

Seeing & Believing

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[0 : 00] All right, we're going to be in John 20, that passage that we read just a minute ago, verses 24 to 31.

We're looking at a text with the most renowned doubter in the history of the world. His name's Thomas. He actually had a nickname already. He was called the twin.

Thomas is just Aramaic for twin. That's what people called him. He had a little moniker that was attached to him. But because of this text, history reminds him with another little adjective in front of that, doubting Thomas, the doubting twin.

To give us a little bit of context for our passage, if you remember, Jesus has just risen from the dead. And he's appeared to Mary and other women. He's appeared to many of the disciples, except one.

One guy missed out. And it's eight days later. It's the next Sunday. They would count the day you're on and then the subsequent days. So when it says eight days later from the resurrection, it's the following Sunday.

[1 : 11] And Thomas is feeling a little bit left out. Can you imagine how you'd feel? Have you ever had a group of friends who, for whatever reason, you couldn't go and do something that was just amazing?

They went on an awesome hike or to a great concert. Or there was some inside joke that you feel on the outside of. And it kind of stings. I mean, imagine you missed out on the resurrection.

It wouldn't feel very fun. And he's struggling. Thomas is struggling with what others are telling him. And the Gospel of John, at this point, is kind of reaching a crescendo. Because John's about to get to his purpose statement in verse 31, where he says, I've written these things that you might believe, whether it's for the first time or the millionth time, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

And by believing, you might have life in his name. And Thomas is kind of the key in the resurrection story in getting to that purpose statement. Before we look into the text, though, more, let's pray for the preaching of God's Word.

Heavenly Father, I don't know the doubts that everyone in this room has this evening, but you do. And so we pray that through your Word and by your Spirit, you would meet us in our doubts.

[2 : 28] And help us to honestly wrestle with them before you. We pray that you would give us as close an experience as what Thomas had. An encounter with you.

We pray this in Christ's name. Amen. There was this guy named Thomas Kuhn. He was an American philosopher and scientist. And he didn't come up with the phrase, but he actually popularized the phrase paradigm shift.

Paradigm shift. He originally, he was talking about it in reference to things like scientific revolutions. But they started to use it and became common parlance for all of life. And basically, he said that we all have different paradigms.

A different way of viewing the world. Of kind of making sense of things as much as you can. Trying to organize life and to look at it. And to make a paradigm shift can be a traumatic thing.

Because what happens is when some new bit of information comes in and it doesn't fit with your current paradigm, what you do is either you reject it. Or you kind of have to have a paradigm shift to make that bit of information then fit in.

[3 : 41] And to do that is a really hard thing. I've been with Phil Stogner. I've been reading a book on leadership. And one of the interesting things this guy is teaching, he says, a lot of organizations and systems, they would rather die than change.

What he's saying is basically we have a paradigm, a way of living in the world. And we get comfortable in it. And even if we feel like something's not quite right, it's a hard thing to have a paradigm shift.

A shift in the way of thinking and acting. It's very hard. I'm not trying to point fingers at anybody in this life. If you struggle with it, we all do. It's a hard thing to have a paradigm shift. It's a traumatic thing.

For example, I can remember as a wee child in America, I loved police officers. We called it cops and robbers. We played cops and robbers with my friends. Cops were the good guys.

Cops, robbers were the bad guys. Until I was watching a television show. And there was a crooked police officer on it. And I remember there's this guy.

[4 : 44] I literally have this image. The guy on a bus. The police officer gets on. And it's America, right? So they're shooting guns. And the police officer, he's in a full uniform. A policeman uniform.

And he's shooting at the good guy. And I remember, I don't remember how old I was. Maybe eight or something like that. And I'm just looking and I'm going, what? And I literally went and asked my mom.

I was like, all right. Sort this out for me. I thought the policemen were the good guys. And all of a sudden, I'm watching the show. And there's this guy.

Is he just a bad guy dressed as a policeman? And I don't remember fully. My mom probably said something like, yes, well, most policemen are good. You can trust them.

