

Jesus, Thomas & the Way Out of Doubt

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[0 : 00] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee. For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

John 20, verse 24. Now, Thomas, one of the twelve, called the twin, was not with them when Jesus came.

So the other disciples told him, we have seen the Lord. But he said to them, 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.

Eight days later, his disciples were inside again. And Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, Peace be to you.

Or with you. Verse 27. Then he said to Thomas, Put your finger here, and see my hands, and put out your hand, and place it in my side.

[1 : 21] Do not disbelieve, but believe. Thomas answered him, My Lord, and my God.

Jesus said to him, Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have believed.

Verse 30. Now, Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book.

But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in his name.

It's the Word of God. God. Oz Guinness begins his book on doubt in the following way.

[2 : 26] He writes, The simplest things in life are often the most profound. Sometimes I feel on fire with the immensity of this, and each of us is a person, alive, growing, and relating.

You ever stood in amazement at that? All these people that you don't know, and yet are persons with as rich of a history as you have, and deepest thoughts that you have. And from the moment we wake as persons, to the moment we fall asleep, we think, we feel, we choose, we speak, we act, not as isolated individuals, he continues, but as persons among people.

And underneath everything we do as persons among people is trust. From a baby with its mother, to friendships of children, to neighbors in a community, to agreements among nations, life depends on trust.

Trust is a baby's cry for help. Trust is being honest about your fears with a close friend. Trust is shaking hands and starting a business. And so that's why one of the most important questions in life is who do you trust?

And should you trust them? You know, one of the main things we've learned this past year is that we have a hard time with trust. We don't know who to trust. And it didn't begin last year with our increasing dependence upon the internet where anyone can write about whatever they want to write about.

[3 : 59] We are plunging into an ever-increasing overload of information. One author I read this week says we're in an infodemic. We just got through a pandemic, but now we're in an infodemic that is nevertheless the same in its global effect.

And not all the information we read in this infodemic is accurate. Despite what you may believe, everything you read on the internet is not true. In fact, it's hard to know what is true.

You know, we read passionate research but vastly different opinions on masks, vaccines, and so many other things. We read shockingly different headlines and stories about the exact same event, the exact same newsworthy event.

And what makes it worse, social media is designed to give us more of what we like. not necessarily what is true. If you're anything like me, the result is you are tired, weary, and suspicious of nearly everything you read.

We don't know who to trust anymore. We don't know if we can trust anymore. If we're honest, this suspicion and skepticism surfaces in our relationship with God.

[5 : 19] Is God really real? Is there someone out there? Is religion just a way for me to feel better about my life?

That's what people say. Does God really hear when I pray? I mean, what about answers to prayer? Are those just the things that were going to happen because that's the way fate works?

Or is God intervening? Are they coincidences or are they the workings of God? How can I know I really know God? I can't see Him.

I can't feel His touch. I cannot understand Him. And the questions of doubt leave us searching for answers. And this morning, we're going to study one of the appearances in chapter 20 of the Gospel of John of the risen Lord Jesus Christ.

I wish we could take the whole two chapters and just camp out here for the afternoon because there's so much glory here. after He's raised from the dead, Jesus appears to numerous people to remove all doubt about His bodily resurrection.

[6 : 23] He appears to Mary first. He appears to the disciples. He later appears to the disciples again while they're fishing again.

Then He eats with them on the shore. How cool is that? Finally, He appears, as we read, He appears also to Thomas. Each of these appearances are captured to establish our faith and trust in Jesus Christ and in the historical bodily resurrection of Him.

If He didn't raise, if He wasn't raised historically and bodily, for real, then the whole John 20 and 21 fall into pieces. In so many ways, they establish our faith by saying, faith is not a blind leap, it is a personal trust in the risen Christ for eternal life.

Faith is not a blind leap, it is a personal faith, personal trust, in the risen Christ for eternal life. We're going to break this out in three points. The first is the problem of doubt. The problem of doubt.

You know, as we've seen, or as I've told you, you know, this scene, this appearance centers around Thomas. Thomas is one of the twelve disciples. He's called the twin. His name, Thomas, and his Greek name, Didymus, both mean twin.

[7 : 43] If it wasn't obvious, he is a twin, even though we're never introduced to his twin in the Scriptures. But Thomas is known by us by a different nickname, Doubting Thomas.

