

INTRO

- Did you grow up believing in Santa, Tooth Fairy, or Easter Bunny? How did you find out they weren't real?
- Does your culture, upbringing, faith background encourage or discourage asking questions?

READ

John 20:24-29

REFLECT

We've come to know Thomas as Doubting Thomas.

Qu: How are doubt and unbelief different? Is Thomas a doubter or unwilling to believe?

Jesus doesn't rebuke Thomas for doubting, but his unwillingness to believe. This is important because doubt has often been seen as the opposite to faith and, therefore, negative and even sinful.

1. Doubt is not the same as unbelief

To doubt means to be uncertain about something:

"To believe is to be in one mind about accepting something as true; to disbelieve is to be in one mind about rejecting it; and to doubt is to waver somewhere in between the two, and thus to be in two minds." — Os Guinness

Qu: why is it important to not confuse doubt with unbelief? How does this distinction help you when you have doubts?

2. Doubt is neither trivial nor terminal

Scripture neither glamorizes nor demonizes doubters. In fact, all of the great men & women of faith wrestled with doubts. It's what we do with our doubt that matters.

Qu: what are some helpful ways we can deal with our doubts?

3. Doubt is necessary for a robust faith

It's been said that a faith without some doubts is like a human body without any antibodies in it. Doubt gets us to ask questions of our faith which can actually help build up our faith if we're willing to work through the process of deconstructing and reconstructing our beliefs.

Qu: what are some areas of your faith you've had doubts about? What are some areas of your faith that you have 'deconstructed', or are feeling like they need to be?

Doubt & Certainty

Certainty is comforting and reassuring especially in our world of "question everything". The goal is not to abandon certainty (that would be treating doubt too casually), but rather *the well-informed placement of our certainty and trust*. The danger of wanting certainty on everything is that we actually make it an idol and it leads to fundamentalism.

As believers, we can redeem doubt by:

- Acknowledging and wrestling with our doubts
- Asking sincere questions (think of Thomas' question in John 14:5!!)
- Seeking to learn the reasons behind our faith
- Creating a church culture that is gracious towards doubters and skeptics, and that doesn't avoid or downplay the objections people have towards faith.

Have mercy on those who doubt. — Jude 22

Don't lose the faith by losing the focus.

Qu: what is John's focus of his gospel (read 20:29-31)

RESPOND & PRAY

- What encouraged/challenged you the most from this discussion?
- Spend time praying for one another and those you know who struggle to believe.