But some might be bad and corrupt. And in my mind, I walked away. And it shook me. I'm like, I go around playing cops and robbers. I like to be a cop.

[5 : 37] Am I a bad guy? What's going on? I really struggled with this. It came. There was, I had a paradigm of way of seeing the world of black and white. And this new bit of information came in. And I either, I had to have this paradigm shift to account for this new bit of information.

Or I had to reject it totally and pretend like it didn't happen. It caused me to doubt everything. It's the trauma of learning about the real world as a small child.

There was this new data. And it entered my paradigm. And it caused me to question everything. And that's what happens with so many of us with our doubts.

And I think that's actually, that's what's going on with Thomas and the other disciples. His paradigm, his way of viewing the world has received some new data. The Messiah is crucified and risen.

Physical resurrection. What are you going to do with that? It's shaking him. The Messiah is not supposed to have these things happen to him in his worldview. I want to look at our passage in two parts.

[6 : 41] It's this. The questions of doubt. And then secondly, the answers to doubt. The questions of doubt. And then the answers to doubt. First off, the questions of doubt. The age that we live in in the Western world has actually been described as a secular age.

An age of skepticism and doubt. To put it another way, we live in a time in human history, in Western civilization, that favors doubt over faith.

It's a unique thing in human history. It's not the way all around the world right now and other civilizations in other parts of the world. And it's not that people haven't doubted. They've doubted things through all human history, everywhere, anywhere.

Doubt's been a part of it. But it's a unique thing of where we're living in that we favor doubt over faith. There's this Canadian philosopher named Charles Taylor who's written one of the most important philosophical books in the last century.

It's called A Secular Age. And it's huge. I can barely understand it. I usually watch YouTube videos of people explaining what he's saying to me. Because as I read it, I'm like, well, I'm not smart enough to understand this.

[7 : 50] But he notes that a few hundred years ago, it was nearly impossible not to believe in some sort of supernatural. Even if there is not saying that everybody believed in the God of the Bible.

And a lot of times there'd be surface level doubt. People still, whatever they believe in, they can want to do their own thing. But now, in our age, unbelief is almost inescapable.

It's the climate of our culture. It is the air that we breathe. It's skepticism, doubt. It's what gets celebrated. And our reaction as the church to the age we live in is a very important thing.

Because here's what happens. This is the temptation in one of either direction. We tend to celebrate doubt or we tend to condemn it altogether. And the problem is that neither approach really enables us to fully engage with doubt.

And I want to suggest, I almost said this morning, this evening, that there's another way. Because you see, not dealt with doubt, it causes within us a deep restlessness.

[8 : 57] Right? Because this doubt, there's these things that are coming in and it's questioning our paradigm. And you either reject it or you make room for it. And if you kind of just let it linger there, it's a deep restlessness in our soul.

I mean, just think about it. If you doubt that your spouse or your parent is really present and really loves you, it's going to eat away at you unless you deal with it. And the same is true in our relationship with Jesus.

Something that's happened within the church in the modern Western world is, again, that we've kind of acquiesced to the skepticism of our age.

And so you can hear things. It waters down the truth. Oh, it doesn't matter. And the essentials get smaller and smaller and smaller. Right? We say, oh, truth. Oh, well, that's relative. Or in the Bible, you've got to understand in the time.

And it waters down the truth so much. It kind of celebrates doubt. Or on the other end, we respond with scoffing at different arguments that people put out there and questions that they ask.

[9 : 58] I literally had a friend in seminary. This was not the Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis. They didn't do this. But he visited a different seminary in America. And he said one of the students there took him out for lunch.

And he said it struck him. He was like, this is the reason I didn't want to go to the seminary, is that the student said he basically scoffed at non-Christian. Oh, I don't even have time. I can't even. I can't fathom why people don't believe.

I don't even have time for that. It was like a condescension and just like, oh, just feeling gross about what other people believe. They just don't have time for that.