Right? That's what we thought his first name would be. Thomas may be a middle name, Doubting Thomas. You know, and poor Thomas. His story is captured in Scripture so that we all know him as Doubting Thomas.

But Thomas is not a full-blown skeptic. In fact, he's more like a full-blown teenager. He is wonderfully quick to speak, as teenagers tend to be, and quick to question anything he doesn't like or understand.

Teenagers are trying to figure out life in this world, and so too is Thomas. In John 14, when our Lord says he's going to heaven, he's going to build a big, big house with many, many rooms, as the song says, Thomas, and he says, you know the way there.

He says, Lord, we don't know where you're going. How on earth would we know the way? So he asks the question that needs to be asked, and Jesus says, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

Maybe we wouldn't have gotten that sentence if it weren't for Thomas.

[8 : 52] And so he's quick to speak, quick to question, and that's what's going on. That's what's behind this passage. That Thomas, one of the twelve, was not with him when Jesus came, and so the other disciples told him, we've seen the Lord.

And then he responds. There's a wonderful plainness to this passage. You know, last Sunday, Thomas missed the service. Thomas missed Easter. Perhaps he was sick or visiting the family. While he was out, the Lord appeared. That's what happened in John 20. That's what it means that the Lord came. So be careful lest you miss the service.

The Lord might come. So they go to tell Thomas, we have seen the Lord. Verse 25, But Thomas said to them, look, unless I see in his hands the mark of his nails and place my finger into the mark of the nails and place my hand into the side, I will never believe.

So what are we to make of Thomas' assertion, demand? First off, I think it's just vintage Thomas. Instead of listening carefully, he just blurts out, I'll never believe unless I see blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

[10:03] You just want to say, calm down, Thomas. Calm down. Just listen for a moment. It's vintage Thomas, but it also reveals that there is doubt beneath his confidence and curiosity.

Thomas doubts. Doubt is not used to describe Thomas in these verses, but it accurately describes his response and the response of Jesus to him.

The word doubt comes from the word meaning to. I find it interesting that the person who doubts in John 20 is the one who's a twin. He's one of two. And so the word doubt just means two.

It means to hold two beliefs at once, to juggle them, as it were, to believe over here and to disbelieve at the same time. It's to be double-minded is what James 1 says.

And the old phrase says it's to have a foot in two camps. We don't like that. You can't have your allegiance to Alabama and to Tennessee in our area.

[11:12] You're divided. So we throw you to Tuscaloosa. It's to be divided about the things that matter. But the idea is that to doubt is to waver between belief and unbelief.

It's very important. Doubting is not the opposite of belief. Unbelief is. Doubting is between belief and unbelief. So belief's over here. Unbelief's over here. Doubting is kind of this nebulous land.

And that's where Thomas lived, in between belief and unbelief. Even though he was called by Jesus, even though he heard Jesus teach about a number of things, death and resurrection many times, even though his close friends saw him and told him about him, Thomas still struggles to believe.

And that's why we love him. He's like us. He questions. He wavers. He doesn't see how the hard things in our lives are working together for good.

He doesn't know all that he wants to know about God, the meaning of life. He's a lot like us. He doubts. Wonderfully, the gospel preserves, or the gospel, John, preserves this story and other stories about doubt to help us realize we're not alone.

[12:27] I mean, do you remember the story of the father with the son with an unclean spirit? He says, we'll study it in a couple months. He comes to Jesus and says, if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.

And Jesus answers, if I can, all things are possible for him who believes. And he immediately responds, I believe. Help my unbelief. How many times have you prayed that prayer? I believe, Lord.

Help my unbelief. Because we can relate to the father and we can relate to Thomas. So why are these stories in the Bible? Surely, if you were to write a story, a gospel, about Jesus Christ, this impressive man, this son of God, surely you would remove the stories about doubt.

Wouldn't he look a bit unimpressive? I mean, he can't even win over a follower that was with him for three years. Well, wouldn't you take out the stories where the disciples look like buffoons?

Like this one. I think they're actually included to come alongside us in our struggle and to show us the way out of disbelief and unbelief. See, the problem of doubt is not the presence of unbelief.

[13:44] The problem of doubt is the peril of unbelief. The problem of doubt is not the presence of unbelief. The problem of doubt is the peril of unbelief. Doubt is wavering between belief and unbelief.

It's common to doubt. It's common to waver. It's somewhat okay to doubt, but it's not okay to stay there. That's what James 1 says. You're double-minded. Jesus says to the lukewarm, I'd rather you're hot or cold.

