

He is risen. He is risen indeed. Excellent. You guys remember, for those of you who didn't remember, that was a traditional greeting Christians would give to each other when they would say, he is risen. The response was, he is risen indeed.

Last week, we began our the resurrection means something, and we began that with Mary Magdalene and how we matter to God. The resurrection means that you and I matter to God. What a joy to learn that we matter to God not because of our own goodness, but because of his goodness. Not because of our own ability, but because of his ability. This morning we're gonna look at the resurrection through another perspective.

It's gonna be through the eyes of Thomas and the experience of Thomas, who over time has become known as Doubting Thomas. All of Jerusalem knew about the trial of Jesus. They all knew about the flogging and the crucifixion. They all knew that Jesus had died and he'd been placed in a tomb. They'd heard how on the 3rd day that Mary and the other ladies came to the tomb and angels had told them that Jesus had risen, and how angels told Mary again Jesus had risen, and she still didn't believe until Jesus showed up and and spoke her name in an incredibly beautiful and touching moment.

She told the disciples, and the disciples didn't believe it at first, but Jesus appeared to Peter, and he appeared to the other disciples, except for Thomas. Old Thomas wasn't there that day. We don't know exactly why. But the disciples went out to find Thomas, and they said, we have seen the Lord. And Thomas said, that is amazing.

I believe. No, it's not what he said at all, was it? But I bet he wished he would have said that later. We'll pick up the account there. We're gonna be in John chapter 20, and I'm gonna ask would you please stand with me for the reading.

We'll begin in John 20:24. 1 of the 12 disciples, Thomas, nicknamed the twin, was not with the others when Jesus came. They told him, we have seen the Lord. But he replied, I won't believe it unless I see the nail wounds in his hands, put my fingers into them and place my hand into the wound in his side. 8 days later, the disciples were together again, and this time, Thomas was with them.

The doors were locked, but suddenly, as before, Jesus was standing among them. Peace be with you, he said. Then he said to Thomas, put your finger here and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don't be faithless any longer.

Believe. My Lord and my God, Thomas exclaimed. Then Jesus told him, you believe because you've seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me. The disciples saw Jesus do many other miraculous signs in addition to the ones recorded in this book.

But these are written, so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him, you will have life by the power of his name. Let's pray

together. Father, we come to your word. We submit ourselves the authority of your word. We put before you all our beliefs.

We put before you all our presuppositions, and we ask you to teach us, to open our eyes, to see your truth, and Father to replace anything in our hearts or our minds that is not obedient to you. We pray that we would leave here forever changed because we've been in your presence. It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Thank you.

Please be seated. The response of Thomas famously has earned him the title of Thomas the Doubter or Doubting Thomas. But he did doubt, but to be fair, all of them doubted. I mean, every single disciple had doubted. Mary doubted.

And matter of fact, she doubted after angels told her Jesus had risen, twice. And so poor Thomas kinda got a bad rap. I don't know anyone who's ever followed Jesus, who has not had a doubt, who has not had a question, who's never wanted evidence or proof. All of us have minds that work, and all of us want to know our faith has a reasonable assumption. Thomas asked for proof, and boy, did he ever get it.

Have you ever asked for proof and got it? I was 6 years old and my aunt, I've told you guys before, my aunt put me in front of her house and she would challenge all the neighborhood kids to come fight me. At 6 years old, I beat all of them until a 12 year old came back for a second round and he pinned me. And I was like, how did you do that? What did you do?

And he said, it's judo. And and I'm like, Jew what? And he said, it's judo. And I'm like, I don't believe you. And he said, stick out your arm.

And so he, 2 seconds later, he flipped me, and I found myself flat on the back on the concrete sidewalk. I became a believer in judo. It worked. Thomas had no faith because his faith had died on the cross. You see, he he his hope had died.

It's easy to lose hope when something we hope is gonna happen doesn't happen. Conspiracy theories today are getting hard to find, aren't they? They're all turning into news stories. Our nation is allowing our history to be rewritten. The media mocks and ridicules faith and God, and and and they they have allowed false science to poison the minds of generations in our country.

Until so many people today don't believe in much, except maybe their own opinions. And sometimes they don't even like their own opinions. Today, we have a nation of skeptics. We are surrounded by people who who just like Thomas say, I I just can't believe. I refuse to believe.