And I want to suggest to us that in ours and our neighbor's statements of doubt, they actually are kind of proceeding. When we make statements of doubt, they're proceeding from questions that we have.

And what we need to be able to do to face the restlessness of our doubt and our neighbor's doubt is to tune our ears to hear these questions so that we can actually then give the right answers.

[10:57] It doesn't really help if really underneath there's this question. They're making these statements, and you're just trying to address those. But underneath there's these deep questions. We're just missing the mark if we don't get at those.

The previous verses to our passage are filled with just absolute rapturous joy, right? Verse 24, though, it kind of starts with this disjunction. Oh, resurrection!

Now Thomas. Thomas had been left out. Ten other disciples, eyewitnesses to the resurrection, they tell Thomas what he missed. And what would your questions be if you were Thomas?

Maybe, why was I left out? Why didn't Jesus wait for me to be present? And Thomas, he doesn't actually ask a question, but he gives a statement, right? There's a statement, verse 25.

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 am never going to believe. Now, quite likely, that's a statement that Thomas would look back on later in his life and not feel super great about.

[12:00] But do you hear the grief in this statement? Some of the doubts that people share can be bloviating arrogance, absolutely. But do you hear the grief so many times in our questions of doubt that we have and our neighbors, our unbelieving neighbors?

What's the question behind all this for Thomas? Can there really be life in this world of death? Can there really be good news amidst all the bad news?

What do we know about Thomas? We actually don't know a lot about Thomas from the Gospels. But this is what we know. He's a follower of Jesus. He's given himself to a life of discipleship.

He's not some amateur philosopher asking questions of epistemology. He's this guy that deeply loved Jesus. And not only that, he'd been with Jesus for three years.

And Thomas believed that Jesus was the one in whom they called the Messiah, the Anointed One, the King who had come to set his people free. Jesus was the one who Thomas believed is going to rule and going to set the people of Israel free.

[13:11] Again, in our day and age, everything's so quick, right? We want change. We want stuff as fast as the fastest high-speed internet. We're shaped by sports highlights, which take a huge match, and they condense it.

Or TikTok videos, right? The shorter, I don't really know what TikTok videos are, but that's what I understand. They're short. It's a video, and it's short. That's all that I know. The young, cool people can explain it to me later. But we sometimes underestimate, then, the slow motion of real life.

It's been a week since the resurrection, and a couple days more since the crucifixion. That is where Thomas has been stuck. Everybody else, a couple days, had a Saturday to work it out, and then they see Jesus on a Sunday.

Thomas has been there for a week. The unfathomable had happened. Crucifixion. Thomas' doubt is coming from this place of profound religious disappointment.

Have you ever in your life experienced somebody leaving the faith? A family member, or maybe somebody you looked up to? It shakes you.

[14 : 19] It's not just something that we shrug at. It can be something that makes us question our faith when we see something like that, especially if we felt like that person was so strong, and we admired their faith, and they walk away, and we ask questions and wonder, what if that happens to me?

It shakes you. It shakes your paradigm. Can things really make sense in all this chaos? And what does Thomas say? What does he say? What's he focused on?

Did you hear it? Did you hear the grief in his statement? The scars. Gotta see the scars. I don't want a pretender.

I don't want a consolation. I don't want those scars to be ignored. Whatever you're doing, whatever I see in this Jesus, you know how I'm gonna know him? Because I see the scars. I gotta see the scars.

Not only do I have to see the scars, I have to touch the scars. Because that is the last thing that I saw, and that shook my paradigm. I am not gonna believe unless I see and touch those scars.

[15 : 23] It's like he's saying, I'm not gonna believe in the resurrection unless it's gonna be honest about the tragedy that I've witnessed. The scars better be there. This better be real. Don't pretend like everything's hunky-dory, to use an American phrase.

It means fine. Do you guys use hunky-dory here? Okay, cool. Hey, we're one. English. You see, Thomas wants what we want in our questions and confusion.

You know, don't... When we have these doubts and we have these questions, we don't want some banal truth claim. Like a little plaster over a gaping wound. Don't do this judo misdirection on me.