If you're lukewarm, I'm going to spit you out of my mouth because doubt far too often leads to unbelief. So these stories, so many ways, they say, be careful with your doubts.

You know, my son and I are listening to The Pilgrim's Progress. It's an allegory about the Christian life, about Christian trying to travel from the city of destruction where he was destined to go to the celestial city.

And one of the dangers he encounters on this journey to the celestial city is Doubting Castle. Much like the whole allegory, all these different fights in the Christian life are allegorized.

[14:54] And so he goes to Doubting Castle and it's guarded by giant despair. Travelers are wooed by the invitation to doubt. Come doubt with me.

Come doubt over here. But far too often they plunge from doubt into despair and depression and never leave. Well, Christian and his friend Hopeful make it out of Doubting Castle. Praise the Lord. And they put a sign out. And we have it for you. Over this stile is the way to Doubting Castle which is kept by giant despair who despitheth the king of the celestial country and seeks to destroy his pilgrims.

Many therefore followed that sign. They followed after, read what was written and escaped the danger. The point is clear. Don't lodge in Doubting Castle. Don't settle.

Doubting is a wavering thing. Don't settle in the waver because of the peril of unbelief. Point two, the answer of truth.

[15:57] The answer of truth. Jesus appears to Thomas and appeals to him with the truth. Look in verse 26. He says, Eight days later his disciples were inside again and Thomas was with them.

Although the doors were locked Jesus came and stood among them and said, Peace be to you. And he said to Thomas, Put your finger here. See my hands. Put out your hand. Place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe. And Thomas, as we know, rejoice my Lord and my God.

And I just, again, I gotta point out this is just wonderfully, simply, plainly laid out. Eight days later, it's just a way of saying, the following Sunday. So Thomas missed one Sunday of church.

He didn't miss the next one, the one week after Easter. And Jesus, he's the son of God, so he's all-knowing. So he overheard what Thomas said last week and knew Thomas was sure not to miss this week, and he came in and stood among them.

Two weeks in a row. How about that? It's even better now because where two or three are gathered, he is with us. He entered through locked doors. You know, people disagree on that.

[16:59] Did the angel open the door or did he like dematerialize and rematerialize? I'm going with the angel, but we can't argue about that today.

But, yeah, but they're split down the middle. And then he says to Thomas, put your finger here into my side and in my hand. Don't disbelieve, but believe.

And I just love this. So this is one of his, one of our Lord's disciples been with him three years. The first thing he does when he doubts is not rebuke him.

He doesn't rebuke him. Not for his doubt and not even for his demand.

Jesus is compassionate. Jesus helps him. Jesus shows him his hands and feet. Jesus accommodates him in his arrogant demand.

[18:01] In so many ways, Jesus models what Jude commands, have mercy on those who doubt. So, I mean, in so many ways it does say, bring your doubts to me, Lord, and I'll examine them and help you.

You know, after Thomas sees his hands on his side, he believes. But then, after Thomas' great confession, Jesus rebukes him. Look at verse 29.

He says, have you seen because, or have you believed because you've seen me? That's a rebuke. Blessed are those who believe and have not seen. So, why does Jesus rebuke Thomas?

And I think it's precisely here that the answer to doubt is often misunderstood. It's often assumed that the problem of doubt is that we're too focused on reasons and rationale.

That's Thomas' problem. He's too focused on reasons and rationale. And so, too, we're committed in the same way. Of course, you can't understand God. You just need to believe. There's no way we can comprehend the truth about God.

[19:07] Just believe. Don't make it so, you're always making it complicated, man. Just believe. In fact, some stories in the Bible are taught to emphasize that true belief goes beyond reason and rationale.

Take the story of Abraham. He was a man of faith. But what exactly was his faith? If you remember, you know, many say when he was commanded by God to go up the mountain and sacrifice his son, he was praised because he kept believing even when it didn't make sense.

Way to go, Abraham. Even when it doesn't make sense, even when there aren't good reasons, he believed. And so many conclude, this is the crisis of faith. Are you going to believe God when there's no good reasons?

I don't think that's what's going on in the story of Abraham or here. Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness. He knew God. He trusted God.

He knew that the all-wise God must know what he's doing. He must have good reasons. He's not somebody who's a dig a hole for no reason and fill it back up or something like that.

