

The Last Supper

STUDIES FROM THE UPPER ROOM

HELP MY UNBELIEF

John 20:24–31

RELATED SCRIPTURES

John 20:1–23 | Acts 2:1–13 | Hebrews 11:1–6

STUDY FOR SERMON FROM 3.24.24

SUMMARY

Immediately after the resurrection, the disciples were still unsure of many things. They heard reports of a resurrected Jesus, but such reports weren't enough to convince them of its reality, as evidenced by their hiding. But Jesus sought them out and stood before them (John 20:19). After this, the disciples undoubtedly believed; however, two of the twelve disciples were missing from this encounter—Judas, who betrayed Jesus, and Thomas. The gospel writer didn't cite a reason for Thomas' absence, however, his absence prevented him from believing as he emphatically stated, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe" (John 20:25). In the church for generations to come, this remark gave Thomas the nickname "Doubting Thomas." However, Thomas' doubt was no different than the other disciples, who didn't believe until they saw Jesus themselves. After eight days, Jesus, once again, stood among the disciples, and this time Thomas was present. The gospel writer doesn't specifically tell us if Thomas followed through with touching Jesus' scars as he previously insisted. Still, Thomas, like the other disciples, walked away believing—not just that Jesus was resurrected—but that he was indeed "God" (John 20:28). It might be easy to read this account and assume belief in Jesus must be accompanied by visual proof. This is what makes Jesus' following remark so astounding: that there would be those to follow who don't see yet still believe. In other words, Jesus offers the generations of Christians after the disciples a unique blessing—the spiritual blessing of believing yet not seeing Christ with their own eyes. We believe by the power of his Holy Spirit—a gift more convincing and compelling than even what our senses report (John 20:22; Acts 2:1–13).

GROUP QUESTIONS

Share something that surprises, encourages, or troubles you from the sermon or your direct reading of John 20:24–31.

What points of comparison can you make between your coming to faith and the coming to faith of the disciples?

What was the most compelling factor that moved you to a place of believing in Jesus Christ as Lord and God? Do you ultimately believe this to be something orchestrated by God? Why or why not?

If there's one thing Jesus would want you to walk away believing and receiving as a result of this portion of Scripture, what is that thing?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

As you pray, be sure to include today's themes in what you bring before God.