

TITLE AND NUMBER: 23. Faith and doubt



REFERENCE AND KEY VERSE(S): John 20:19-31

[Thomas said] "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." (v.25)

Then he [Jesus] said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" (v27-28)

LOOKING FURTHER: Matthew 28: 16-20; John 20: 1-8; Psalm 13

What does this Bible passage tell us?

This passage about Thomas has resulted in his nickname being "Doubting Thomas". This seems rather unfair as Thomas was a brave and loyal disciple (John 11:16). It is true that he needed to see before he could totally believe (John 14:5). The important point about Thomas is that he was honest with Jesus about his doubts.

We too need to be honest with Jesus about our doubts because then we can look to God for answers and our faith will grow stronger. Thomas found his answer and recognised Jesus as his Lord and his God. He was in fact the first person to call Jesus "God".

Sometimes we don't find answers to our doubts, but it is important that we continue to trust God because "not knowing" is sometimes what God wants of us. Faith and doubt are common in many Christian people's experience. As we continue our journey with God, we must carry on despite the doubts.

Even people of great faith often experience doubt, but it is working through this doubt that enables them to grow. After her death, it was revealed that Mother Teresa of Calcutta (1910-1997) experienced many periods of doubt, but she was also a woman full of faith whose life's work with the poor and destitute was to "do something beautiful for God". We always want immediate answers to our questions, but sometimes God allows us to go through times of doubt in order to learn more about Him and grow in our relationship with Him.

Reflections:

- When you have doubts, do you give up or try to find out the answers?
- How do you feel if you can't find an answer? What do you do next?
- Have you experienced growing in faith and in your relationship with God by coming through your doubts, either because you have found the answer or because you have accepted that not knowing is the answer? If so, how could you help others who have doubts?

Write or draw something you read in this Bible Study that stood out to you.



Do you have any questions about this week's Bible Study?



How does this week's message apply to your life?



What can we learn about God from this week's passage?



What would you like to ask God this week?



Has God responded to your prayers this week in the way you had hoped for? It's okay to talk to God about this.