[20 : 10] It's not arbitrary. His commands aren't arbitrary. Os Guinness gets right at it. He said, it's precisely because Abraham knew God that he knew he could trust God in the dark. More precisely still, it's because Abraham was not in the dark about God that he could walk in the dark about Isaac.

His faith was against sight but not against reason. I think that is so helpful. The crisis of faith for Abraham and for Thomas is not a lack of reasons and rationale.

The crisis of faith is a lack of sight. Jesus is not rebuking Thomas for not believing without evidence. Jesus is rebuking Thomas for not believing without sight.

That's helpful. You know, in so many ways, Jesus rebukes Thomas because there were already enough reasons to believe. I mean, he was called by Jesus. We don't know what he did before but he was called by Jesus.

He saw Jesus perform countless miracles. He heard Jesus teach about his death and resurrection, how he will raise all those whom the Father entrusts to him in the end and then he appeared to his fellow disciples.

[21 : 22] That should have been enough to believe. That's the point in this passage. So what about us? Christianity is still not faith without evidence but Christianity is still faith without sight.

The Lord said to Moses, you cannot see my face for anyone who sees my face for no one can see my face and live. Same holds true today. Christianity is faith without sight but that doesn't mean that faith is irrational, unreasonable.

That doesn't mean faith is a blind leap. faith just means faith is trust on the testimony of the word of God. The answer of truth to doubt is not just believe.

The answer of truth to doubt is the testimony of God's word. The answer of truth to doubt is the testimony of God's word. All that you believe about anything comes in one of two ways.

Personal experience or the testimony of others. Personal experience or the testimony of others. That's all you know about anything you know. So how do you know that the Gulf of Mexico has crystal clear water?

[22 : 38] How do you know that there are grizzlies in Montana? How do you know that Neyland Stadium is the best place to watch football? You either learn by reading or by experience.

Last weekend I took my son, Rev, backpacking for a few days on the Appalachian Trail. The section we picked ended in Grayson Highlands Park in Virginia. And I must add he did an exceptional job. He crushed it 20 miles with a pack in about 36 hours. Well, the reason we went to Grayson Highlands is for the wild ponies.

Grayson Highlands is known for it. I had read about it. I'd heard the testimony. And I got to go. I got to see the wild ponies.

We did too. It was pouring rain at that point so we kind of snapped a picture and said, we saw them. Let's get out of here. But, uh, inhaling. So, but that's another story. In this passage, Jesus is upholding both of these ways to believe and saying both are strong enough to establish faith.

[23 : 46] That's why he appears to the disciples. So you see me and you can believe me. But there's a transition going on here. I think that's why they're laid out like this.

Now, now, now that we can no longer see him, this is why he, he works with, with Thomas. Jesus is teaching us that we overcome doubt and believe, and believe through the testimony of these disciples and the word of God.

I think that's why these stories are back to back. Jesus appears to the twelve, then he rebukes Thomas for not believing the appearance to the twelve. So he appears to the twelve and then in sequence he rebukes Thomas for not believing their testimony.

So he appears, you know, you know, faith based on experience, on eyesight, and then he rebukes Thomas for not believing what was shared. And then he concludes the whole scene with blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.

And so how do you overcome doubt? It will not be by personal experience or an encounter with Jesus Christ. It will not be by having all your questions answered, even though that's great and you should press into the word of God.

[24 : 45] It will be by listening to the solid testimony of the word. That's, I think that's why they're stacked up like this. Romans 10 says, for faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ.

2 Peter 1 says, for we do not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

So he's describing an experience of the transfiguration, seeing Jesus transfigured before him, and we have a prophetic word more fully confirmed. If you put it to Peter, what would you rather have? The experience or the word? He'd say the word. Every time. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

What's Peter saying? That greater than an experience is the word of God, for it's fully confirmed and carries the authority of God. So, so, don't take a blind leap.

[25 : 54] Take up the word of God and let it teach you what you should think and feel and rest upon. You are insane in many ways without the word of God.

It's the word of God that restores sanity and understanding. St. Augustine, who we know about from the 4th century, the great North African saint.

He tells about it. He was a very promiscuous man. If you've done it, he did it 10 times. Just a terrible person before Christ and he tells a story about trying to figure out, you know, he's very philosophical, so deep and a lot of speculation and trying to figure out what was going on.

