

Small Groups @ TBC Sermon Discussion Notes

Date of Sermon: 19th April 2015

Speaker: David Lawrence

Title: No Doubt

Introduction: This talk explores the theme of doubt. It attempts to create a careful balance between, on the one hand, the acceptance that doubt is normal experience for many Christians (including those in the Bible) and, on the other hand, the challenge to 'stop doubting and believe'.

Review: (invite one or more who have heard the talk to give their own brief review)

Reflect:

Read: John 20:24-31

Reflect:

- Thomas was a disciple, yet he doubted the good news that the other disciples relayed to him. What does this tell us about personal experience of Jesus?
- In the talk a list of possible causes of doubt was offered. Which ones (if any) did each group member identify with in particular?
- In the talk we heard that doubting does not define whether or not you are a Christian: you might be a Christian who doubts (like Thomas) or a non-Christian who doubts. Doubt does not in itself *define* us, but it does *disable* us (read e.g. Matthew 21:21,22; Mark 4:40,41).
 - Discuss the various ways that doubt disables our Christian lives?
- How would you describe Jesus' attitude to the doubter? How does this make group members' feel about their own times of doubt? And how might it shape our dealings with others who express doubts?
- Thomas' doubts were dispelled by a personal encounter with the scars of Jesus. There is no doubt about the scars, and that is the basis for his fresh belief.
- Discuss this quote from Greg Boyd: "Biblical faith is not so much psychological certainty, but spiritual risk-taking - trusting God's character in the face of uncertainty".
- Thomas was the first one to 'get it' in John's Gospel - the first to worship Jesus as his 'God'. What is the significance of this statement of Thomas', and how does the acknowledgment that Jesus is God impact members of the group?

Leaders: feel free to be selective and creative with your use of these notes. Don't feel you have to use all of the material, but do try to keep the shape of Review – Read – Reflect - Respond

Respond:

Love for God

How does Jesus' treatment of Thomas affect your love for him?

Love for one another

How might you be inclined to treat fellow Christians who doubt differently as a result of this discussion?

Love for neighbour & world

How can your life 'offer the scars' of Jesus as the primary evidence for his love for those you meet in the world?

And finally:

Before you conclude, ask each person:

- What is the main thing you are taking away as an action point?
- How can we pray for you?
- Is there anything we can check on next time we meet?