Thomas popped off and he got in a lot of trouble. Throughout history, he's been may held up as an example, but we all have trouble controlling our tongues. Have you ever listened to somebody say something about God you knew wasn't true, or they wrote something about God you knew wasn't true and and you're like, oh. You you just you you have trouble controlling your

mouth or your fingers in those moments, online. You'll you'll, like, correct those lies from the pit of hell, you know.

You're just like, uh-uh, that's not no, that is not true. And and you try to you try to correct it. Right? Sometimes we try to collect lies, correct lies, but sometimes the truth is even hard to swallow, isn't it? Sometimes we see something that's just impossible to believe.

Like, for instance, a hippo's jaws can open wide enough to swallow a sports car or fit a sports car inside. I doubt if he could swallow. It would take you 19 minutes to fall from the North Pole to the core of the Earth, if you could just fall down that way. 6 generations back, you have 64 great great grandparents. A pencil can draw a line long enough to reach Nampa and back, a typical pencil.

Australia is almost exactly as wide as the moon. South America is east of Florida. I didn't realize that till I did the study for this. Some things are just hard to believe. And then sometimes we are misled, we are lied to.

Like they told us that eggs were good, and then eggs were bad. Now eggs are good. And some and then now there's some reports going, no, you shouldn't they're good, but don't eat them. Ivermectin won a Nobel Prize for the 2nd most beneficial drug in human history, and then they called it horse dewormer. We have so many voices screaming in our ears, so many opinions out there that, like Thomas, a lot of people have just lost hope.

They've just given up, and they just refuse to believe in almost anything. But the story Thomas got topped them all. Thomas got the story that the savior he had followed, the one he saw arrested and beaten and mocked, the one he saw flogged, the one who was hung on a cross for all of Jerusalem to see. The one who died on that cross and had a spear thrust through his side and his lifeless body was buried in a tomb, and 3 days later, the disciples come up to him and said, well, guess what? Jesus showed up today.

It would be hard to believe. It would be almost impossible to believe. Thomas wasn't with the other disciples when Jesus showed up the first time. And so their story sounded like nonsense, just like the disciples weren't with Mary, and they didn't really fully believe Mary either. Thomas just couldn't swallow it.

He said, I need proof and not just any proof, poor Thomas just stuck his foot right in his mouth. I wanna see that hand. I'm gonna stick my finger in the hole and I and I'm gonna I'm gonna I'm gonna touch the wounds. I want to put my hand in his side. And matter of fact, the Greek says, I positively will not believe unless or until.

So about a week later, Jesus pops into the locked room again. The doors were locked. Thomas was there this time and Jesus said, Doubter. No, he didn't say that. He said, Shalom.

Peace. Peace be to you. First thing he said to Thomas was, peace. Don't freak out. Don't panic.

I'm not here to correct you. I'm here to help you. He said to Thomas, put your finger here. And he held out his hand. Put your finger in here.

Put your hand in here and believe. Jesus heard Thomas. He knew his doubts and his unbelief. I won't believe unless or until. We may not say those words like Thomas did, but we think them sometimes.

I won't believe unless or until, God, you do this. We put conditions on God and we try to carry that doubt in our hearts. We may not say it out loud, but we still live it. Thomas had gone a week without hope because he refused to believe. Sadly, people all around us go their entire lives without hope because they refuse to believe.

The disciples told Thomas about Jesus, and they kept telling Thomas about Jesus. God sent us to tell people about Jesus too, and sometimes we need to tell them we've met Jesus and invite them to come and meet him too. Thomas is there, Jesus shows up, peace, stick your fingers, stick your hand in my side and believe. And Thomas says, my Lord and my God. My Lord, you are who I believe you are.

You are my savior and my God, you are eternal. He was recognizing who Jesus was. He needed no more proof. And Jesus said to him, you believe because you've seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me.

That's you and I. The people who were there after Jesus has already risen. Then John said, there's many other miracles Jesus did, But these, the ones we read about in John, he said, this is why they're recorded, So that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. And that by believing in Him, you will have life by the power of His name. This is a personal message to every Thomas, to every person on earth, every person who has a doubt or a fear, every person who lives in darkness, every person who is living in unbelief that I'm talking to you.