He tells a story of his conversion. He was outside and he kept hearing kids playing a game saying tolelege, tolelege, which just means take and read, take and read. And he says, he saw a Bible under a tree and he opened it up to Romans 13 and he believed.

He began to read and he began to believe. He began to read and he began to believe more and he began to understand and then he became one of the greatest thinkers ever. So I encourage you, if you're not sure where you stand in relation to Jesus Christ, to take up the word of God and read.

[27 : 23] You know, it's so funny that we based a lot of our understanding on personal testimony. Well, we receive a lot of things as fact from personal testimony but then we come to the word of God that's based on personal testimony and we begin to quiver a little bit.

We received the Holocaust as fact and yet I don't think by the age of anybody in this room you were at Auschwitz. we received the Second World War as fact.

We received the Roman Empire and all that Alexander did as fact. Sure, we know the roads are there but actually the New Testament is a more verified document than any other existing ancient document and it's the testimony that's preserved.

Jesus could have built the church by continual experiences but he wanted to build the church by a more sure thing, the word of God. Thirdly, the response of faith.

The response of faith. After his encounter with Jesus, Thomas responds to Christ with a staggering statement of faith.

[28 : 33] Jesus says to him, put your finger here into my hands and into my side. Do not disbelieve but believe and we're not told anymore. We're not told whether Thomas did take the Lord up on the offer.

We're not told. I mean, the picture, the famous old picture is of him sticking his finger. I don't think he stuck it in actually. I think he stood there in the presence of the Lord and realized that the Lord heard, he overheard the previous week's demand and then he saw the Lord risen and he just erupted as you would expect Thomas to do into this proclamation saying, my Lord and my God. He did not disbelieve. He believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. My Lord and my God. D.A. Carson says this sentence is one of the great Christological, that just means Christ confession of the New Testament.

Another author says, this is one of the strongest texts in the New Testament on the deity of Christ. Why? I came to this passage, I'd read those things before this week.

I came to this passage this week going, why? What's so great about this? Five words. I think the answer lies in verse 30. Look. Now Jesus did many other signs that are not written in the presence of the disciples that are not written in this book.

[30 : 01] If you know anything about the Gospel of John, it's peppered with a sequence of signs. I think what he's saying here is that the resurrection was a sign.

You know, running through the Gospel are these signs, that's the word, the sign, the first sign is he turns water into wine and everybody parties down for more, after the party had already gone for three days, he kept it going.

The second sign, he heals the official's son a sign, a third sign, he heals the paralyzed man by the pool. The fourth sign, he multiplies the bread and feeds the 5,000.

The fifth sign, he heals the man born blind. You remember that in John 9, they're wrestling about who sinned, his mother or him, you know, and he heals the man born blind. The sixth sign in John

11, he raises Lazarus from the dead.

The seventh sign in John 19, Jesus was crucified. Each of these signs are sign-nificent. They're significant. They are pointing to something.

[31 : 01] They're showing something. They're unveiling the glory of Jesus Christ. Each of them are revealing that he is from heaven. Each of them are revealing that he is the Messiah and in so many ways, I think John references sign right here to say that there is one more sign, an eighth sign.

The cross was the climax and culmination of all the signs. It was the moment when John was glorified and lifted up that he might draw all men to himself. But on the eighth day, there is an eighth sign, the greatest sign of all, that Jesus is raised from the dead.

Jesus conquers the power of sin and death. Jesus conquers the sting of death. His sacrifice is not just a man bleeding on the cross.

It is a sacrifice. It is a sacrifice offered by God to appease God's wrath and set us right with him. And on the eighth day, he raises from the dead as the exclamation point.

It happens on the eighth day because all the other signs were of the old order. They happen in the first seven days. But this one happens on the eighth day as referenced twice in John 20 because the eighth day is the beginning of a new creation.

[32 : 17] creation. The guarantee that all things will be made new, that Jesus will usher us into a place where neither sin nor sickness nor death nor disease will haunt any longer is right here in the eighth sign.

The old is gone, the new has come. And so Thomas realized that Jesus is none other than God himself. He's not just a son of God. He's not just a Messiah, not just a man from God.

He is God because he's doing what only God can do. And so he shouts, my Lord, my God. The whole gospel that John comes full circle.

You remember it mirrors Genesis. In the beginning was the Word. The Word was God and the Word was with God. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we've seen His glory. The glory is the only Son from the Father full of grace and truth.

