

Thomas Doubts

John 20:24-29

MEMORY VERSE

JOHN 20:29

Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A large sheet of paper, markers and/or stickers, magazines and/or newspapers, scissors, and glue.

A chalkboard, slips of paper, and tape.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Peace Be With You!

Make a full child-sized picture of a child. With markers or stickers, designate where the heart should be. Put the word "PEACE" on the heart. When your class comes in, have the paper turned over so they can't see the picture of the child or the heart.

Have your class cut out pictures from magazines or newspapers of things that represent worries in our lives. Glue these to the backside of the picture. When your class is all done, turn the sheet over, and explain that **Jesus wants His peace to be with us**. All of the cares of life can be bearable, even joyful, if we have the peace of Jesus in our hearts.

LESSON TIME!

Have you heard the phrase "Doubting Thomas"? Today we will learn about the Thomas who that little phrase was named for. We will see that our Lord Jesus had a personal interest and concern for "doubting" Thomas. Jesus replaces doubt with peace. **Jesus wants His peace to be with us**.

When we find our life at home turned upside down, it's hard to see where Jesus is. Today we will see how Jesus' death shook up one of His own disciples, Thomas. We will learn that hearing the word of God needs to be followed by practicing it daily. **Jesus wants His peace to be with us.**

JOHN 20:24

But Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.

Where was Thomas on the Resurrection Day? Was he so disappointed and discouraged over all that had happened to Jesus that he went off alone? Thomas may have had many unanswered questions, but if he had been with the other disciples, his questions would have been answered. Thomas' example is a good warning to all of us. We need to be careful not to miss meeting with God's people on the Lord's day (Hebrews 10:22-25). Because he was not there, Thomas missed seeing Jesus and hearing His words of peace. **Jesus wants His peace to be with us.**

A handful of people had seen Jesus after His resurrection, and word was spreading, but Thomas was not among them. Even though there must have been much confusion and fear in Thomas' life, he had heard all the words that Jesus spoke concerning Himself for three years. We need to read the word every day, trust what it says as God's truth, and try to apply it to our lives.

JOHN 20:25

The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

Do You Believe It?

Make a list of questions for your class like:

Do you believe that there is a grocery store in your neighborhood?

Do you believe that bears are real?

Do you believe in gravity?

Do you believe that you were born?

Do you believe there is a place called Africa?

Do you believe in the wind?

After you ask each question, ask the children why they believe or don't believe? Have them pinpoint the reasons for their faith in Jesus. Ask them if they believe that Jesus died and rose again.

What was it that Thomas would not believe? He did not believe the reports of the other Christians that Jesus Christ was alive! On the one hand, we admire Thomas for wanting personal experience, but on the other hand, we must fault him for laying down conditions for the Lord. How often have we refused to simply believe? How often have we insisted that God prove Himself?

Jesus had told the disciples that He would rise from the dead, but Thomas didn't remember or believe. He said he had to see and feel the imprints of the nails and spear for himself. All of the disciples had been devastated since the crucifixion, but now there was excitement in their faces. Thomas could not understand. The last time he had seen Jesus, Jesus was on the cross. Thomas was still suffering from all of the pain and lonely feelings he felt that day.

JOHN 20:26

And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!"

When Jesus returned a week later, Thomas was there. He had to endure a week of fear and unbelief, when he could have been experiencing joy and peace. **Jesus wants His peace to be with us.** Thomas had wanted proof of Jesus' resurrection. He thought, "seeing is believing." Jesus came and, again, offered His words of peace. **Jesus wants His peace to be with us.**

Jesus came to them in the middle of their room, and said "Peace to you!" His peace can't be taken away from us. It's not found in a store or a treasure hunt. Only He can give us the peace that overcomes the darkness. If we're afraid at night and we sing a song to Jesus, the fear washes away. Do our circumstances change? No, but Jesus gives us His peace in the midst of our circumstance.

What Is Peace?

On a blackboard make a heading that says "Peace" and one that says "No Peace." Make several slips of paper with words like "joy," "fear," "doubt," "happiness," "hate," "love," "contentment," etc.

Have the children put the words under the correct heading. This can be an individual activity or done as a group.

JOHN 20:27

Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."

Jesus had heard Thomas' words; nobody had to report them to Him. Jesus knows all we think and say. The Lord came and dealt personally with Thomas and his unbelief. Jesus invited Thomas to do what he said he needed to do in order to believe. He knew it was dangerous for Thomas to have unbelief (Hebrews 3:12). Thomas was faced with his own words of unbelief, but Jesus loves us so

much that He deals with us personally. **Jesus wants His peace to be with us.**

Jesus went right to Thomas. He had heard the words Thomas spoke days ago. How could that be? Jesus knows us intimately! Luke 12:7 tells us that even our hairs are numbered. If He can number each of the hairs of our heads, surely He can see into our hearts. What had been in Thomas' heart? If we have God's word tucked in our hearts; we will remember His promises. Jesus wanted to help Thomas believe.

JOHN 20:28

And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

All of Thomas' doubts and questions melted away. In his confession of renewed faith, he said "My Lord." His words confess that Jesus was his God and that he would serve and follow Him.

JOHN 20:29

Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

In the world some people say, "seeing is believing." Jesus said that those who believe without seeing are blessed. Jesus wants us to be confident in His word; it is reliable and true. Our faith that God is in control, that His word is true, and that He loves and cares for us more than we can imagine brings us peace! **Jesus wants His peace to be with us.**

We haven't had the privilege of seeing the nail prints in Jesus' hands. One day we are going to have that opportunity in heaven. But we receive a special blessing because we haven't seen, but still believe. How important it is for us to know the word of God and believe what He says.

sPRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of thanksgiving that Jesus rose again from the dead. We can also be thankful that when we trust in Him He will take away all of our fear and doubt. If there is anyone who has not asked Jesus to come into their lives, give them opportunity to do so.