

Safford Church of Christ

3888 S Hwy 191, Safford, AZ 85546

17 April 2016

Topics

A.M. Bible Class:

Ed Curry

A.M. Lesson:

Ed Curry

P.M. Lesson:

God's Mighty Army (Joshua 1:9)

Wednesday:

Christian Evidences

Pulpit Evangelist

Ken Knowlton: 428-3494

Elders

Greg Briggs: 428-8756

John Cunningham: 428-0895

Sunday Bible Class	10:00 A.M.
Sunday Morning Worship	11:00 A.M.
Sunday Evening Worship	6:30 P.M.
Wednesday Evening Class	6:30 P.M.
Thursday Ladies Bible Class	10:00 A.M.

*Great are the works of the Lord,
studied by all who delight in them. Psalm 111:2
Please silence your cell phones and other electronic devices.*

Doubting Thomas

Savannah Cottrell

<http://focuspressblog.com>, 13 April 2016

Let's talk about Thomas' moniker – "Doubting Thomas" – briefly for a moment.

In John 20, Jesus was appearing to the rest of the disciples after He was resurrected. It was a joyous time; Mary, Mary Magdalene, Peter, and John had already seen the risen Savior. At this point, He was assuring them that He in fact was the Jesus they had known and ministered with (John 20:19-23).



This leads us to Thomas. Thomas was not with the disciples when Jesus had first appeared to them (John 20:24), so it's easy to speculate – and I'm just speculating here – that he had no clue that Jesus had actually risen from the dead prior to his showing up. He said to his fellow disciples upon hearing that they had seen Jesus, "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" (John 20:25). Sounds

pretty adamant, right? Imagine Thomas' surprise when eight days later, he sees His Savior, and guess what? He tells him specifically to "put your finger here, and see My hands; and put out your hand, and place it in My side. Do not disbelieve, but believe" (John 20:27). Based on his declaration of praise upon hearing this – "My Lord and my God!" – we can safely assume this was the proof he needed (John 20:28).

But it's verse 29 of John 20 that has people wondering about Thomas' doubts: "Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'"

So, what is Jesus saying here? Is He chastising Thomas for his questioning and possible outright doubt? Or could His message be more loving to both those who need to see and those who don't? Let's talk about that.

When someone questions their belief in God, we should not go on the attack – questioning their questioning, for lack of better phrasing. We need to be aware that at this point in time, they need a Christian brother or sister to love them with a truly Christlike attitude, especially if such an example hasn't been shown to them in some time, or if they've experienced tough trials. Love on them first, and make sure they know you care and that you will

be there for them. Then, start the conversation. Why are they asking these questions? Are they wanting evidence to go with their belief? Are there scriptural sources for what they're trying to find answers for, or have they been swayed or discouraged by false doctrine? Avoid an accusatory tone, here; just talk as friends. Then, offer to pray for them; pray that God will reveal the truth they need to see in only the way He can.

In turn, we shouldn't be scared to ask questions. Ask a fellow believer whom you trust – such as a family member, close friend, or a fellow member of your congregation – what questions you may have. They in turn can pray for you and help in any way they can.

The point is that asking questions is not a death knell for one's faith and belief in God. Rather, a questioning season – as scary as it can feel or seem – can actually strengthen your faith if you turn to Him.

Jesus doesn't outright condemn asking questions in John 20:29. He is just emphasizing faith.

Look at what Thomas says in his exchange with the disciples: "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" (John 20:25). Maybe Thomas was speaking rashly, or even sarcastically... the Scriptures don't say exactly. But saying you'll never believe because you don't see something can be a big problem, just because we are encouraged and called to love the One we cannot see. As such, He wants us to feel like we can love Him and believe in Him without seeing. He wants a loving relationship with us, and faith that He is there is part of it.

But what about times when you feel like He is not present? In these seasons, it's best to read scripture and get into the habit of prayer, along with seeking the support of fellow Christians. Maintaining that consistency and building that relationship will help keep you in step with Him, even when you can't see where your foot is going.

At the end, what we need to realize is that as we look at this account of Thomas and his experience with the risen Savior, we need to know that he is not nicknamed "Doubting Thomas" by Jesus or His disciples at all. It's just that Thomas had a unique reaction to hearing that Jesus had risen, and Jesus

used that reaction to teach him about faith. We can – and should – apply the same lesson to our lives today: having faith when we do see is great and all, but it's just important to have faith and not see. Not only that, but it's also okay to ask questions. Reach for Him; He is there for us and will meet our every need (Philippians 4:19).

Some thoughts: When we are not actually fighting spiritual battles, we need to be preparing for spiritual battle. We prepare by dedicating ourselves to prayer, Bible study and fellowship with fellow believers. It is notable that the book of Ephesians includes a description of the Armor of God. That armor includes an offensive tool called "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

Military volunteers are rigorously trained in ways that are difficult to endure. Imagine if the military never requested its recruits to do any physical exercise for concern that they might get tired and some might even drop out of boot camp. Would those soldiers be prepared for real battle?

Do our classes, sermons, bulletin articles (etc.) prepare us for spiritual battle? Do we prepare for war?

I Timothy 1:18; 6:12; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Ephesians 6:11-17; John 8:32; Hebrews 4:12; Revelation 12:9 (avoiding deception).

News:

The Portales Christian Children's Home pantry van will be here approximately April 26. Our pantry item is canned tomato foods.

Prayer list:

*Joy Gibson has requested prayers for her family.
Christian Children's Home in Portales, New Mexico
Dan Keele—mission work
Robin Richards—back pain
Sam Appleton—declining health
John Cunningham—cancer
Norma Robinson—health
Linda Boling—health
H.L. Boling—general health and complications from leukemia
Tatyana Knowlton—macular degeneration
Nic and Ani Self—health and personal needs*



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