

Jn 20:24–31

**WELCOME:**

Welcome back!

**REVIEW:**

- We finish up chapter 20 today leaving only one more chapter (Doubting Thomas)
- Then we start a new series True Story
- Book of Revelation

**PRAYER:**

What we have not seen, show us. What we do not know, teach us. Wherever we are, lead us.

**OPENER:**

**How many of you have read Pilgrim's Progress?**

**The book Pilgrim's Progress has been printed and read more than any other book in history only second to the bible.**

**Short Biography of Bunyan**

Nov 1660 arrested for preaching the gospel as an unlicensed minister it ended up a twelve-year imprisonment cutting him off from his family and church;

- *Next to the Bible, the book that I value most is Pilgrim's Progress.*— Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)

Look on website for link to children's movie Pilgrim's Progress

The narrator of the book explains that he fell asleep in the wilderness and dreamed of a man named Christian, who was tormented by spiritual anguish. A spiritual guide named Evangelist visits Christian and urges him to leave the City of Destruction. Evangelist claims that salvation can only be found in the Celestial City, known as Mount Zion.

- *I find this book so full of matter, that I can seldom go through more than a page or half a page at a time.* – John Newton

Interpreter and Christian at the wall of fire. (show picture)

**"The fire you see is the work of grace burning in the heart of ones who loves God. He who seeks to douse it is the devil."**

Apollyon was clothed with scales, like a fish (and they are his pride), he had wings like a dragon, feet like a bear, and out of his belly came fire and smoke, and his mouth was as the mouth of a lion.

Rev 12 epicenter

“This is Christ,” whispered the Interpreter reverently. “He, by continually applying the oil of his grace, sustains the flame of love in our hearts!”

2 buckets – discouragement and doubt

“Because of Christ’s constant help, it matters not what trials the devil may pour in upon us. The oil of the Spirit floats above them all and the flame of love burns brighter still.”

Have you doubted recently?

How is doubt most often expressed?

### A. Fairytale syndrome

- If one’s faith remains immature, then doubt may stem from being unable to answer opposing views.
- Students go to college and aren’t prepared to answer objections, and it can lead them to doubt.

The dedication found in the first Narnia book, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

My Dear Lucy,

I wrote this story for you, but when I began it I had not realized that girls grow quicker than books. As a result, you are already too old for fairy tales, and by the time it is printed and bound you will be older still.

But some day you will be old enough to start reading fairy tales again. You can then take it down from some upper shelf, dust it, and tell me what you think of it. I shall probably be too deaf to hear, and too old to understand a word you say but I shall still be,

your affectionate Godfather,  
C. S. Lewis

**One day you will realize enlightenment, intellect, and experience alone will leave you a smoldering wet piece of wood – but coming back to God’s story will set you ablaze again.**

## What about Thomas? What kind of doubt was his?

### B. Frustration Syndrome

- Thomas' doubt was the result of massive religious disappointment.
- But he was crushed because his hopes were in the tomb.
- He felt as though he got hoodooed.
- Often doubt stems from being greatly hurt in life.

## What can we learn from Thomas' doubt and His experience with Jesus?

### 1. Isolating yourself intensifies your doubt.

**Vs 24-25** *Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."*

- Thomas didn't say he would never believe – he said he needed empirical evidence – proof.
- We all doubt – all of us are having the enemy throw water on our fire.

**Vs 26** Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."

- When Jesus shows up he brings his peace – even when you are weakened by doubt.

### 2. Jesus pours in more oil when we are most weak.

**Vs 27** *Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe."*

- Jesus did not rebuke Thomas for his failure, but instead compassionately offered him proof of His resurrection. Jesus lovingly met him at the point of His weakness.

**(2 Tim. 2:13)** *if we are faithless, he remains faithful— for he cannot deny himself.*

- What about when you doubt? Is there still room for Jesus to supply the oil of grace to keep the fires lit for you?

- **YES and when you receive it, here is the only response.**

**Vs 28** *Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!”*

- Notice Thomas forgets his need for empirical evidence and never has to put his hand in Jesus side.
- The word translated as “Lord” here is the same word used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament for God’s high name, Yahweh. Thomas confessed that Jesus was Yahweh, His God, standing before him in the flesh.
- Thomas’ Isolation breaks way to exclamation
- But without community would he have experienced the presence of Jesus fueling the fires of his faith.

**Vs 29** *Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”*

- Catechism 11 Truth and Grace – Can you see God? No. I cannot see God, but He always sees me.

*“Though you have not seen him, you love him, and rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory” (1 Pet 1:8)*

### **3. The way to look behind the wall is to look into His Word.**

**Vs 30-31** *Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

Robert Robinson

Come thou fount

Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it  
 Prone to leave the God I love  
 Here's my heart, oh, take and seal it  
 Seal it for Thy courts above

Robert Robinson in the 1700s, John Bunyon in the 1600s, us in 2020 – the year the wheels fell off – are all facing the same attack of doubt. One lion is throwing water on the fires of our heart

for God and the other Lion is feeding the fire – one lion is on a leash and the Other is on the throne.

“To teach thee, dear pilgrim, that even when you cannot see Him, Christ is always near. No matter what doubts may come or fears assail, your faith may burn brightly still.”