

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

February 12, 2023 "Seeing ourselves in the 12. Thomas: logic, reason don't always add up."

I Intro.

We're solidly in 2023 now. The new year will bring some new and innovative ideas in all areas of our church life. We have seen an increased activity in our children's ministry, and we're working on new ideas for both our children and our students. We have many ways you can plug into life at NCC. You can find all those through our website, app, and social media sites. Our app is the best way to livestream our services, but you can also livestream on FaceBook and YouTube. You can revisit past services, sign up for events and even give. We're encouraged by your presence when you gather with us. New and familiar faces join us every Sunday. If you join us online, we appreciate your presence. We are 100% committed to our virtual attenders. We are your church family, and if there is anything you need, prayer, or anything else, please let us know. This is our weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from Sunday's message. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing. You can use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. We hope you find this tool helpful on your spiritual journey.

II Recap.

This is our second Sunday in finding ourselves in those who followed Jesus. It's a series on giving ourselves permission to not be perfect, and real life lessons on how to overcome different struggles. Last week we looked at Peter and the struggle to overcome pride and the desire to want to control everything in our lives. There's a lot involved in that message. Check it out on our app or at our website. This week we talk about overcoming our own restrictive, predefined view of the world.

III Sunday.

The bible character we hit Sunday was Thomas. I have to say he's one of my favorites. There are a couple of references to his passion to follow Jesus, and his curiosity to understand what Jesus was teaching. However, unfortunately he gets labeled, 'Doubting Thomas'. Not by Jesus or scripture. But by us. Because we can't honestly deal with our own struggles of who Jesus was. So, some questions about our views of God and what it takes to change.

Have you changed any of your views or understanding of Jesus over the years? What were they, and what caused you to see Jesus differently?

Have there been times in your life where you felt doubts about what you believed? What did you do about them?

Why do you think we have placed an unkind label of 'doubting' on the person of Thomas?

The video from **"The Chosen"** that was shown Sunday, placed Thomas at the miracle of changing water to wine. That account wasn't actually in scripture, but it gives us a picture of the nature of Thomas. The heart of the message took lines from that scene and built on them helping us deal with our own view of what Jesus looks like. The scripture we used was **John 20:24-31**. It's the classic account of Thomas' struggle to believe Jesus was alive. Read it and we'll dig into it.

What jumped out to you about this passage?

What do you see in it about the person of Thomas?

Why do you think Thomas needed to see actual evidence before he believed?

Before we deal with the specific statements from the clip of ***“The Chosen”*** we showed a couple of truths from this passage.

1. We have to admit our own logic and reasoning, how we view and understand the world or Jesus, are our own construction. We weren't alive back then. We don't understand the culture fully, or the style in which scripture was written. So, we have to realize what we logically and reasonably believe about Jesus is based on our experiences and from people we've allowed to speak into our life.
2. Thomas loved and had a deep commitment to following Jesus. John mentions Thomas two other times, **John 11:16, 14:5**. These are references that paint Thomas in a good light. Thomas was not a skeptic questioning Jesus from a distance. Like us, he was a dedicated follower of Jesus, but had some beliefs about faith that needed revisiting.

The three statements from the video and how they relate to relying on our own logic and reasoning.

1. *“I see no logical solution to the problem.” -Thomas.*

Admission is the first step...right? We have to admit our current understanding of the world, and set of beliefs, doesn't allow us to see an answer here. Language and perspective matter...a lot!! This isn't; *“there is no logical solution to the problem.”* From Thomas it's a personal admission he can't see one. Our ability to see or know everything is impossible, and limited. Thomas hemmed himself in by the small world he had built around himself only believing based on his logic and reasoning.

2. *“It is good to ask questions. To seek understanding” -Jesus*

Jesus encouraged Thomas to question his current worldview. Doubt is good, it encourages us to think critically. Just don't live in doubt. Our words, how we understand and describe God, will confine us. Thomas had a specific understanding, certain assumptions, of the world. Exactly because he wanted to understand it. But our goal isn't to run from understanding. It's to seek truth...continually.

3. *“It's going to be like that sometimes, Thomas. We sometimes have to move beyond counting and measuring.” -Jesus*

Sometimes we have to let go of how and what we have measured the world by. **If we are committed to seeking truth, we have to be committed to seeking truth.** Holding onto just counting and measuring, old ways of thinking, creates a really small world. This also isolates us, and can keep us from engaging the world fully. Being stuck in using our limited logic and reason can be paralyzing. The logic and reason that we hold onto to understand and explain the world, becomes barriers and walls that keep others and God at a distance. And keep us from experiencing the fullness of life.

How could you work each of these into your regular spiritual growth?

IV Challenge.

THE challenge is to find that sweet spot between having a strong set of beliefs based on our experiences and understanding, but not being bound by them. Not being swayed by every new thing that comes along, and not being an immovable fortress of certainty. Hear this, getting it right isn't the litmus test. We will ALWAYS have certain understandings and beliefs that at some point we don't hold anymore. The real truth is trusting in God not in our ability to understand him.

How could you design your life to have beliefs, but always allow them to be tested by God?