

DEALING WITH DOUBT

John 20:24-29

March 30, 2008 Sunday a.m.

INTRODUCTION

- A. In the United States, each of the 50 states, has a nickname.
 - Florida-The Sunshine State.
 - New York-The Empire State.
 - Ohio-The Buckeye State.
 - Oklahoma-The Sooner State.
 - Missouri-The Show Me State.
- B. The disciple Thomas must have been from Missouri because he was a “show me” kind of guy.
 - 1. In our text we learn that he refused to believe secondhand testimony of Jesus’ resurrection—John 20:24-28.
 - 2. He has since won the nickname of “Doubting Thomas”.
 - 3. This is an unfair designation for a couple of reasons.
 - a. At least he didn’t betray Jesus like Judas or deny him like Peter.
 - b. Tradition says he eventually went to India as a missionary and was martyred there.
- C. At some time or another, most people have doubts about the Christian faith.
 - 1. There are a few people who can say, “The Bible says it, I believe it, and that settles it!”.
 - 2. The rest of us, though, have had some questions about God, Jesus, the Bible and even the resurrection.
 - 3. We are born questioners. One of the earliest words every child learns to say is “why”. They want to know how things work and why they work that way and why they don’t work another way.
 - 4. Doubt is not a sin. John the Baptist had doubts about Jesus and Jesus had doubts from the cross (i.e. why have you forsaken me”).
 - 5. Doubts can be beneficial if they motivate us to nail down what we really believe-I Peter 3:15-16.
 - 6. Lets see how God responds to our doubts by looking at Thomas’ example.

I. FIRST, WE LEARN THAT GOD WON’T ABANDON US BECAUSE OF OUR DOUBTS.

- A. Jesus didn’t abandon Thomas-24-25.
 - 1. He didn’t expel him from the 12.
 - 2. He didn’t scold him.
 - 3. Instead, he appeared to him so he could deal with his doubts-26-27a.
- B. Doubt isn’t the same thing as unbelief.
 - 1. Its simply asking for more information in order to reach a conclusion.
 - 2. A faith without doubts, may be an unexamined faith.
 - 3. Some refuse to examine faith because their minds are closed to the possibility of its truth.
 - 4. Thomas didn’t say “nothing will convince me”. He just asked for more information.
- C. God won’t abandon us either because of our doubts-Jude 22.
 - 1. If you have doubts about God, don’t use them as an excuse to avoid God.
 - 2. Instead, use them to guide you in your search for the truth. Jesus said, “I am the truth”.

II. SECOND, WE LEARN THAT THE CHRISTIAN FAITH CAN WITHSTAND SCRUTINY.

- A. Jesus invited Thomas to examine him-v.27.
- B. Our faith can withstand scrutiny too.
 - 1. Don't hesitate to put your faith under a microscope.
 - 2. Over the years others have....C. S. Lewis, Josh McDowell, and Lee Strobel to mention only a few.
 - 3. Listen to Lee Strobel's testimony concerning Jesus. (YouTube).

III. THIRD, WE LEARN THAT AFTER ALL THE EVIDENCE IS IN, IT STILL REQUIRES FAITH.

- A. After Jesus appeared to Thomas he told him to stop doubting and believe-27.
 - 1. Why would Thomas doubt after seeing Jesus with his own eyes?
 - 2. The implication is that sometimes not even "seeing is believing"-Matthew 28:16-17.
- B. The lesson here for us is that there will always be room for doubt because there must always be room for faith.
 - 1. Our relationship with God is based on faith-Hebrews 11:6.
 - 2. Following Jesus requires a step of faith, but it's not a step into the dark. Rather, it's a step into the light.
 - 3. Thomas took that step of faith-28.
 - 4. Jesus knew others would too, even today-29.

CONCLUSION

- A. We will always be susceptible to doubts. But remember that...
 - 1. God will not abandon us because of our doubts.
 - 2. Our faith can withstand intense scrutiny and investigation,.
 - 3. Faith is always essential in our relationship with God.
- B. Charlotte Elliot wrote a classic hymn that expresses how we should respond to our doubts—p. 307, 1991 Baptist Hymnal, 3rd verse.