

Jesus' Conversations with His Doubting Disciples

Lesson 6 of 6 in the series: "Conversations with Jesus"

1. After Jesus died on the cross on Good Friday, His body was placed in a tomb by two secret disciples who came out publicly about their belief/faith/trust in Jesus.

"Afterward Joseph of Arimathea, who had been a secret disciple of Jesus (because he feared the Jewish leaders), asked Pilate for permission to take down Jesus' body. When Pilate gave permission, Joseph came and took the body away. With him came Nicodemus, the man who had come to Jesus at night. He brought about seventy-five pounds of perfumed ointment made from myrrh and aloes. Following Jewish burial custom, they wrapped Jesus' body with the spices in long sheets of linen cloth. The place of crucifixion was near a garden, where there was a new tomb, never used before. And so, because it was the day of preparation for the Jewish Passover and since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there."

John 19:38-42 (NLT)

2. On Easter Sunday morning Jesus' disciples were surprised that His tomb was empty.

"Early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. She said, 'They have taken the Lord's body out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!' Peter and the other disciple started out for the tomb. They were both running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He stooped and looked in and **saw the linen wrappings lying there**, while the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was folded up and lying apart from the other wrappings. Then the disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in, and he saw and believed—for until then they still hadn't understood the Scriptures that said Jesus must rise from the dead. Then they went home." John 20:1-10 (NLT)

Note: Jesus' disciples didn't believe He had risen from the dead because they didn't understand OT prophecies or Jesus' own words about His resurrection.

"For you will not leave my soul among the dead or allow your holy one to rot in the grave."

Psalms 16:10 (NLT)

"The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of his enemies. He will be killed, but three days later he will rise from the dead.' **They didn't understand what he was saying**, however, and they were afraid to ask him what he meant." Mark 9:31b-32 (NLT)

Note: The fact that Jesus' burial wrappings were still in place should help us believe.

- Why would a grave robber take a corpse out of its wrappings and then neatly reassemble them?
- If Jesus was just an ordinary man who had somehow survived a brutal flogging and crucifixion and later revived inside the tomb; how was he able to unwrap himself, reassemble the wrappings, roll away the stone, and overpower a group of Roman soldiers assigned to guard His tomb? (Matthew 27:62-28:4 & John 11:44)

3. On Easter Sunday evening Jesus had an uplifting conversation with most of His confused and doubting disciples.

"That Sunday evening the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them! **"Peace be with you,"** he said. As he spoke, he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord!" John 20:19-20 (NLT)

Note: Jesus had to convince His disciples that He had a real resurrected body and that they weren't seeing a ghost.

"But the whole group was startled and frightened, thinking they were seeing a ghost! 'Why are you frightened?' he asked. 'Why are your hearts filled with doubt? Look at my hands. Look at my feet. You can see that it's really me. Touch me and make sure that I am not a ghost, because **ghosts don't have bodies**, as you see that I do.' As he spoke, he showed them his hands and his feet. Still they stood there in disbelief, filled with joy and wonder. Then he asked them, 'Do you have anything here to eat?' They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he ate it as they watched." Luke 24:37-43 (NLT)

Note: Jesus didn't blast his disciples for deserting Him. Instead, He brought them peace and helped them get back on mission.

“Again he said, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so **I am sending you.**” John 20:21 (NLT)

“I am leaving you with a gift—**peace of mind and heart.** And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid.” John 14:27(NLT)

4. **Regardless of what all the other disciples said, Thomas refused to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead until he saw Jesus had a conversation with Him.**

“Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, ‘We have seen the Lord!’ But he said to them, ‘Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, **I will not believe.**’ A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you!’ Then he said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. **Stop doubting and believe.**’ Thomas said to him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ Then Jesus told him, ‘Because you have seen me, you have believed; **blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.**’ Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that **by believing you may have life in his name.**”

John 20:24-31 (NIV)

Note: We must have belief/faith/trust in God in order to have a relationship with Him because God is beyond our comprehension. “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” Hebrews 11:6a (NIV)

“‘My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts’, says the Lord. ‘And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.’” Isaiah 55:8-9 (NLT)

Note: Without belief/faith/trust it’s impossible to have a meaningful relationship with anyone.

Note: Every historical event we have not personally witnessed must be accepted by faith.

Note: By believing/having faith/trusting in the name of Jesus we can have abundant, eternal life.

“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” John 10:10b (NIV)

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16 (NIV)

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Connect Group Questions.

Read John 19:38-20:31. Then discuss the following questions:

1. What was the best part of Easter for you this year?
2. Why do you think Jesus’ disciples were surprised that His tomb was empty Easter Sunday morning? (Mark 9:31-32, John 20:8-9, Psalm 16:10)
3. Why do you think Jesus’ disciples were shocked and frightened when he appeared among them Easter Sunday evening? (Luke 24:37-43)
4. If you had been in Jesus’ place, what would you have said to a group of disciples who had all deserted you, given up on you and even denied knowing you?
5. Why do you think Thomas refused to believe Jesus rose from the dead even when all of the other disciples told him that had seen Jesus, talked to Him and touched Him Easter Sunday evening?
6. Discuss the following statements:
 - We must have belief/faith/trust in God in order to have a relationship with Him because God is beyond our comprehension. (Hebrews 11:6, Isaiah 55:8-9)
 - Without belief/faith/trust it’s impossible to have a meaningful relationship with anyone. (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)
 - Every historical event we have not personally witnessed must be accepted by faith. (John 20:29)
 - By believing/having faith/trusting in the name of Jesus we can have abundant, eternal life. (John 3:16,10:10)
7. Quotations to consider:

“Faith is not belief without proof but trust without reservation.” D. Elton Trueblood

“We live by faith, not by sight.” The Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:7 (NIV)

“A faith is a necessity to a man. Woe to him who believes in nothing.” Victor Hugo