



## Parkway Fellowship

No Regrets • Stop Second Guessing • John 11:11-16; John 20:24-29 • 09/29/2019

### Main Point

God helps us overcome our doubts and live with no regrets.

### Introduction

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**When eating out with other people, do you like to choose the restaurant, or would you rather someone else decide for you? What are some other choices you'd rather someone else make for you so you don't have to decide?**

**When have you made a decision and then later questioned or regretted it?**

**Would you say the decision to follow Jesus was made for you, or one you made on your own? Explain. Ultimately, is following Jesus a choice one person can make for another? Why not?**

**Has there ever been a time in your life when you questioned Jesus, wondering if He really was worth following? Share.**

We all face seasons of difficulty and doubt; in them, we must remember what God has done and continues to do in our lives and choose to trust and follow Him. As we study His Word and seek Him in prayer, Jesus will continue to provide reasons why we should follow Him, but He leaves the choice up to us. We must face our doubts head-on so that God might work in our hearts to strengthen our faith, deepen our joy in Him, and help us live with no regrets.

### Understanding

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| Ask a volunteer to read John 11:11-16.

**From the context and response to Jesus in verse 12, what doubts or questions did the disciples have that they weren't voicing out loud?**

**In this week's sermon, we learned that we should stay faithful in the face of doubt. What are some situations where it's been hard for you to do that?**

**From Thomas's response in verse 16, would you say he was hesitant or full of excuses? How would you characterize him, based on this passage?**

As Jesus informed His disciples that they were going back to Bethany, where He had just been rejected for claiming to be one with the Father, His disciples knew precisely the kind of danger He was in. In addition, their friend Lazarus had died and Jesus so far only expressed the situation as a teachable moment (v. 14-15). Thomas spoke up for the group—they would continue to follow Jesus with certainty, even in uncertainty about the circumstances that surrounded them. One way to stay faithful in the face of doubt is to decide that traumatic experiences won't traumatize our faith.

**Jesus said He was glad He wasn't there when Lazarus died so that the disciples might believe. Read Romans 8:28. If God's intention is to allow experiences to increase our faith, then why do so many of us allow traumatic experiences to decrease our faith? How can we prevent that from happening?**

| Ask a volunteer to read John 20:24-29.

**Look past his words. What clues are there in these verses that Thomas did hold onto some measure of faith and belief?**

**How do you see Jesus' love for Thomas here? What gentle rebuke does Jesus give him? What does this encounter teach you about how Jesus responds to the doubts of His followers?**

Jesus did not get angry with Thomas or scold him. Instead, Jesus drew close to Thomas to strengthen his faith. Jesus made it clear that the better way is full belief; after all, faith requires that we believe without the proof that comes from seeing. But Jesus did not turn His back on Thomas, He literally pulled him to His side and used Thomas' doubt as a teachable moment. He presented Thomas with exactly the evidence Thomas had asked to see. Jesus knew the heart of His disciple, and He was prepared to remove every barrier to Thomas's belief.

**What kind of proof do you ask (either outright or by your actions) from Jesus to prove Himself?**

**What are some ways God lovingly continues to give us evidence to trust in Him?**

## Application

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**In this week's sermon, we learned that the longer we let doubt linger, the stronger doubt takes hold. What are some steps we can take to stop doubt in its tracks?**

**God is looking for people who believe without seeing so they can see Him do things they can hardly believe. In what situation do you need to believe without seeing so that God might display His power in your life?**

## Pray

Thank God that He is not frustrated by your questions and fears. Invite Him to reveal any doubts you're holding onto that keep you from moving forward in faith.

## Commentary

| John 11:11-16

Jesus returned to the subject at hand and used a common New Testament euphemism for death—the word “sleep” (see Matt. 9:24; 1 Cor. 11:30; 15:20; 1 Thess. 4:14). After having told them the sickness would not be unto death, Jesus then said clearly, Lazarus is dead. Not only that, but we learn the delay that allowed the death of His friend would work for the benefit of Jesus' disciples. They were on their way south to Bethany. This trip would take them through Jerusalem.

| John 20:24-29

20:24-25. If Judas depicted betrayal and Peter denial, Thomas demonstrated skepticism. The word translated told in verse 25 appears in the imperfect tense. The disciples kept on telling Thomas they had seen the Lord. Thomas, fed up with such nonsense, grew weary of holding on to a faith that had crumbled. He removed himself from the disciple band, telling them he wanted to hear no more about this ridiculous notion of a resurrection. Thomas used strong language with his friends, indicating the frustration to which the events of the past week had driven him.

20:26-27. But John moved on to show us doubting alleviated. In spite of what he had said, Thomas at least joined the Sunday evening service a week later. Again, in spite of locked doors, Jesus appeared and greeted them exactly as He had a week earlier. But rather than showing His hands and side to the entire group, He turned to Thomas and invited empirical investigation. Sincere Christianity has always welcomed sincere research. Jesus did not scold Thomas or condemn his hesitation. He provided the evidence. Only then did He say to him, Stop doubting and believe.

20:28-29. In the flow of this wonderful story, John next offered us a record of doubting abandoned. Thomas moved quickly from rough-talking skeptic to willing worshiper. In the New Testament, no one had yet said to Jesus, My Lord and my God. Here again the theme of our study looms large—believing is seeing. Thomas saw and believed—and that was fine. But happy are the millions who since that day have not had the opportunity of Thomas and the other ten and yet have believed. More than 375 times in the Old Testament and 100 times in the New Testament, the Bible talks about blessing. This one is related to faith and especially faith in the resurrection.