Don't ignore the pain. I gotta see the scars. I gotta know. Can there be life in all this death? This is the stuff of real life. There's this uneasy fear that keeps us from pressing into our doubts.

And it's a lot of times, what if I'm not supposed to ask that? Right? Or what if I'm already supposed to know the answer to that? Why did that happen? Do you fear asking these things?

[16 : 29] Like there's things you shouldn't ask or feelings you shouldn't feel. Do you fear that you might be Thomas? Feared that before in my life? Where you might get the nickname doubting.

And that might be attached to you like a badge of shame for the rest of your life. And I mean, in our doubts, and in our neighbor's doubts, it can exist on a wide spectrum.

Right? From does God exist or does the resurrection really happen? To how do I make sense of goodness and beauty and all this suffering? To does God really love me? To why? Why is this happening?

To how can I know? How can I be certain? To what's the meaning of all this? To am I the only one who struggles with this or asks these questions? And you know who doesn't mind asking these questions?

Kids. I was one. That's how I know. And I have three of them. Ollie's favorite question right now. Why? And I'll explain it, I think, a really good way. And he looks at me and goes, but why?

[17 : 32] I'm like, I don't know. I don't know how to follow up. I don't know how to answer that. They have these profound, hard questions. Ones that make you feel like you're unable to answer them.

And sometimes we want to ask ourselves but feel unable to ask. We can feel like sometimes, hey, especially if I've been in the church for a while, right? Like I've got to have all the answers. At least the majority of them.

I feel like we're going to be shunned if we admit that there's a passage in the Bible that's hard. Where our modern minds can't make sense of and we get stuck. And the thing is, our questions and our unbelieving neighbor's questions, they calcify into statements.

And they go from can I trust God to I cannot trust God. Can God love me moves to God cannot love me. And we ignore our questions.

We push them down. We let them eat at us from the inside. And we get so worried. Like everybody else is having this incredible spiritual experience in their following and discipleship of Jesus.

[18 : 34] And you are the only one who has questions and is wrestling, whatever they might be on the spectrum. We get so worried. We feel like Thomas. We feel left out. We feel confused.

All right. That's point one. The questions of doubt. Our doubts are statements coming from questions. We are either too scared to ask or are unanswered in grief or are blind to us in pride.

And we have to hear these questions fueling the doubt. But the second thing, though, is that we're not just left in our questions. There's an answer to our doubt. That's the second thing. The answer to doubt. And in our passage, and kind of outside of it, too, I want to give you three different answers to doubt.

And it's going to go, my answer, Jesus' answer to Thomas, and Jesus' answer to you. And that was for ranking of importance. My answer to your doubt from the rest of Scripture and some experience as a Christian and minister, Jesus' answer to Thomas, and then Jesus' answer to you in your doubt.

So first off, my answer to you. Maybe it's a little more philosophical. I don't know. My answer to you is that if you find yourself struggling with doubt, have you ever tried the option of doubting your doubts?

[19 : 46] Again, because we live in an age of skepticism, we favor doubt over faith. We feel like our doubts have more weight than our faith. And so we question our faith, but we think our doubts kind of stand there.

Unless we have an answer that can knock them down. But we can doubt our doubts. The world will tell you that to come to belief in God through faith, this is what you have to do. You have to have faith to believe in God.

But unbelief, the only way you get there is through reason. Right? To believe in God, you have to have faith. To unbelief, oh, that's only through reason. But we don't understand. There's all these assumptions that we make.

So many things that we believe we're blind to in our paradigm. To not believe in God also takes faith. People don't want to say that in the world.

To believe takes faith. To not believe takes faith. It actually takes faith to doubt Christianity. We've got to start with that. This was the experience of C.S. Lewis. He argued with God before his conversion that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust.

[20 : 51] And then he asked himself this. This is what he writes. But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? What was I comparing this universe with when I called it unjust? Atheism turns out to be too simple.

