

Jesus Appears to Thomas

(John 20:19-29)

Pre-Session Warm Up

Do you ever wonder if God is really listening to your prayers? We all have moments of doubt. When He doesn't answer our prayers right away, we wonder if He really cares about us or if He is even there. God isn't upset with us when we doubt Him; He uses these times as opportunities to grow our faith. With God's help, our doubt can be transformed into faith.

One of Jesus' disciples went through a time of doubt. He had seen Jesus do many miracles. He had even seen Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead, but he just couldn't believe that Jesus had come back to life. Today we are going to learn how Jesus turned his doubt into faith.

Opening Prayer

Father, we desire that You would give us all stronger faith. Please help us to trust You, even when we are going through times of trial in our lives. Show us You are real so our faith can grow. Amen.

Memory Verse

And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved..." (Acts 16:31)

Lesson

We've been learning about what Jesus did for the 40 days He was here on earth between the time He rose from the dead and the time He went up to heaven.

The first one to see the risen Lord was Mary Magdalene. She had gone out to the tomb very early the morning after His crucifixion while it was still dark. When she got there, she saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.

She looked in and saw that the tomb was empty. So, she ran back to tell the disciples, but they didn't believe her.

That same day, two men were on their way to Emmaus. As they were walking along, Jesus joined them. They didn't recognize Him at first. Do you remember from last week's lesson how they finally realized it was Jesus? (They recognized Him when He broke the bread.)

Then, the moment they recognized Him, He disappeared! So, these two men ran back to Jerusalem to tell the disciples what happened.

They found the disciples hiding in a room. They were afraid the Jews would come after them next.

While these two men were telling the disciples about meeting Jesus on the road to Emmaus, suddenly he appeared.

John 20:19

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."

How did Jesus suddenly enter the room? [Teacher, let the class discuss.] Apparently, our resurrection bodies are not like our earthly bodies! At any rate, it must have freaked them out when He suddenly appeared in the room because the first thing He said was, "Peace be with you."

John 20:20

When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

Why do you think He showed them the wounds in his hands and his side? He wanted them to see with their own eyes and believe that He was really alive! Jesus knew their fear and He wanted to comfort them. See how in verse 21 He says to them again, "Peace be with you."

They were filled with joy when their spiritual eyes were opened and they recognized it was really the Lord. He turned their fear into faith!

Unfortunately for Thomas, he had missed seeing Jesus!

John 20:24

Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came.

We don't know why Thomas wasn't there. But, for some reason Thomas was not present when all the other disciples saw Jesus after His resurrection.

John 20:25

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."

Why didn't Thomas believe the other disciples when they told him they had seen the Lord? [Teacher, let the class discuss.] Thomas hadn't seen Him personally and he wasn't about to believe this incredible story! He was saying, "If you can't prove it, I won't believe it!" He wanted to see Jesus' wounds for himself.

But Jesus didn't want Thomas to doubt that He was alive.

John 20:26

Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."

Eight days later the disciples were again huddled together in a room. They were still afraid the Jews would come after them like they did Jesus. This time Thomas was with them. And, again, even though the doors were locked, suddenly Jesus stood among them.

John 20:27

Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe."

Jesus wanted Thomas to believe that He was alive!

John 20:28

Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"

Thomas fell on his knees and with tears streaming down his face said, "You are my Lord and my God!" Thomas didn't doubt anymore. He had seen with his own eyes that Jesus was alive. He had seen Jesus' wounds in his hands and side.

John 20:29

Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Jesus wasn't scolding Thomas for not believing He was alive. He knew Thomas honestly wanted to know the truth. God wants all of us to search for the truth.

Thomas is a good example to us. He refused to say he understood when he didn't, he refused to pretend to believe when he didn't. And when he *did* understand and believe, he went all the way and properly called Jesus Lord and God.

While Thomas was saying, "Show me and I will believe!", Jesus tells us if we believe, then He will show us Himself. God will reveal His power to us in our lives if we trust in Him without actually seeing Him.

Even though God is invisible we need to trust and believe that He is.

Thomas refused to believe until He saw Jesus in person. We must have faith to believe even when we cannot see God with our eyes. If we use our spiritual eyes, we can certainly know that He is working in our lives.

There are many things in life that we cannot see yet we know they exist. For example, we know that germs exist because we can see their effect. Some people can get sick from the Corona virus and even die from it.

We don't need to doubt Jesus is alive today. We can see His effect in the lives of people. We have proof He lives from the Bible and from other Christians who share what Jesus means to them.

How do *you* know that Jesus is alive? Can you tell me about a time that Jesus touched your life? Perhaps He healed you, or protected you, or provided miraculously for your family. (Teacher, share a personal testimony with your class.)

How would you recognize Jesus if you met him? What things would he be doing/saying? How have you recognized Jesus at work in your life before? E.g., answered prayers, other people's kindness.

Jesus turned Thomas' doubt into faith. And He wants to transform your doubts into faith, too.

Closing Prayer

Father, Thank You that You sent Jesus to die on the cross for our sins. Thank You that You raised Him from the dead so that we can know without any doubts that Jesus is alive; we serve a living Savior! In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Game Center

Use the following review questions in a time of discussion or a game of your choice:

1. Who was the first one to see the risen Jesus? (Mary Magdalene.)
2. Why didn't people recognize the risen Jesus? (He was the last person they expected to see; they thought He was dead!)
3. Why were the disciples hiding in the room? (They were afraid the Jews would come after them like they did Jesus.)
4. How was it possible for Jesus to disappear and reappear? (He was in His resurrection body.)
5. Why did Jesus show them the wounds in his hands and side? (To prove it was really Him.)
6. Who was Thomas? (He was one of Jesus' disciples.)
7. Why didn't Thomas believe the disciples when they said Jesus was alive? (He wanted to see Jesus for himself.)
8. What did Jesus say to Thomas? ("*Peace be with you.*" Then, "*Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.*")
9. How did Thomas' doubt become faith? (When he saw Jesus wounds in his hands and side.)
10. Because we can't see the nail prints in Jesus' hands and feet, what must we do to be saved? (Believe in Him. We must trust Him without actually seeing Him.)
11. How has God helped your faith to grow?
12. How do we know that Jesus is alive? (The Bible tells us that He rose from the dead and didn't die again. He was taken up into heaven through the clouds.)
13. How would you recognize Jesus if you met Him? What things would He be doing or saying?

