

**Easter Encounters (3 of 5)**  
Small Group Discussion Questions

**PUBLIC WORSHIP DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

The global pandemic COVID-19 has forced us to adjust and adapt how we do church and stay connected to one another as a congregation. We're not closed as a church, we're just doing church differently! So, please stay connected to the body at Grantham Church. Join our congregation for worship in-person with restrictions or online at 10:30 am each Sunday morning via our Grantham Church YouTube Channel. For more information, please go to the [Grantham Church Live](#) page at our website.

As usual, the sermons will be posted to the [recent sermons page](#) on our website and at the [Grantham Church Podcast](#) the following day, along with the small group discussion questions under Worship Resources. Thank you for staying connected with us!

**Sunday, May 2nd 2021**



**Sermon Title:** Jesus Appears to Thomas

**Scripture Reading:** Matthew 28:17; John 20:19-29; 1 Peter 1:8-9

**Sermon Focus:** He's often been called "Doubting" Thomas. But that's not a fair description of this passionate disciple of Jesus. In fact, Thomas revealed an even greater commitment than the other disciples, and his insight was far above theirs. So why did Thomas respond the way he did when the 10 disciples said they had seen the risen Jesus? Listen as Pastor David explains and sheds light on its meaning for us.

Thank you for going deeper in conversation with your small group in person, by phone, or video call. Use the following questions to help *guide* your small group discussion:

1. Read John 20:19-29 together. What do you find interesting about this passage? What do you find puzzling or confusing? What can you relate to in this story?
2. Pastor David said, “For folks like Thomas in first century Palestine, I don’t think these disciples needed “proof” in the same way some skeptics demand it today. Because when it comes to the supernatural, we are far more skeptical (even arrogant) about what we think we know and understand than first century Jews.” Why do you think that we are far less humble in our knowledge and open to mystery? How might this attitude impact our faith and the life of our church?
3. Pastor David pointed out that Thomas missed the first encounter with Jesus because he was not with the other disciples. Have *you* ever missed what turned out to be a great faith-building experience for others? How did it make you feel? Have you ever wished that someone else wouldn’t have missed an opportunity for God to minister to them? Why is it so important to stay with the church? And how can we encourage those who are disengaging and missing out?
4. Pastor David suggested that since Thomas was radically committed to Jesus (e.g., see John 11:16), it’s likely that he was deeply disappointed, frustrated, even angry that Jesus had died and that he had been duped. And then missing the first encounter would have intensified his feelings. How have you witnessed or experienced this before? How does this speak to you?
5. Pastor David gave us some takeaways from Thomas’ encounter with Jesus. How does these speak to you? Why are they so important for growing as disciples?
  1. Be honest about your doubts. (a) don’t deny them; (b) are they the real issue? (e.g., some people just don’t want to repent)
  2. Faith embraces mystery, so don’t make a big deal about your doubts. It’s normal. (e.g., see Matthew 28:17 – the disciples doubted but believed)
  3. Stay with the church, bring your doubts to worship, and in time Jesus will reveal himself to you.
6. Pastor David said that our faith is primarily a confession, not an explanation. While we may be able to explain a lot (which Christian theology has done), we will always confess more than we can explain. Do you agree? Why or why not?