

## Meeting the Risen Christ: Jesus Meets us in Our Doubt

John 20:24-31 || Pastor Paul Hahn || 8 May 2022

*To CARE for one another in truth and in love,  
To GROW together as followers of Jesus,  
To SERVE those God has placed in our path.  
– CG Mission Statement*

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**Icebreaker:** What place have you visited that seemed too good to be true until you saw it with your own eyes?

**Worship:** Jesus of the Scars (*Remain a few moments in worship with this poem. What is God's invitation?*)

If we have never sought, we seek Thee now;  
Thine eyes burn through the dark, our only stars;  
We must have sight of thorn-pricks on Thy brow,  
We must have Thee, O Jesus of the Scars.

The heavens frighten us; they are too calm;  
In all the universe we have no place.  
Our wounds are hurting us; where is the balm?  
Lord Jesus, by Thy Scars, we claim Thy grace.

If, when the doors are shut, Thou drawest near,  
Only reveal those hands, that side of Thine;  
We know to-day what wounds are, have no fear,  
Show us Thy Scars, we know the countersign.

The other gods were strong; but Thou wast weak;  
They rode, but Thou didst stumble to a throne;  
But to our wounds only God's wounds can speak,  
And not a god has wounds, but Thou alone.

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**Sermon Summary for John 20:24-31** (*Read aloud before reading the sermon summary.*)

No one likes to be called a doubter, like we label Thomas. But the truth is, there can be doubts in the middle of our faith. And not all doubts are bad; in fact, they can even be good. When the Apostle urges us to take every thought captive to Christ, this includes our doubts. Because Gospel faith is not afraid of doubt. In fact, Christian faith invites doubt as part of the journey of faith. As Tim Keller notes:

*“A faith without some doubts is like a human body without any antibodies in it. People who blithely go through life too busy or indifferent to ask hard questions about why they believe as they do will find themselves defenseless against either the experience of tragedy or the probing questions of a smart skeptic. A person's faith can collapse almost overnight if she has failed over the years to listen to her own doubts, which should only be discarded after long reflection. Believers should acknowledge and wrestle with doubts—not only their own but their friends' and neighbors.”*

We are able to welcome doubt as a part of our journey because our faith is ultimately reliant on the One in whom it believes – the risen Jesus – who is absolutely the most sure thing and the most beautiful thing in the universe.

Doubting the Reality of the Resurrection // Thomas doubted that the resurrection had really happened. He had missed out on the many, personal encounters that others had already had. Though he heard their accounts, Thomas couldn't believe that Jesus was indeed alive (v25). So when Christ appears a week later to bring the truth to him personally, inviting him to see and touch His wounds (v27), Thomas instantly knows the truth, and his only answer is worship. Because Jesus has given him exactly what he needs to move through doubt to faith. John says that he writes his Gospel account with a voice given by the Holy Spirit, so that we would also believe, and by believing, have life in His name. John says that he could have written down many other things, but these accounts are what we need from Jesus to believe. They are enough – both to bring us to Christ and to support and grow this faith.

Doubting the Power of the Resurrection // For some, our doubts are less about the reality of the resurrection than about its power to change things. As John says, when Jesus breaks into our lives, it will always involve Scripture. No evidence will be enough without its voice and vision. Faith submits to its authority rather than to doubt. And

what does the Bible say about the resurrection? It says: we have been raised up together with Jesus ([Col 3:1](#)); we experience the power of His resurrection as we suffer for the good of others ([Phil 3:10](#)); if we are in Christ, we are a part of a new creation ([2 Cor 5:17](#)); Jesus continues working His resurrection into the world, until all things are made right, in preparation for a great feast ([Rev 21:1-5](#)). Scripture declares these truths, trumping our doubts or worries. When Jesus greeted the group on Easter night, He offered His shalom and breathed into them His Spirit. That same Spirit breathes into us, giving the life of Heaven to us and through us. As Geerhardus Vos wrote, “*The Gospel of Easter is like the sea breeze of heaven, filling the lungs of our souls.*”

[Doubting the Resurrection is for You](#) // Maybe we doubt Easter’s reach to us personally, as if Christ came to calm Thomas’s doubts but not our own. But this is Good News for the world, corporately and personally. As one who encountered the Risen Jesus, John promises that whoever believes shall have life. The resurrection will come to us – just as it did to Thomas – if we admit our need and open ourselves to Christ’s voice in Scripture. John pleads with us not to feel trapped, to embrace the Gospel, and to let its power change us, remaking us in humility and love.

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**Discussion Questions** (*You will not be able to discuss all the questions. Pick the ones you like. Some are personal perspective and application questions for life-transforming discussions.*)

#### **Doubting the Reality of the Resurrection**

- What do you think Thomas was going through in the days leading up to his encounter with the Risen Lord?
- In Pastor Paul’s review of the proofs for the Resurrection, (empty tomb, martyr’s deaths, human longing, voice of scripture) which stand out to you?
  - What about this proof resonates with you?
  - What makes doubt so common and easy at times?
  - What strategies do you use to combat doubt when it comes for a time or a season?

#### **Doubting the Power of the Resurrection**

- CS Lewis called the Gospel with its Resurrection at the center, “*the sunshine that then allows one to see all things.*” How does the Gospel work as a filter through which to see and process all things?
  - Why is processing the Gospel intellectually not enough on its own?
  - How does the gift of God’s Spirit impact our faith?
- What makes the power of the resurrection difficult to live into in our day-to-day lives?

#### **Doubting the Resurrection is for You**

- One of the reasons we doubt whether the Gospel is for us is because we want to be and see change occurring in our own lives and in those around us. Do you see change occurring through the Gospel around you? Do you see it occurring through you?
  - In what other ways do you want to see the Gospel move in you and through you?
  - What are you doing that allows the Gospel to move in and through you?
  - What other practices could you engage in to see this?

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## **Prayer**

For this week’s Prayer Guide for personal or group use, click [HERE](#).

## **Engage & Experience: Prayer & Gratitude**

Check out the PCC [Pray for Me](#) Campaign at <https://pacificcrossroads.org/prayforme/>. Consider signing up to pray for PCC children or families as a Community Group.