I'm writing these things so you won't be doubtful, so you won't be living in unbelief. This is the truth. We have eyewitness testimonies of people who have seen Jesus alive. We're reading their stories now. And not just these, but many others.

And we can learn from the doubts of Thomas and from his faith. Some steps to take for us to take to have hope because of the resurrection. Number 1, be honest with God. As Thomas found out, God already knows your doubts and your fears anyway. After the resurrection, Jesus didn't bash Thomas for having honest doubts.

He met Thomas. He spoke peace and He showed him what he needed to see. God cares that you believe. Every person has questions sometimes, even pastors and apostles, even John the Baptist had his doubts. When I was growing up and my dad had cut his wrist trying to attempt suicide, They were able to save him.

He went in a mental institution and boy, I got saved that summer and I was praying hard. And I will tell you when he got back, things seemed pretty good for a while. We went to church for a little while and he seemed to be in pretty good mood and and then he gradually started slipping back into his old ways, his old habits. He gradually started drinking and doing drugs and then started the attempted suicides again. It became so bad that I didn't even know what to pray anymore.

Like God, I've been praying. Why why are you not answering? And I didn't understand what God was doing. When God allows something unexpected, when the mountain stays still instead of moving like you prayed for. When when the person leaves when you've prayed for them to stay.

When the disease stays when you've prayed for it to leave. When the grief grows greater instead of growing less. When we're depressed, when we're worried, when we're grieving, when we're anxious, when we're afraid, we can all wonder where God is and and start to let those doubts creep into our minds. Like Thomas, when we're discouraged and feeling down it is easy to start doubting. It's easy to hide.

Thomas wasn't there with those disciples. We don't know why but we can guess. He was probably down. He was probably a little depressed. When we are down and depressed, we're tempted to hide.

We are tempted to distance ourselves from people around us and and especially from people of faith because we don't want to admit we're struggling. We don't want them to see past the mask that we wear on Sunday mornings, and so sometimes we just hide. But we need our faith, our friends and our savior even more when we're struggling. Thomas had doubts. He didn't fully believe, but he still came to meet with the disciples.

So instead of trying to suppress or hide our doubts and our fears, bring them to church. Bring them to Sunday School. Bring them to a trusted counselor or a deacon or a pastor. And like Thomas, keep showing up. Because the very next time you show up, Jesus is liable to show up and rock your world.

A message to all of us who believe, all of us who aren't having doubts right now, can I just tell you when someone questions God, don't feel like you need to shout them down or correct them? I mean, we don't need to we don't need to admonish them. When Thomas said, I won't believe unless I stick my fingers in the hole in His hands, unless I stick my hand in His side, the disciples could have gone, spawn of Satan, you're gonna burn one day. You know, I mean, that's probably what they felt like. Woah.

Wow, man. Thomas, that was that was brutal. But they didn't. They hung around him and they kept telling him, we've seen the Lord. We've seen him.

And, you know, Thomas, I I don't believe you. Well, yeah, okay. But you're coming to prayer, right? You're coming to coming to church? You know, I well, hey, you know what?

I just I can't believe. Okay. Well, we'll see you at Sunday school. I'll save you save you a chair. We'll go get some delicious cookies and come down and let's let's just bring our request to the Lord.

You know what? We've seen Jesus. Thomas, we've seen him. They kept telling him, and they kept inviting him, and they kept letting him ask questions until Jesus showed up and rocked his world. And we need to do the same thing for people around us.

Be honest about your doubts. Stay in church. God already knows your doubts anyway. You're not fooling anybody, including Him, so just bring them with you and keep them before the Lord because He will answer. Satan loves to get us thinking we're all by ourselves.

When we're wondering what God's doing, it's, oh, you you can't possibly have faith and and questions. Well, of course we can. We see that all through God's word. When people didn't understand, didn't know what God was doing, they hung in there, God eventually answered. To find hope, be honest, admit your doubts and questions, and examine Jesus.

That's our next one. Examine Jesus. Check it out. Thomas had some wrong thoughts about Jesus. He believed Jesus.

We're still dead. He needed to know Jesus was alive. He thought Jesus was late, but Jesus was right on time. Doubt is usually an intellectual problem. We wanna believe, but we don't have all the all the evidence that we need to feel like we can believe yet.

