

## Doubt

John. 20:24,25

Intro. It seems that Thomas is a pretty well known Bible character if you take the number of times he is used to remind us of our tendency towards doubt.

Thomas was an apostle. But in spite of his close association with Jesus, Thomas was a doubter.

In real life Thomas was probably a twin although nothing is ever said about brothers or sisters. The name Thomas actually means twin.

The only things we know about Thomas are those things recorded in John's gospel. But this incident involving Thomas is important today because we are often troubled by doubt.

Doubt puts a stumbling block in our pathway to being conformed to the image of Christ.

Now we all have doubts once in a while but there are some people who struggle with it to the point that they miss blessings and growth.

**Question:** Does doubt deprive you of growth, joy, and being conformed to the image of Christ in your life?

If it does, I would like to look at this problem and see if we can understand it and find a way to change it from a hindrance in our life, so we can be more successful.

T.S. I want to begin by looking at

I . What doubt is

The Bible dictionary points out that doubt is not disbelief which would be the opposite of faith, but rather it is a state of mind which is indecisive about something.

In John. 20:25 Thomas said and I paraphrase here, unless I have real proof, I will continue to doubt that this truly is Jesus.

**Thought:** Thomas could have taken the word of the rest of the apostles and believed it and kept going, but he was the type of person that required that little extra evidence.

**Question:** Are you the type of person who, in spite of honest, sincere, communication about something, still can't seem to make up your mind?

Then we also see that doubt is blind to possibilities. Doubt lives in the realm of the impossibility, yet with God all things are possible.

**Question:** Are you afraid to think great things about and for God? You see God is the God of great possibilities which He wants you involved with.

Then we notice that doubt is deaf to hearing God calling you to great things because it whispers, you may not be able to do it.

II . What doubt does.

Before we look at what it does, lets notice.

A . What it doesn't do.

Doubt doesn't offer us anything progressive for our spiritual or physical lives. Doubt casts shadows on our progress and potential. It does nothing to help us

**Illustration:** When our daughter worked in the diet office and had to learn the computer it almost crippled her yet when she stepped out in faith and decided, she was successful and went even further in the career field.

Doubt tried to destroy her. How about you? **Question:** Is doubt keeping you from being all God wants you to be?

B . What doubt does.

1. It keeps you on edge

James 1:8 talking about a double minded man or a doubter says that he is an unstable man. He is a man on the edge who can hardly keep his balance. Does that sound like you?

2. It hinders us.

It always leads towards perplexity rather than victory. We become confused about who we are as Christians and about we are to be doing.

It leads towards helplessness as we doubt if we will ever see victory. **Thought:** How soon we forget that with Christ, things are not hopeless.

Beck translates Luke. 18:27 like this, speaking of riches and entering the kingdom but also applicable to all life, *what men can't do, God can do.*

Doubt sees hopelessness but in Christ there is no such thing as hopelessness but notice also, that hopelessness, fostered by doubt, leads to helplessness. When things seem hopeless and we are unable to make decisions, we end up feeling helpless.

**Thought:** The problem is, our helplessness is really our inability to make up our mind and act on something. But as we step out in faith, our helplessness will disappear.

Doubt leads not only to hopelessness and helplessness, but it leads to sin if we don't deal with it in our lives. John Rea says, "Unless the honest doubter presses on to full faith, his doubt becomes sin." *For whatever is not of faith is sin.* Romans 14:23.

So as we see, doubt leads us on a downward progression because it keeps us from pressing on in faith.

### 3. It hinders God from being Himself.

**Thought:** When we doubt and can't make up our mind we hinder God to the extent that He will provide us with opportunity and wisdom to believe, but He will not force us to action beyond doubting and therefore, is hindered in putting an end to our doubts.

**Thought:** God says, you believe and I'll show you. We say, you show me and I'll believe, so our doubting and indecision won't allow us to believe so He can show us.

**Illustration:** How open is a door if we are asking him to show us something? Is an open door an inch or does it have to be a foot? Doubt will suggest that open is not open even if the door is actually wide open.

**Question:** Do we have a hard time trusting and believing God? If we say no, then why is it that we don't see more of His power in our lives? I would suggest that doubt is often a bigger hindrance than we realize or may care to admit.

