

## THOMAS: A CASE STUDY ON DOUBT

**Observation #1: Thomas was a dedicated and \_\_\_\_\_ follower of Christ.**

### Examples:

- **He was willing to go to Jerusalem and \_\_\_\_\_ with Christ.**

**John 11:7-8, 16:** “Then he said to his disciples, “Let us go back to Judea.” (v.8) “But Rabbi,” they said, “a short while ago the Jews tried to stone you, and yet you are going back there?” ... (v.16) Then Thomas (called Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

- **When he was \_\_\_\_\_ he admitted it.**

**John 14:3-5:** “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. (v.4) You know the way to the place where I am going.” (v.5) Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

- **He wasn’t going to \_\_\_\_\_ to believe just to fit in, he wanted proof.**

**John 20:24-25:** “Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. (v.25) So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it.”

**Observation #2: Thomas was committed to \_\_\_\_\_, not \_\_\_\_\_.**

**Key Truth:** Doubt is not the same as unbelief, so it is not the opposite of faith – it is a state of mind \_\_\_\_\_ between faith and unbelief.

**Mark 9:24:** “Right away the boy’s father cried out, “I do believe! Help me overcome my unbelief!”

**Observation #3: The request of Thomas was reckless and irreverent, but it also was an \_\_\_\_\_ search for answers.**

**John 16:16-18:** “In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me.” (v.17) Some of his disciples said to one another, “What does he mean by saying, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me,’ and ‘Because I am going to the Father?’” (v.18) They kept asking, “What does he mean by ‘a little while’? We don’t understand what he is saying.”

**John 16:19-20:** “Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this, so he said to them, “Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me’? (v.20) I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.”

**John 20:24-25:** “Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. (v.25) So the other disciples told him, “**We have seen the Lord!**” But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it.”

**Observation #4: Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ Thomas where he’s \_\_\_\_\_ in his search for answers.**

**John 20:26-27:** “A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” (v.27) Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”

**Key truth:** God is not constrained to show us this kind of \_\_\_\_\_. If we had complete knowledge we wouldn’t need \_\_\_\_\_.

**Hebrews 11:1** Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.

**Observation #5: Ultimately Thomas was convinced by the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.**

**John 20:28-29:** “Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!” (v.29) Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

**FINAL OBSERVATION:** Thomas didn't run away, he chose to \_\_\_\_\_ long enough to get his doubts resolved and so should we.

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### *Prayer time...*

1. What insight, principle, or observation from this weekend's message did you find to be most helpful, eye opening, or troubling? Explain.
2. What's the difference between 'doubt' and 'unbelief'?
3. What are some 'doubts' or 'questions' you've had, or still have, about Christianity? How have you dealt with these doubts and questions?
4. How should we deal with our questions and doubts?
5. What do the following passages tell us about the approach we should take to answering questions and dealing with doubt? (Matthew 22:37-38; 1 Peter 3:15; Acts 17:1-3, 10-12, 16-34; 18:1-4, 24-28).
6. What do the following passages teach us about 'doubt'? (Judges 6; Mark 9:24; Matt. 28:16; Mark 16:9-14; Luke 24:1-12, 36-49; Jude 22).
7. What do the following passages teach us about doubts, questions and our relationship with God? (Psalm 6; 10:1; 13; 22:1-2; Jeremiah 12:1-4; Habakkuk 1:2-4; 1:13).

### *Prayer for each other's needs*

## REASONS TO BELIEVE

*"What Should I Do With My Questions And Doubts About Christianity?"*

02.06.11 / Pastor Cory Anderson / SMC

### INTRODUCTION:

#### Truths about Doubt

- Doubt is a \_\_\_\_\_ for anyone who thinks.
- Doubt is necessary to forge a \_\_\_\_\_ faith that stands the tests of life.
- Doubt is something other \_\_\_\_\_ have encountered throughout time.
- Doubts are \_\_\_\_\_.
- Doubt should be \_\_\_\_\_ with properly.

"Sure, it's hard to give up our Norman Rockwell picture of life, but that's not reality. Reality is that our parents were imperfect and behaved in ways that brought us pain. Reality is that miscarriages cause grief. Reality is that wayward teenagers can rip a parent's heart out. Reality is that sexual abuse causes devastation. Reality is that there is heartache in this world, and sometimes you and I are caught in the middle of it. When that's true, we need to acknowledge our gut-level responses. We need to admit to ourselves that we're afraid, lonely, disappointed, or angry. The second step is to honestly tell God how we feel. He can handle our authentic cries of pain and disappointment. He can even help us work through them...The third step is to discuss our pain, our disappointment, or our heartache with someone else." **Bill Hybels, "Honest to God? Becoming an Authentic Christian", p.102-103.**

For many Christians, merely having doubts of any kind can be scary. They wonder whether their questions disqualify them being a follower of Christ. They feel insecure because they're not sure whether it's permissible to express uncertainty about God, Jesus, or the Bible. So they keep their questions to themselves – and inside, unanswered, they grow and fester and loom until they eventually succeed in choking out their faith." **Lee Strobel, "The Case for Faith," p.316.**