In the natural world, the strong eat the weak and there's nothing wrong with violence. Where do you get the standard that says the human world shouldn't work that way? That says the natural world is wrong.

You can only judge suffering as wrong if you're using a higher standard than this world. A supernatural standard. If there's no God, you have no reason to be upset at the suffering in this world.

It takes faith to get mad at the world. Hmm. You know, on top of that, too, I want to say to us, and we need to answer to our doubts, is that there sometimes can be a cultural elitism to our doubts.

Like, sometimes we think we are the only people in the history of the world who've struggled with this. And there's not other really strong, smart Christians who've actually wrestled with every single one of these things.

[21 : 51] Or we think this is the only thing, and we forget that we live in a culture, and we have a paradigm with which we see the world. For instance, if you live more in eastern countries, you know what's harder to believe in?

A God who's loving and forgiving. No problem with a God who's just and judges. What about Western society? Flip it around, right?

We've got a really hard time with a God who is just and judges sin. But this idea of love and forgiveness, that's great. So you've got to understand that we're conditioned, in a way, by the culture that we live in, towards certain type of doubts.

And I'm not trying to say that to say that there aren't good answers towards it. But I just kind of want to take the power away sometimes from some of those doubts. There's a context to it.

Talking about the resurrection, the theologian N.T. Wright, he wrote this like 900-page tome called The Resurrection of the Son of God, and he goes through it, and he basically says, hey, listen, you know, if you read the New Testament, maybe you're thinking, well, they lived 2,000 years ago, and so they were just superstitious.

[23 : 04] Superstitious. That's why they believed in a resurrection. And he spends 900 pages basically proving that the last thing that any Greek or Roman person would believe in is a resurrection, right?

They believed that the body was bad and the soul was good. So for the eternal state, it is to free the soul from the body. Resurrection doesn't sound like a good thing for your leader. And not only that, he proves that in the Jewish thought also.

They were not expecting a resurrection. Maybe they would believe, they'd be more likely to believe in the miraculous and the supernatural than a 21st century Scottish person. But it doesn't mean that they're just ripe to believe that the Messiah was going to rise again because they believed the resurrection was coming at the end of the age if they believed in a resurrection.

Sadducees didn't. Pharisees did. So it's not like they were all sitting around going, oh, oh, resurrection, oh, that makes sense, and the end of the world hasn't come, and judgment hasn't. No. No. It didn't fit in either paradigm.

You ever wonder why Jesus has to constantly repeat himself so many times? They didn't get it. These new information coming to their paradigm. You see, in our doubts, it's not the first time that people have struggled and asked these types of questions.

[24 : 19] And they come from different experiences, things of why we ask these questions. I saw an example this week. There's this guy, does anybody know Chuck Colson, American, kind of evangelist and things like that.

I did a lot of prison ministry because he went to prison for being part of the Watergate scandal for Richard Nixon and all his cronies as they were spying on the other political parties. And Chuck Colson, he became a Christian, and he said, he came to believe that the resurrection was a fact, and he said, Watergate proved it to me.

He said, how? Because 12 men and more women and later some crowds in the Gospels testified that they had seen Jesus raised from the dead. They proclaimed this truth for 40 more years of life at least without ever denying it once.

Everyone was beaten, tortured, stoned at some point. And he said, when I was part of the Watergate scandal, all the people couldn't keep their story straight for a single day, especially when the pressure started to go against them.

And my point in all that is not to say that the issues you struggle with don't matter, but just to give you some perspective and patience with your questions and the questions that other people are asking you. Now, that was like Nate's kind of like philosophical stuff.

[25 : 34] A better answer. Jesus is towards Thomas. All right. So Jesus shows up. It's a week later. It's a Sunday. And again, remember what we asked this morning.

What would your first words be of resurrection? Jesus asked this woman, why are you weeping? What would your first words be towards a guy who is doubting whether you are going to rise again? Where's that guy, Thomas?

I'm going to tell him a thing or two. Thomas, why did you doubt me, bro? Come on. I told you so many times, Thomas. The first words, peace.