### 4. Doubt and indecision keep us from victories and usefulness in God plan.

**Thought:** Someone said nothing ventured, nothing gained. When we waver and are indecisive we really say, I better not venture out with this because it might not work thus we gain nothing.

**Insight:** The reason I keep going besides my call to the ministry, is because I believe and do not doubt that God has given me the ability and spiritual insight to bring blessing and positive changes to the lives of His children. If I doubt that, my ministry would be done.

III . How to challenge doubt and instill stability in the Chr. life.

A. First we must remember to accept Christ's invitation to try Him.

1. Back in John. 20:27 Thomas was hindered by his doubts and uncertainties and Jesus said to him in so many words, try me. Touch my hands and side and see for yourself, so you can quit being skeptical.

2. That's what He says to us today when we are doubtful and afraid. He says try Me and see if I'm able to do what Ephesians 3:20 says I can do. *It says that I am able to do exceeding abundantly above all you can ask or think.*

We will always doubt until we try the Christ in whose image we are being conformed into. **Question:** Why would God want to conform us into the image of a weak and ineffective Christ? It doesn't make sense. Jesus says try Me. I am powerful. I am He who reigns forever.

As we look at and try Christ, we will see that He becomes bigger than our doubts. **Remember:** God and you are a majority and that you have the right to succeed in Christ. Is doubting and indecision keeping you from your victories? I trust that you will look to Jesus with renewed enthusiasm.

B. We need to trust Him

1. Proverbs 3:6,7 says *don't trust yourself but trust God.* We don't need to doubt because He is able to accomplish whatever He tells us to do.

C. A third thing we need to do to get rid of doubt's hindrance is to be willing to change.

**Thought:** The person that is resistant to change is a person who is probably plagued with doubt.

Doubt says, maybe it won't work or maybe this is the wrong approach. Doubt then suggests that no approach is better than a possible wrong one and therefore change and progress never take place.

R.S. Barrett says, "Don't exercise your doubts, exercise your faith." In other words don't say what if I can't, say what if I don't try?

As we learn this abandonment to Christ, we will learn to think with Oswald Chambers who likens our victories to Mt. peaks, which, when we have once attained them, we find them only to be plateaus where there is ample room to grow even further.

**Question:** Are you willing to change your life's outlook from doubt and despair to a life's outlook that says, YES I'll try it with Christ?

#### D. Dare to be creative rather than doubtful

- Doubt fears change, but to change doubts, don't fear to be creative.
- Don't be afraid to try jobs that are bigger than you are.
- Doubt will paralyze you, while creativity will free you to accomplish great things for God.

In conc. we see that doubt really does hinder our growth and conforming process. But God wants to get us past this hurdle so we can grow and enjoy Him.

If you are here today and you struggle with doubt remember 3 things.

1. God loves you.
2. God wants you to have victory and success in life.
3. God will give you a clear mind and victory as you step out in faith and put your life in the hands of an all knowing, all loving, all victorious God.

So this week, by faith, dare to venture forth and put your doubt aside and go on to victories in Christ.

How about you my friend, is your life filled with fear and doubt, not sure you can do this or that? If it is consider this; God wants to free you from this dreadful feeling but the key is you need to know him before he can help you.

If you have never done that, remember the three things listed above then read and do the following so you can live the rest of your days in victory instead of doubt.

Realize you are a sinner Romans 3:23

Understand that the payday for sin is death or eternal conscious separation from God.  
Romans 6:23a

Know that there is a way of escape for you. Romans 6:23b and John 1:12

Desire to escape and pray this or a similar prayer.

"Dear God, I know I am a sinner. I am truly sorry for my sins, and I confess them all to You [name them]. Lord Jesus, forgive all my sins and come into my heart as my Saviour and Lord. I receive You right now. Help me from this time forward to live for You. Thank You for hearing and answering my prayer. In Jesus' name. Amen."

On the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ I became a Christian by inviting Jesus Christ into my life to forgive my sin.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

If you have further questions or have chosen to do this, be sure to let us know so we can help you, pray for you and encourage you in your new life.

You can reach us at [lapeerchurch@gmail.com](mailto:lapeerchurch@gmail.com) Subject line: (Salvation)