We don't have a mindless faith. Christianity is not a faith where we say, check your brains at the door and just accept it all. Whatever we tell you, just accept it. God never says that. All through his word, he will say, you know what?

Here's how you know I'm telling you the truth because this is gonna happen and this is gonna happen and this is gonna happen and I'm gonna do this miracle and I'm gonna do this miracle and and later on, this is gonna happen and this is gonna happen and this is gonna happen. Even the death of Jesus, Jesus said many times, hey, guys, this is what's gonna happen. I'm going to Jerusalem. I'm gonna be killed, and on the 3rd day, I'm gonna rise. Why was he telling them that?

So one day they would go, oh, he said that. He's God. He knows what he's doing. Open your bible and read. Stay in the word.

Don't let Satan get you out of the spot where God can reach you and teach you. Join a small group. Open your mind to the proof that God's placed all around us. Forever is a long time. You have a few short years to figure out what you're going to do with Jesus.

Are you going to believe or are you not going to believe? And after those few short years, your faith will determine where you spend eternity. Ask questions, investigate. Remember Jesus was resurrected, appeared to Mary, the disciples, and Thomas, and over 500 other eyewitnesses, and all those things are recorded. Why?

So you and I can believe. That's our third point, believe. John said, he wrote almost a 100 times in his gospel, not just you and me, but to the whole world. I believe, and not just you and me, but to the whole world. I believe and I don't believe are both statements of faith.

Every person on earth has faith. Every person on earth, some of them have faith in themselves. The I did it my way crowd, I used to love that song till I became And then I'm like, I just, I don't know. He still sings it good, but I don't want to do it my way. How about you?

Some people have, faith in love, the love is all I need crowd. And that works until love stops or love changes. Some people have faith in the universe, karma or Star Wars, the Force crowd, you know, the universe juice, and that says everything is just gonna some people have cookware faith. They just hope it all pans out in the end. Some people hope there's nothing after death.

Some people hope all dogs go to heaven. Some people hope there's no hell. Some people hope their 401 ks grows. Some people hope the pastor's gonna drop the last pages of his sermon. Some people hope that their ideas and their thoughts are gonna happen.

But that's not the way it works. He said, this is written so you may believe, not just believe, but believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And by believing in Him, you would have life. Jesus said believe because without believing we can't be saved. When you believe, it will change your life.

Did you ever think about this? And we kind of saw it as He was going through. Jesus had already been resurrected. He already had his new body. The one, the body that could pop into a room.

But he still had the wounds. He still had the wounds in his hand. He still has the wounds in his side. He is going to stand before every person on earth one day, living proof of the resurrection. And on that day, every person will be faced with the consequences of their choice.

Jesus chose to go to the cross, to pay the price for our sin, the debt for every wrong thing we've ever done. He arose from the dead, conquering the grave, and He rules as King forever. He said in John 524, I tell you the truth. Those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life.

God is willing to forgive us and change our life. Fill us with his spirit and give us eternal life if we'll believe. Thomas declared Jesus as Lord. For the rest of his life, we never heard another

doubt from the arc accounts of Thomas. For the rest of his life, he followed Jesus as his Lord and his savior, and he spent his life making disciples just like Jesus had commanded him to.

Church history tells us that Thomas was filled with faith. Maybe this morning you have some doubts. Thomas showed us that Jesus can come into our doubts, and he can give us peace. Because the resurrection, you and I can have hope that death is not the end. According to Fox's book of martyrs, Thomas ended up in Parthia and India where he preached the gospel and there were a lot of pagans, and the pagan priests there became so enraged that at one point, they ran Thomas through with a spear.

Interesting that that's the way Thomas died, with a spear. Because he said, I won't believe unless I can stick my hand in the hole in his side that was caused by a Roman spear. And you can believe that Thomas knew he was safe. Even if that spear took his life, it could not touch his eternal life because of what Jesus had done, because Jesus had already conquered death. Thomas was safe even from death.

The worst death can do, the worst this world can do is send us to heaven, and that's not necessarily a bad thing. Because of the resurrection, we have the rock solid hope Jesus doesn't give up on us. Can you hear me? Jesus doesn't give up on you. I don't care how long you've carried your doubts.

