

# benefit of doubt

## CREW LEADER GUIDE: DOUBT DOESN'T DISQUALIFY YOU - BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT PART ONE

### Message Summary:

This sermon explores the often-misunderstood topic of doubt in the Christian faith, challenging the notion that doubt disqualifies believers from God's love and calling. Using the story of "Doubting Thomas" as the primary framework, the message emphasizes that doubt is not the same as disbelief; rather, it's a natural part of the faith journey that can lead to deeper revelation when brought to Christ. The central theological point is that God has compassion for our human limitations and invites honest wrestling with difficult questions, as long as we continue to seek Him and remain in community with other believers.

### Key Points:

- Doubt is not the problem itself but a signal pointing to something deeper that needs to be addressed in our faith journey
- Doubt and disbelief are two different things; doubt can coexist with faith while disbelief represents a complete absence of trust
- Jesus appears to different groups post-resurrection: the unsuspecting, the hurting, the uncertain, the doubter, and the failure
- The distinction between "pistos" (faith) and "distazo" (doubt/being divided in two) shows that doubt means having two competing perspectives simultaneously
- Thomas didn't isolate himself in his doubt but remained in community with other disciples, positioning himself to receive revelation
- Jesus met Thomas exactly where he was, providing a three-level answer to his three-level request for proof
- Doubt didn't define or disqualify Thomas; he went on to become one of the most successful missionaries, traveling further than any other apostle
- We must draw a line and commit fully to trusting God's character, even when we don't understand our circumstances
- Staying in environments that cultivate faith is crucial when wrestling with doubt

### Key Message Scripture:

- John 20:24-29 - The story of Thomas (Doubting Thomas) - primary text
- Galatians 6:9 - "Do not grow weary in doing good, for at an appointed time, you will reap a harvest"
- Matthew 14:31 - Peter walking on water - "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"
- Mark 9:21-25 - Father with sick son - "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief"
- Psalm 91 - Referenced as a prayer the pastor prayed over his son
- Psalm 103:13-15 - "As a father has compassion for his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him"
- Romans 10:9 - "Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord and confesses with their mouth and believes in their heart that Jesus is Lord and was resurrected, they will be saved"
- John 21 - Mentioned as containing Jesus' appearance to Peter

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## Discussion and Reflection

1. How does the analogy of the check engine light help us understand that doubt is not the problem itself, but rather a signal pointing us toward something deeper that needs attention in our spiritual journey?
2. Thomas required a three-level revelation from Jesus, who met him exactly where he was. What specific revelation do you need from God to step fully into the calling He has for your life?
3. The father in Mark 9 cried out, 'Lord, I believe; help my disbelief.' How do faith and doubt coexist in your own life, and what does it mean to be honest with God about both?
4. Peter had the faith to step out of the boat but not the faith to weather the storm. In what area of your life have you stepped out in faith, only to find yourself struggling when the storm came?
5. Thomas stayed in community with the disciples even during his season of doubt rather than isolating himself. How does staying connected to wise counsel and biblical community help us navigate our own seasons of doubt?
6. The sermon distinguished between doubt and disbelief, suggesting doubt can lead to deeper faith while disbelief is a settled rejection. Where do you see this distinction playing out in your own spiritual journey or in the lives of those around you?
7. Jesus appeared to five different groups: the unsuspecting, the hurting, the uncertain, the doubting, and the failure. Which of these categories do you most identify with today, and how does knowing Jesus appears to people in that state encourage you?
8. Ps. Luis mentioned that some people receive answers from God but reject them because they do not align with their desires. How do we cultivate a heart that accepts God's answers even when they differ from what we hoped for?
9. Thomas went on to plant churches and travel thousands of miles after his encounter with the risen Christ, ultimately being martyred in a way similar to Jesus. How does his transformation challenge our view of what God can do with someone who has doubted?
10. The sermon emphasized the importance of continuing to knock, seek, and pursue God rather than settling for shallow answers. What practical steps can you take this week to knock more persistently on the door for the revelation you need?

## Practical Challenge:

*Here are a few ways to help activate key next steps this week:*

- **Write It Out:** Journal about a doubt or question you've been carrying. Write out specifically what you need from God (like Thomas did). Commit to "knocking" in prayer about this each day this week.
- **Research Your Doubt:** Pick one theological question you've been wrestling with. Read a book, listen to a sermon, or talk to a pastor about it. Don't settle for shallow answers, keep knocking until you find clarity