



Connect Group Discussion Guide
Sunday Message - 7/26/20 | Chuck Sackett | John 20:24-29; 21:2

NEW Redeems Our Story: New Solutions!

Key Scriptures:

Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”

- John 20:19–21

Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “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 20:24–25

Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

- John 20:28–29

Message Notes:

- Key observations about the text:
 - v28—“my Lord/God”; John 1 = Word was God
 - v21—“sending you”;
 - v30— the purpose of book
 - v25–25—“unless I see...” – first witness fails...
 - v25—“unless I see...” – experience not information
 - v19, 20, 26—“peace” – “shalom” = wholeness, redemption, restoration
 - v28—“my Lord/God” – not merely assent—but embrace
 - v29—last words of Jesus in John’s gospel

Message Highlights:

- There are many reasons people doubt. They may have too many questions; they may not feel God’s presence or--on the other hand-- feel that God has failed them.
- Often people simply feel as though they will never be “good enough.”
- Doubt is very real, even among believers, and we can’t deny, avoid, condemn, or dismiss this reality.
- Thomas doubted, too. He refused to believe until he could see and touch Jesus’ wounds. This leads to a key verse and the overarching theme of TRUST.
- Ultimately, you will have to choose whether or not you will trust.



Conversation Starter:

- Some sources say that on average, we trust approximately zero to four people in our lives. Do you think this is accurate? Is the level of trust increasing or decreasing in our culture? Why?
- Which best describes you: “I tend to trust people unless they give me a reason not to trust them” OR “I tend not to trust people until they prove to be trustworthy?”

Discuss the Message:

1. Richard Carlson’s commentary on John 20:19-31 suggests that maybe instead of calling him “Doubting Thomas,” we would more accurately call him “Conditional Thomas.” What were the conditions he established that, if met, would cause him to believe? What are some common conditions that we establish for Jesus to meet in order for us to be more likely to believe, follow, or trust in him?
2. Referring to Jesus in his hometown, Matthew 13:58 says, “And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith.” Other versions say “because of their unbelief.” “Because” indicates a cause-and-effect relationship. Why do you suppose they struggled so much with their belief? What happened as the result?
3. In the lyrics to “Way Maker,” we sing:

*Even when I don’t see it, You’re working...
Even when I don’t feel it, You’re working...
You never stop, You never stop working...*

It goes on to praise God:

*Way Maker, Miracle Worker, Promise Keeper, Light in the Darkness
My God, that is Who You are!*

We can relate so well to these words that they elicit a very emotional response at times. Can you think of a time in your life in which you couldn’t see or feel God working, but as you look back it has become so clear that He was with you and at work the whole time?

4. Describe your journey in terms of developing trust in God. How would you relate to those who struggle in this area? How would you encourage them?

Pray:

- Pray for one another.

Heavenly Father, Thank You for being the One we can fully trust. Forgive us for our unbelief. Jesus, you bless those who have not seen and yet believe. You ask us to put our faith in you. Holy Spirit, strengthen our faith and guide our hearts in such a way that we will surrender our lives to you fully. In a time so full of uncertainty, lead us closer to you with confidence. We need you desperately, and others need you desperately as well. Let us be inspired by the sense of urgency so that we will represent Christ well in our broken and hurting world. Help us also to be trustworthy as we reflect Jesus to others. We have never been more needed. Help us rise up and take courage in the battle to advance your kingdom. Amen.

