

Believe: Overcoming Doubts

We continue our series on “Believe” from Easter Sunday. In this study we are focusing on three post-resurrection encounters, the first last week was Thomas.

We learn quickly from these encounters that Jesus seeks out those who have doubts.

“Faith is not the absence of doubt, but the action we take that overcomes it”

He can’t reward us until we take that step toward him, towards believing:

“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)

Jesus told us that John the Baptist was the greatest prophet that ever lived. John boldly and confidently announced that Jesus was the long awaited Messiah. He had now been arrested sitting in a cold dark dungeon and sends word to Jesus asking if he was the Messiah.

Doubt, along with things like fear just pop up in our lives, it’s not like we schedule them. These things will just grab us, so what will you do with doubt?

We will all experience doubt, but don’t let your doubts “take you out”. We must deal with and overcome those doubts...3 days after all the events, Jesus shows up:

Text

“Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. 14 They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. 15 As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; 16 but they were kept from recognizing him. 17 He asked them, “What are you discussing together as you walk along?” “They stood still, their faces downcast.” 18 One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, “Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened

downcast.” 18 One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, “Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?” 19 “What things?” he asked. “About Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. 20 The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; 21 but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. 22 In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning 23 but didn’t find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. 24 Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.”

“25 He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

“28 As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. 29 But they urged him strongly, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them. 30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. 32 They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?” 33 They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together 34 and saying, “It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.” 35 Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.”
(Luke 24:13-35)

The followers of Jesus were on the road, (a metaphor for life) putting distance between the events in and around Jerusalem and themselves.

Some Journeys or “road trips” are all about the destination; others are about what you see and experience along the way. This road or journey is about both.

As the Christ followers walked this road apparently trying to get distance, Jesus showed up. Their “*faces downcast*” all hope seemed to be gone. Jesus points out: “*how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken*”. How would he help people who had lost all hope, Jesus took them to the *scriptures*. He gently showed them that all of the scriptures pointed to and are all about him. He started with Moses and all the prophets and “*explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself*”.

1. **We resolve our doubts through God's Word and by taking a step of faith in response to it.**

“They stood still, their faces downcast.” (:17)

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“Downcast” - *skuthropos*: directed downward, as the eyes; dejected in spirit; depressed.

From the beginning in the garden, the serpent challenged God’s word, trying to get them to doubt. It’s no different today; God’s Word is constantly under attack. As with those walking the road that day Jesus wants us to have:

- **Confidence in the bible *Historically***
(Especially concerning the resurrection)
- **Confidence in the bible *Culturally***
(The scriptures invaded the culture of that day in every way)
- **Confidence in the bible *Personally***
(God’s inspired scriptures will change you daily if you’re open)

They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?” (:32)

“hearts burning” —speaks of an uncontrollable desire for someone.

“They were saying that they had had a life-changing personal encounter with the Lord. They felt their hearts going out to him”

2. **We resolve our doubts through interacting with the resurrected Jesus.**

“30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight.” (:30-31)

“..., and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.” (:35)

Discussion Questions

- 1) As we journey through this life following Jesus, one of the most important lessons we will learn is: *“Faith is not the absence of doubt, but the action we take that overcomes it”*. As we study these encounters of Believers who experienced doubt and we look back at *our* times of doubt, what was that “action” or “step” we took to overcome doubt? Also as we consider Hebrews 11:6, what does this scripture say to you concerning belief and moving toward God?

overcome doubt? Also as we consider Hebrews 11:6, what does this scripture say to you concerning belief and moving toward God?

- 2) We know that we don't schedule times of doubt; they just "pop up". We saw how even John the Baptist experienced a time of doubt about Jesus and who he was. Randy challenged us to not allow doubt to "take you out"; he gave us two very important ways to resolve our doubt. But have you experienced doubts or seen others around you that struggled with doubts that almost took them out?
- 3) Please discuss the first way to resolve our doubts: "*we resolve our doubts through God's Word and by taking a step of faith in response to it*". What are the challenges for people living today concerning doubt and God's Word?
- 4) Next reflect on the second way to resolve doubts: "*we resolve doubts through interacting with the resurrected Jesus*". What does this mean in a practical way for you?