

Believing Thomas - John 20:24-29

Is Christ Risen
Yes He is Risen Indeed

It's a week since Jesus appeared first to the women and his disciples, well, all bar one. Thomas was somewhere else and misses out on seeing the Risen Jesus.

Ever felt left out? Thomas certainly did and as a result found it really hard to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead.

I'm sure he wanted it to be true but could br true? And why did Jesus appear to all the other closest disciples but leave him out.

My Prayer today is that if you have any doubts about the Resurrection of Jesus, today those doubts would disappear and a living vibrant faith would flood in. Jesus hasn't left you out!

Don't get me wrong, it's OK to have doubts, they are a necessary stepping stone to faith!

Thomas gets a bad rap for doubting
Why is he referred to as doubting Thomas? He only doubted for a week and then he believed!
Surely he should be known as believing Thomas!

We do need to be brave enough to step forward beyond doubt however to discover truth.

Do you remember what Jesus said a fortnight ago, the day after Palm Sunday, after cursing the fig tree? 'If you believe and do not doubt Everything is Possible', Mountains can be moved!

Easier said than done though eh?

Some things are incredibly hard to believe

Over to Professor Nick, tells some facts that are hard to believe.

There are a lot more trees on earth than there are stars in the galaxy. - surely not? Well, NASA estimates that there could be from 100 billion to 400 billion stars in the Milky Way galaxy. The earth has more than 3 trillion trees.

The biggest tyre manufacturer in the world is Lego.
The company makes more than 50% more tyres than other tire manufacturers such as Bridgestone or Goodyear.

Teeth can reattach to their roots after being knocked out if they are put back into their place.

Clouds may look very lightweight but the science says otherwise. The average cumulus cloud you can see during the sunny day, weight around 500,000 kg (1.1 million pounds).

There are more ways to sort a deck of cards than the amount of atoms estimated to be on earth. [The standard 52-card deck has 8×10^{67} possible arrangements of the cards.]

Say that there exists 10 Billion people on every planet, 1 Billion planets in every solar system, 200 Billion solar systems in every galaxy, and 500 Billion galaxies in the universe. If every single person on every planet has been shuffling decks of cards completely at random at 1 Million shuffles per second since the BEGINNING OF TIME, every possible deck combination would still yet to have been "shuffled".

My brain hurts now, so I've got one for you professor Nick

Two 12-inch pizzas are smaller in size than one 18-inch pizza. which is why I always go 18 inch!

Just because something seems incredulous doesn't mean it's not true!

Many people have come to faith by examining the truth even in the process of trying to disprove it all.

Thomas's test was based upon the fact that Roman crucifixion was thorough and lethal, So Jesus was dead, and dead people stay dead!

Thomas proposed a test was designed to prove the solidity of Jesus's real (yet resurrected) body.

Thomas does not have long to wait. The next Sunday, the disciples are again hiding behind locked doors—this time with Thomas in their midst.

{Reading John 20:24-29}

He immediately turns to Thomas— indicating supernatural insight, since Jesus had not been physically present with the disciples when Thomas had expressed his doubts—and takes him up on his test: "Put your finger here, and see my hands. Reach out your hand, and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe. literally - do not keep on unbelieving but become believing!

Jesus knows all about your doubts.

Doubts do not disappear until we start believing or at least not until we start doubting our doubts!

Jer 29:13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart

I've been reading this week of a guy called Sheldon Vanauken and his struggle to believe. I love the way he put it of there being a gap in front of him that he couldn't cross in order to believe, to be certain that it was true. But he also became aware that there was a gap behind him. He equally couldn't be certain that it was not true. And that gap behind him seemed to be getting bigger He says 'There was only one thing I could do once I had seen the gap behind me. I turned away from it and flung myself over the gap towards Jesus.'

This is what John has been working round too since the beginning of his gospel. 'In the beginning was the word'. He is referring to Jesus. The word became flesh. Jesus God's son became a man to live and die for us. John's gospel goes on to tell us the whole story.

But in-between those statements, right at the beginning -

In the Beginning was the Word - and - The Word became Flesh
is this -

The Word was God.

And here at the end of John's gospel one doubter says - My Lord, and My God.

We can get uncomfortable when things get personal

There is a message here for those of you who have a problem with those who go with the crowd, those who are always upbeat and positive. Those of you who like Thomas recognise you can get a bit down and negative sometimes. In 11:16 He says come on, let's go with Jesus and die with Him. In 14:5 Thomas says to Jesus, I haven't got a clue what you are on about, I don't know where you are going, I haven't the faintest idea how to get there!' ... or words to that effect.

Even Thomas, once he saw, he believed.

Jesus' words to him are not rebuke, 'you have seen and you have believed, there are a whole lot more that are not going to see me quite like this but they too are going to believe'. It's a sort of commission to Thomas. Tradition tells us that Thomas travelled as far as India to tell people of his Lord and God.

? song I believe in Jesus

Jesus concludes this brief appearance by pronouncing a blessing upon all who believe in him without physically seeing him in his resurrected body. This blessing includes all believers throughout history beyond the initial generation of eyewitnesses all the way to you. If you believe, you are truly blessed.

John follows up this pronouncement with two interesting statements.

First, Jesus did many other things in the presence of his disciples that were not written in the Gospel—space constraints (not to mention the cost of book production in the ancient world) forced John and the other Gospel authors to be selective.

Second, John provides a clear purpose statement for his Gospel: “But these [signs] 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.” John did not write as a neutral, unbiased observer but as someone who had been an eyewitness of the events described and who was passionately convinced of their truthfulness, believing that eternal life could be obtained only through faith in Jesus, the Son of God. He writes both to communicate information and to persuade readers and hearers to believe.

John does not explicitly state whether Thomas takes Jesus up on his offer (though one surmises he did not), but the outcome is complete and utter belief. Thomas confesses Jesus as his Lord and his God, acknowledging his authority and divinity, and goes on to be a witness to that truth. Lord help us do the same.