John 1.18, no one has seen God, the only God. No one's seen Him. Moses didn't see Him who's at the Father's side. The Word has made Him. Who's made Him known? Jesus Christ.

[33 : 32] My God has made Him known. But there's another thing in John's and Thomas' confession that's just staggering to me.

It's personal. We can come out and say that. Now it's personal. You know. It's personal. Thomas wrestled with faith his whole life.

And yet His confession is preserved as the greatest confession of all the disciples. He's probably greater than Matthew 16.

Not that we should rate confessions today. And what marks it is His personal trust and faith in Jesus Christ. He says, My Lord.

My God. John Newton says, The life of Christianity says Luther. So it's Newton quoting Luther. Consists in possessive pronouns.

[34 : 36] It is one thing to say Christ is a Savior. It is quite another thing to say Christ is my Savior and my Lord. The devil can say the first.

The true Christian alone can say the second. It's one thing to say Jesus is a great Savior. It's a whole other thing to say Jesus is my Savior.

The question, perhaps the most important question, is can you say it? Can you say it?

Of course we're taught to say it. But can you say it? Before God alone. Can you say it? The scriptures are very clear. We all stumble and sin.

We're angry, proud, critical, filled with lust. It's jarring to hear joy list out those sins that we all know so well. But the deepest problem with our sin is not the things we do to one another.

[35 : 41] The deepest problem with our sin is rejection against God. The one who created us and called us to live for His glory. Scriptures say the wages for these sins is death. Sin is a high crime in the kingdom of God.

It's treason. It's betrayal. It's rebellion. And it is against God. He says the wages of sin. What you earn for sin is death. Everyone who sins should die.

It's what Ezekiel says. Everyone who sins will be judged and after judgment is death. It's what Hebrews says.

Jesus came to cancel the debt of sin and to set us free. Everyone who can say that you're not just a Savior but that you are my Savior will escape death in the end. but only them. That's just an important question to lay on your mind and heart. Faith is not a blind leap.

[36 : 54] It's personal trust in the risen Christ for eternal life. Over the last couple months I've been reading a book about my homeland Scotland. We were there like 300 years ago.

Probably you were too. about the theology of Scotland and it's written like a biography to some degree and I've been struck by a number of these stories. One of them stood out to me. One chapter was about a man named Robert Bruce. Not Robert the Bruce but Robert Bruce in the 1600s. He was a towering man of God and a powerful minister of the gospel but he was continually plagued by doubt.

During one season of his life his faith is assaulted was assaulted by doubt. He said he could not say my God like Thomas said without being challenged and disquieted in his heart.

For a serious man of God that's not a good thing. For years he would never say I'm fully persuaded about a belief. So in their form of government there would be these moments where you had to state your belief your agreement with a certain belief and he would never say I'm fully persuaded.

[38 : 06] He was challenged one time what are you not fully persuaded about in the articles of your belief? He said I'm not fully persuaded as I should be if you or I were both persuaded that there were a hell we would do otherwise than we do.

But even though he was not fully persuaded he continued to press himself in the word of God and to preach the word of God and one day nearing the end of his life he came to breakfast with his family.

His wife had deceased so he's with his children. He sat in silence he was known for these trance-like silences where he was cogitating and thinking.

Suddenly after a long silence he said to his daughter hold my daughter hold my master calls me. He asked for a Bible his eyesight failing he said to his daughter cast me up the eighth chapter of Romans.

He repeated the words as his daughter said and as we proclaim this morning I am persuaded that neither death nor life shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

[39 : 24] He was suddenly his doubts were gone in the moment I'm fully persuaded and then he said God be with you my children I have breakfast with you and shall sup with my Lord Jesus Christ this night and he died.

I love this story a man fighting for faith in the word of God I think that's why Thomas is preserved in our Bible that we would stand on faith on the testimony of the word of God just like Luther said here I stand I can do no other let us be a people that stands come what may on the testimony of the word of God and especially what it says about our Lord Jesus Christ amen Father in heaven we thank you for the privilege of opening your word thank you for the privilege of gathering this Easter when we were not able last year thank you for the opportunity to give ourselves to these words Lord we pray that you would help them to dispel our doubts and drive us more and more to Jesus that our faith would be certain because of the fact of his death and resurrection for us we praise you and we worship you in Jesus name amen you've been listening to a message given by Walt Alexander lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens Tennessee for more information about Trinity Grace please visit us at trinitygraceathens.com