



APRIL 17, 2022 | DAVID SMITH
EASTER

The Resurrection of Jesus is the foundation of our faith. That makes Easter the perfect time to bring your questions and let Jesus meet you there, help you overcome your doubts, and believe. Because Easter is more than an event we celebrate; it is a Person we experience.

ICEBREAKER (10 MINUTES)

With Spring here and the weather warming up, what outdoor activity are you most looking forward to?

INTRODUCTION (5-10 MINUTES)

Like many of us, Thomas had his doubts. However, once he encountered the Risen Savior his life was forever changed. After the resurrection of Jesus, Thomas went on to Babylon and established the first Christian church in that country. By the end of his life, he was able to spread the Gospel to Persia, China, and India. No matter where you are in your faith, this Easter is the best time for you to bring your doubts to Jesus.

INTO THE WORD (25 MINUTES)

- 1. Read Hebrews 10:24-25. How has being a part of a small group helped you share your spiritual questions and doubts?**

H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

[Answers will vary. The author of Hebrews encourages believers to think about “how to stir up one another to love and good works” and to, “encourage one another”. Small groups are important because we all need to be encouraged. We give each other permission to be real when we openly and honestly share about our own lives. When we deal with doubts and questions, we can feel comfortable bringing them to God because Jesus is the answer. “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” John 14:6. If you are dealing with doubt or have questions this is a safe place to be.]

- 2. Read John 20:24-25. Have you had a time in your life when you have had doubts about your faith? How did you respond or how are you responding and what have you learned from that experience?**

H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

[Answers will vary. This is a sensitive question and some in your group may currently be wrestling with doubts. Do not be worried about trying to answer or solve their doubts at this moment. Instead, this is the perfect opportunity to listen and ask clarifying questions and to make them feel heard and known. If people share, this is a great opportunity for your group to study and look into those questions.]

3. Read John 20:27-29. What do you find significant about Jesus' response to Thomas and what do you think He means when he says, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed"?

H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

[Answers will vary. Fun Fact: In verse 28, we see Thomas refer to Jesus as God. This is significant because he is the first person in the New Testament who refers to Jesus in this way and not just "the Son of God". Jesus starts not by putting Thomas down for his doubts but instead tells him and those with him to have peace. Doubts don't keep Jesus away from us. He welcomes them and wants to meet us in the midst of our doubts. Thomas's doubts allowed him to experience Jesus in a unique way which led him to genuine transformative belief. Unlike Thomas, we may not have the opportunity to touch the physical body of Jesus but we are blessed for believing without seeing. Blessed here means that we have the opportunity to experience internal contentment and joy regardless of what is happening externally in life.]

APPLICATION (25 MINUTES)

1. Read John 14:27 and John 20:26. Where in your life do you need Jesus to give you peace this week?

H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

[Answers will vary. Jesus wants to give us peace regardless of what we have going on in our life. Like Thomas, we can give our doubts to Jesus and replace them with peace. Being able to talk with trusted believers is a positive step to finding peace in areas we are struggling in. That is why we believe so strongly in doing life in small groups!]

2. Read John 20:30-31. John says his Gospel was "written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." Who in your life needs to believe in Jesus and find life in his name?

H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

[Answers will vary. For Thomas experiencing Jesus transformed his life and led him to spread the good news of Jesus throughout the world. What would it look like if we identified two people in our lives who we can be missional with this week? Like Thomas, you and I have been transformed by Jesus and have a story to tell. Understanding our story allows us the opportunity to share the impact Jesus has had on our lives. "We must tell people the gospel, but [we also] embody the gospel in all our attitudes and relationships. Evangelism is inviting people to look into our lives and see how a human life has been transformed and re-arranged by the gospel." —Tim Keller]

3. Read John 10:10 and John 20:30-31. Jesus wants us to have life in his name and have it abundantly! After reading both passages what do you think it means to have life through Jesus? What would it look like for you to live an abundant life this week?

H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

[Life with Jesus isn't just about existing or living day to day but about having joy show up in every area. Jesus uses the word abundantly to describe the life he wants to give. Abundant means to have plenty or to be overflowing. This does not mean that our external lives such as our health, wealth, and relationships will be amazing all the time but that we can find abundant joy and peace in our internal lives because of who and what Jesus has done for us.]

PRAYER (10 MINUTES)

Dear heavenly Father, thank you so much for sending Jesus to come and die for us so that we may have peace in you. Thank you that we can bring our questions and doubts to you. We celebrate that you are the answer to our questions. When we experience hopelessness, you are the way. When we don't know what is right you are the truth. When we feel worn out, Jesus you are the resurrection and the life. Thank you that you want to give us not just life but life more abundantly. Help us this week to live this out as we interact with others. May we be transformed like Thomas and be instruments of your reconciliation. In your wonderful name, we pray. Amen.