

Jesus is Worthy of Our Trust

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[0 : 0 0] Take your Bibles and turn to the book of John, chapter 20. John, chapter 20. We're going to begin reading in verse 19 and read through the end of the chapter.

I don't want to step on Aaron's toes, but I'll tell you what's been happening. Jesus has been crucified. He's been buried. And now people are beginning to hear some strange rumblings that the tomb is empty.

Jesus is beginning to appear to people. And this is on the evening of the first day. You see that in verse 19. John, chapter 20, verse 19. On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, Peace be with you.

After he said this, he showed them his hands and sighed. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. And again, Jesus said, Peace be with you.

As the Father has sent me, I am sending you. And with that, he breathed on them and said, Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven.

[1 : 1 7] If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven. Now, Thomas, called Didymus, one of the twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, We have seen the Lord.

But he said to them, Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it.

A week later, his disciples were in the house again. And Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, Peace be with you.

And then he said to Thomas, Put your finger here. See my hands? Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.

Thomas said to him, My Lord and my God. And then Jesus told him, Because you have seen me, you have believed.

[2 : 2 7] Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book.

But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Let's hear the preaching of God's word. Well, thank you all for welcoming me back to preach and for sharing Pastor John with our church down in Warsaw.

I count the years that our family spent in Bremen some of the most formative for me in ministry, some of the most blessed for our family in many ways.

Although we've seen many blessings in Warsaw as well. But we love you. We miss you all. And we appreciate the opportunity to be with you again today. Or at least I do. The rest of my family is not here.

[3 : 2 4] But I'm glad to see your faces today. From the end of John 20, John's Gospel in chapter 20 this morning, our goal is really very simple.

I want us to see that Jesus is worthy of our trust. That's it. I want us to see that Jesus is worthy of our trust.

And so if you are here this morning without faith, it's my prayer that you will come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And if you are here this morning with strong faith, I pray that it will be strengthened further with the glimpse of our Savior that we get in these verses at the end of John's Gospel.

And if you're here this morning with sometimes faltering, stumbling, doubting, weak, small faith, and I think that's especially what the passage before us might be most related to.

If you're here with weak faith and with doubt. I pray that your faith too will be strengthened and solidified as we look to the Savior who is absolutely, unequivocally worthy of our faith.

[4 : 40] I fear that too many may think that the church is a place for the strong. And so they are afraid to show weakness when they come to church.

They look around and they see a bunch of people who seem to be strong in their faith. And so, well, I'm pretty weak and faltering. I can't let on to that. And so I've got to just put on a smile and hope that everybody thinks I'm as strong as I know all of them are.

A place where people are sometimes afraid to show weakness, to admit doubt, to own their struggles. But, brothers and sisters, the church is the very place designed to receive and help those with such struggles, doubt, and weak, faltering faith.

I say that because that's what Jesus does. Jesus receives those with weak, faltering faith and lots of doubt.

And he strengthens their faith. And Jesus is the head of the church. And so the church is the hands and feet of Jesus should be the same. The organization on earth that receives those with weak faith and seeks to strengthen that faith by pointing all who come through the doors to the wonderful Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

[6 : 01] The Bible tells us certain things about Jesus to that point, that he receives those who are weak in their faith, that he receives all who come to him with any measure of faith.

Matthew tells us this. He tells us Jesus is the fulfillment of Isaiah 42. And in Matthew 12, 20, that Jesus is the servant of God who a bruised reed he will not break.

And a smoldering wick he will not quench until he brings justice to victory. Jesus says of himself, Matthew 11, 28 to 30. Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart. And you will find rest for your souls, for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

John 6, 37. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me, I will never cast out. Sweet, isn't it?

[7 : 14] It is so sweet to trust in Jesus. He receives all who come to him in faith. Weak faith, struggling faith, doubting faith, strong faith.

He receives all who come to him in faith. The Bible tells us that our Savior is gentle with his people.

He doesn't crush bruised reeds or quench smoldering, barely flickering flames. He welcomes all who come to him in faith. That's what the Bible tells us.

But can we believe that it's true? Can you believe that Jesus welcomes all who come to him in faith? Do you believe it? God is good in his word to show us not just to tell us that Jesus is such a Savior who receives all who come to him in faith.

The Bible shows us that in lots of different ways. And I want us to focus on one particular way the Bible shows us that Jesus receives all who come to him in faith.

[8 : 21] Weak as that faith may be. And that's the account of Jesus receiving Thomas. It's here. And I asked Jason to read from verse 19 to the end of the chapter.

Our focus is going to be on verse 24 to the end of the chapter. And I want us to see five things. If you don't remember these five things, that's okay. Remember the one main thing. That Jesus is worthy of your trust.

He's worthy of your faith. All right? So the five things that we're going to organize our thoughts around are these. First, doubt. Then reassurance. Then a confession. Then faith and blessing.

And then I have a question for you. And the question is, do you believe? Right? So we're going to begin again. It doesn't matter if you don't remember all of those five things.

Just remember Jesus is worthy of your faith. But we're going to begin with doubt. And our story tonight, today, begins after Jesus appeared to his disciples on the night of his resurrection.

[9 : 20] Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week. And later that night, he appears to his disciples behind the doors that they had closed for fear of the Jews.

But verse 24 tells us Thomas had missed that. Verse 24. Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the twin, or Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. We don't know why Thomas wasn't with them.

He might have had a legitimate reason or it might not have been a legitimate reason. But we know what Thomas missed out on by not being there that night. When the disciples were gathered together, ten of them anyway.