Words of fullness and flourishing things as they ought to be. Wholeness and life. God's presence and blessing. That's what he says to Thomas in his doubt.

And please notice, because this is incredibly important and absolutely beautiful. Thomas, he has four criteria for his doubts to be assuaged. I got to see the nail marks on his hands.

[26 : 37] Place my finger into those nail marks. Place my hand in his side. And then I'll believe. All right. And what does Jesus say to Thomas? Put your fingers here.

See my hands. Put your hand in my side. And do not disbelieve, but believe. Jesus answers every single one of the questions that Thomas had.

Every single one of his criteria. What's he telling Thomas? I mean, if Thomas remembers, this is written down. He said, Jesus has heard his questions and his cries.

And his movement towards him in his doubt is not one of scorn, but one of grace and his presence and peace.

I've heard you wondering, Thomas, if there actually can be life in the midst of all this death. And I'm here to tell you, yes. I don't know. I read it as a kid. I always kind of thought Jesus was berating him.

[27 : 43] I don't think it is. I heard you, Thomas. You were mine. Put your hands. You needed this? Put your hands right here. Put your hands here. That's the only way you're going to believe.

Don't disbelieve. But believe. You ever touch somebody's scars? It's a very intimate thing. It's not something you do kind of haphazardly.

What Thomas needs isn't rapturous rumor or distant glory. But the God who died come to life. Coming to him. This is what the gospel writer John writes in his first letter.

This is what we testify to. That which we have seen. That which we have heard. That which we have beheld. And we've believed. We tell you. You see, so many times for us, believing is without seeing.

But the resurrection, it says it's not something to believe unless it was actually beheld. Unless Christ actually rose again. His amino acids bursting into resurrection life.

[28 : 45] The same Christ resurrected. Is what the New Testament says. This is what you should believe in. This is what your faith rests in. If it's anything less than this, then throw it away.

And what's the most beautiful thing? Thomas, the last to believe. The last to see. The one whose questions calcify into statements of doubt.

Gives the best confession of who Jesus is of anyone in the gospel of John. My Lord and my God. Not words of shame, but words of joy.

There's a third answer, though. So it's Nate's kind of answer towards you. And then there's Jesus. He answers Thomas. But then there's Jesus' answer to all of us. Because maybe you're sitting here thinking, going like, hey, Alex, good for Thomas.

He got what he asked for. I've got doubts. I've got questions. I want to know what God's up to. I want to know where he is. I want to know why he's allowing this thing. You know what would be really great? It's if I saw Jesus.

[29 : 51] If I touched him. If I could put my hands into his scars. What about me? What about my doubts? How does Jesus react to me? I haven't seen him. And it's as if Jesus is anticipating those very questions that we have.

That he's talking to Thomas. But then he kind of like looks over Thomas' shoulder. And he looks to every single one of us. He's looking at every single one of us who follow him and believe in him.

And he's anticipating our questions. And in verse 29 he says, have you believed because you've seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believed.

Who's he talking about? Talking about us. He's saying you too are blessed. You aren't left out.

You aren't forgotten. You too are called blessed. Blessed. I want to touch Jesus. I want to see him. And often you don't feel what you want to feel or see what you want to see.

[31 : 00] And Jesus says to you, I know. I want you to know in the midst of your doubts, in the midst of your questions, if you have faith in me, small as it may be, your life is secure too.

There's still blessing for you. As one theologian puts it, Jesus' words are not a critique of Thomas but a consolation to us. All of us who are looking over Thomas' shoulder saying, can I see too?

Jesus tells us that we haven't been left out. And that's when John then gets to his purpose statement. He says, hey, listen. I get it. But you can believe this eyewitness testimony that we have seen, that we are reporting to you.

And I've written it down so that you wouldn't stay like Thomas in doubt, but that you too would believe that Jesus, he's actually the Messiah. Israel's king, the son of God.