Jesus is not giving up on you. We can all believe and be saved. Thomas's story says we can have hope even when we feel like we've been abandoned by God. The moment Thomas heard, Here, put your finger here. Put your hand here.

He realized something. He realized Jesus had heard him. He realized Jesus was there even when he hadn't felt he was there, even when he didn't know he was there. I couldn't see you, but now I'm realizing you're with me the whole time. And I want to tell you, you may not be able to see how God's working, but you can have hope no matter how hopeless things seem.

We don't know how He's gonna work in our situation, but we don't need to. We can just trust Him that He is going to work in our situation. He is going to work through this circumstance. He is going to show up and accomplish everything that is necessary. We can have hope, because you and I have seen the nail prints in the lives of the followers that have followed Jesus, the millions of people who followed him since the resurrection.

People like Thomas who saw the risen savior and gave his life because of that belief. This man who said, I refuse to believe, went to his death saying I refuse not to believe. We can have hope for our children, hope for our marriage, hope for our future because of the resurrection. You and I can have hope. I've seen the Lord work in my life.

How many of you have seen the Lord work in your life? Amen. We can have hope because Jesus Christ has risen. He is on the throne. We know how our story ends.



Amen. So bring him your doubts. Bring them to him and lay them out and just trust him, and he is going to answer everything that needs to be answered and believe. Can I ask you to bow your heads, close your eyes for just a moment? For somebody in this room, you need to hear God's not given up on you.

He is still waiting on you, and I want to encourage you to put your faith and your trust in Jesus, maybe this morning for the first time. And if you have not done that, then like Thomas, I'm asking that you just realize Jesus is in this room. Jesus is with you. He said where 2 or more are gathered together in my name, I am there. And so, I want you to realize an incredible truth.

Jesus Christ is here. And so I want you to be able to reach out to believe and if you would, can I ask you to pray with me as you put your trust in a God who loved you so? Dear God. Thank you for loving me. I know I have done things wrong.

I have sinned. I know Jesus paid my price on the cross. Jesus thank you for saving me. I believe you died and rose again. Would you help me follow you all the days of my life until I stand before you face to face?

If you prayed that for the first time this morning, then the Bible says that you have been given life because you believe. You've been adopted into God's family. You are someone like Thomas who can say, my Lord and my God. If that is you today, you have something to be excited about and I wanna be excited with you. So if you would, would you just raise your hand and say, hey pastor, I put my trust in Jesus this morning while we prayed together.

Just raise your hand high enough so I can see it. Awesome. Some of us have doubts and questions and I'm gonna ask you this morning to bring those. You can bring those to the front to me. You can bring them to the altar, lay them before the Lord.

Maybe some of you in this room need to join the church or be baptized. Maybe you just need somebody to pray over you. Whatever it is, I'm gonna pray and then we're gonna have a time of invitation. That invitation is for you. Father, we give you this time to work in the hearts and lives of our own hearts, father, and the hearts of those we love in this room.

And Father, we know that there are many struggles that we don't know about in this room. Father, there are many cares and burdens we can't see, but you can. And so we pray that you would work in ways we can't see, in hearts we don't know. We trust you to do everything that's necessary, so they experience you this morning. In Jesus' name, amen.

I'm gonna ask you to stand. This invitation is for you, so I'm gonna ask you to respond however the Lord puts on your heart. I'll be up here at the front. If you need to come pray with me, come on down and pray. If you need to join, you come on down and join.

If you need to be baptized, come on down. We'll heat the water up next week. So as we sing, you come. From an old rugged tree. And it whispers to all closer to me.

Leave this world, leave it far behind. There are new heights to climb in a new place. In me you will find for whatever it takes to be more like you. That's what I'll be willing to do. Take the dearest things to me if that's how it must be to draw me closer to thee.

Let the disappointments come. Lonely days without the sun, if there's sorrow, or like you I'll become. Or whatever take for I'm placing my whole life in your hands. And if you call me today to a land that's far away. Oh, lord.

I'll go there, and your will obey. For whatever it takes to draw closer to you, lord. That's what I'll be willing to do for whatever it takes I'll be willing to do. I'll trade sunshine for rain and comfort for pain. That's what for my will to break.

That's what I'll be willing to do. Oh, Lord. Yes. And that's what I'll be willing to do. Amen.

Thank you. Now you guys have a seat for just a minute.