whether God is there, and go through situations that cause us to wonder whether God still cares. And when that happens, we want to go through God's phone. We want proof. We want evidence. We want reassurance that God is still who He says He is.

KEY POINTS

1. Keep Showing Up

At the time of our key text, Jesus has been crucified, buried in a borrowed tomb, and His followers are scattered, arrested by fear, disbelief, and disappointment. They gather behind closed doors, unsure of the future, grieving what they have lost. And yet, even in their fear, they show up.

Thomas was not there when Jesus first appeared, but somewhere along the way, in the midst of his grief and frustration, Thomas decided to keep showing up anyhow. He may have been a week late, but the good news is that he showed up.

Showing up is a radical act of resistance. It is a sacred refusal to allow what you've seen, what you've been through, or what others have done to cause you to quit and throw in the towel. Showing up is not the absence of doubt; it's the decision to trust God in spite of doubt. Thomas is a great reminder of the importance of showing up, no matter what it is you're going through.

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2. Speak Up for Yourself

When Thomas gets in the room, he doesn't fake faith. He doesn't hide where he is spiritually. He says plainly, "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."

Thomas was not rejecting Jesus; he was rejecting secondhand faith. He did not want to rely on someone else's encounter with God. He wanted an encounter for himself. That's not weakness; that's honesty.

So many people are forced to fake faith because they believe strong faith means you never question. But the measure of a real relationship with God is not the absence of doubt. It's the willingness to be honest about it. God can handle your honesty. If Jesus could cry out, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" then surely we can speak honestly to God about our fears, doubts, grief, and need.

NOTES

3. Don't Forget to Look Up

When Thomas speaks up, Jesus shows up. A week later, Jesus appears again, stands before Thomas, and gives him exactly what he needs. Thomas's doubt became a doorway to deeper discovery.

Jesus says, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.” And when Thomas touches Him, he cries out, “My Lord and my God!”

In that moment, Thomas goes from worrier to worshiper. The one who questioned the resurrection becomes a witness of it. From there, he carried the Gospel all the way to India. When you open your mouth to God, start looking up. When Jesus shows up, the evidence you've been searching for is right in front of you. What doubt is God turning into destiny in your life? What uncertainty is God transforming into a calling?

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What has life put you through that has caused you to question or struggle with trusting God?
2. Which of the three movements (keep showing up, speak up, or look up) do you find most challenging right now, and why?
3. What would it look like for you to stop relying on secondhand faith and seek a personal encounter with God in this season?