He's not just the king of Israel. He's the king of the universe. And that by believing, you too, that you would have a share in this resurrection life. You who live between Jesus' ascension and Jesus' return.

[32 : 06] You who don't get to touch Jesus and see him like we did. I've written this. That you too would believe. That you could have access to him. That you in his word can encounter him.

This is why we should long to take the Lord's Supper. Because in it. It's as close as we can get this side of heaven to putting our hands into the scars.

Remember that there's blessing. There's a cup of blessing for us. His answer to you and your questions that disorient you and your doubts.

His response is one of grace. This is where we can find rest in an age of skepticism and doubt. We can come to Jesus with our questions. He promises to meet you right where you are.

To show you his wounds. And maybe you too can hear his words that say, yes, there can be life in the midst of this world of death. And flying over here is interesting.

[33 : 13] Flying in the midst of pandemics, right? There are a lot of people when you get on an airplane who get nervous. In the best of times. All of a sudden you throw in everybody who's worried about getting a virus.

And you put them in an enclosed space with a circulated air system. Which is like, yeah, great. The filters are better, right? I just remember flying a few times. And everybody was just on edge.

And of course, though, there's that person who kind of just hops on the plane. And like falls asleep immediately. And I'm always kind of jealous of them. One, because I got kids and I'm not allowed to fall asleep. And two, I couldn't do that even if I didn't have kids.

I'd just kind of be awake and jittery. And you see them and they just fall asleep, right? And they land and they're like, oh, that was a great win, huh? How long did that take? Was it a transatlantic flight? Oh, it might as well have been a 20-minute flight.

I slept the whole time. And you're like, you jerk. And then there's the people who, you know, the whole time they're nervous, every little bit of turbulence. But here's the thing. No matter whether you're a person who fell asleep or you're the one who was shaking getting on the plane, it got on the plane and you got to the same spot.

[34 : 17] You landed. You see, when you come to Christ, maybe you have the greatest faith of anybody who's ever lived in the history of the world. You can swing with one hand on a rope over the fires of hell and scoff at Satan.

Or maybe you're a trembling person and get scared by a lot of things. And you've got doubts that pop up and you feel weird about them. It's the most important thing, though, is did you get on the plane?

Whether it's the small faith in Jesus or the biggest faith in Jesus, it's not the quality or the quantity of your faith that saves you.

It's the object of your faith. It's Christ who saves us. So I want to encourage you. I'm not saying stay in your doubts. Ask those questions.

Wrestle with them. Read about them. People in the history of the world, I guarantee you, have asked those questions and somebody's written about it. Ask those things. Do it in community.

[35 : 20] Don't stay in your doubts. But don't disbelieve. But believe. It's an invitation towards Thomas and towards us. Don't stay in your disbelief.

Believe. Believe. Have faith in me. Because faith as small as a mustard seed can move a mountain. Praise be to God. Let's pray to him right now.

Oh Jesus, we give thanks to you for a story like this in your word. Thank you for the disciples, for Peter who messes up and has to be restored.

For Thomas who doubts and resists. For all of the disciples. Who don't get it the first time. Because we all know the shame of falling short.

We all know the struggle of doubt, Lord. We all know the confusion and the things that we forget and we feel like we're supposed to know and have arrived at already. Thank you that you've come to save imperfect, doubting people.

[36 : 33] And Lord, would you help us in our doubts. Not to celebrate them. Not to stay in them. But to wrestle with them. To invite you in to our doubts. With your very presence.

We pray that you would minister to us through your means of grace. As we come to you and meet you in your word. and believe that we can actually encounter your truth.

That as we pray to you, Lord, that we would realize that we're practicing the presence of God. That you're with us wherever we go and you desire to know us and for us to bring all of our life to you in prayer.

Father, would you be with us in our community, Lord. Help us to be a place that has mercy on those who doubt. Because that's what Jesus is like.

And in those things, Lord, would you grow our faith. Would you grow it day by day through any means possible. We pray all of this in the name of Jesus of the scars.

[37 : 38] Amen.