Thomas wasn't there. Judas wasn't there. We believe the other ten were there. But he missed out. He missed out on seeing the risen Savior and learning that his Savior was not dead but alive.

He missed out significantly by not being there. And this is just a side note. This isn't the point of the passage, I don't think, but I think it's worth observing. You know what?

[10 : 19] You too. When you miss gathering with the Lord's people on the first day of the week, whether for a legitimate or maybe not so legitimate reason, you're going to miss out.

Now, understand, sometimes we're providentially hindered. We're sick. We can't make it. All sorts of different things. But when we don't, we miss out. Just like Thomas missed out in a really important way. You miss the appearance of the Savior Jesus.

He missed seeing his hands and his side and hearing his words of peace and commission and equipping. Jesus did all of those things. He spoke peace to them. And he told them he was going to send them as the Father had sent him.

And he told them that they were going to receive the Holy Spirit. So they would be equipped for that mission. Thomas missed all of that. And his faith is faltering.

It's shaken. And the other disciples tell him in verse 25, 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 in the mark of the nails and place my hand to his side, I will never believe.

[11 : 19] Thomas doesn't believe. I will certainly not believe if I don't see the mark of the nails and put my finger in the mark of the nails. Put my hand in the side.

It's very specific. Maybe the others had told him what Jesus had done when he appeared to them. Look back at verse 20 for a moment. Here's what happened when Jesus appeared on that day that he rose from the dead, the night of that first day.

Verse 20, when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. They knew it was their crucified and now risen Savior. Maybe the disciples told Thomas about that.

And maybe that's why he's so specific in verse 25. Unless I see these things, the marks in his hands, his side. I certainly will not believe.

He wants to see it too. Like many skeptics, I'll believe it when I see it. And how sad this is. Thomas' privilege over the last three years, plus the testimony of the ten disciples.

[12 : 23] Couldn't he have remembered all that Jesus said? And even now, these ten disciples who he would have come to know and presumably trust. And they are testifying to him.

Listen, Thomas, we've seen him. He's alive. Thomas says, I will not believe. Unless I see him. Everything he had heard and seen over the last three years in the testimony of these ten should have been enough.

But it wasn't. Maybe he thinks these other ten are deceived or delusional. But he doesn't believe. He's not ready to believe that Jesus is risen from the dead.

Now, before you give Thomas too hard of a time here, much of what is true of Thomas here was likely true of all of the disciples one week earlier. They needed the physical appearance of the risen Savior in order to believe.

Their faith was not solely based on the unseen either. They got to a point of greater faith the same way that Thomas will by seeing Jesus. It just happened a week earlier for them.

[13 : 33] A week later for Thomas. And before we give all of the disciples too hard of a time, how often have we struggled to believe?

How often is doubt swept over us when our suffering, perhaps? Or our difficult circumstances. Or maybe the witty argument of a really winsome unbeliever who makes an argument against Christianity.

We think, I never thought of it like that before. And a wave of doubt sweeps over us for a moment. Or maybe longer for a moment. How often has we experienced doubt?

Or weak, faltering faith because of our suffering or our circumstances or some case someone makes against Christianity. More on this later. But our, in the age in which we live, our only view of Christ is through the eyes of faith.

And sometimes the arguments of unbelievers and the suffering that we face and the sorrows in our lives and maybe just the little day-to-day things, but they pile up and they accumulate.

[14 : 43] And sometimes those things are more clear to us than Christ is. You ever found it easier to focus on all of your struggles and uncertainty and difficulties rather than on Christ?

And find your faith flagging, faltering a bit. Because you're so focused on the circumstance and the difficulty and the suffering that you lose sight of Christ and you begin to doubt.

Maybe the doubt creeps in. Maybe sometimes for you, doubt has flooded. Friends, it does us no good to say, Christians don't doubt. Our faith is solid.

We have good reason for our faith. We do. But our faith is not always solid. The object of our faith is always solid. But our faith in Him is not always.

And it does us no good to deny that. John the Baptist doubted. Jesus had to rebuke His disciples in the boat. Oh, you of little faith, why did you doubt?

[15 : 56] Thomas, of course, doubts. The week before, it seems that most of the rest of the disciples were in some state of doubt and small faith. And I don't mean to suggest doubt and weak faith are good and right. No.

I only mean to suggest we don't do ourselves any favor when we act like doubt and weak faith are a rare or strange occurrence for believers. They are, in fact, I think, quite common.

Hang on. I want you to see the challenge to grow in faith and the rebuke that Jesus gives Thomas as well. But I don't want anyone to think that they're alone in their doubt or their weak faith.

I don't want us in shame to keep it in the dark. Maybe the church, I mentioned the church earlier, and I don't think the church does this on purpose, but maybe the church sometimes unintentionally has made it hard.

And listen, I preach this at my church too. I don't mean Grace Fellowship Church and you guys need to get it together. I mean the church, okay? Maybe the church sometimes unintentionally has made it hard for doubters to come and admit their struggles.

[17 : 08] If we all appear happy, happy, happy all the time and strong and well, then those who are not happy and strong and well in their faith may find it difficult to come and admit that they are struggling.

They look around and they see people gladly singing God's praise. I don't have it in me to do that today, but I'm going to put on a smile and try because everybody else is. I'm not the way I'm supposed to be.

I'm supposed to be like all these people and they may hide their struggles. No. Bring those struggles to the light. We love you. We want you to grow and we want you to know that we struggle too.

Now, next Sunday when you gather together, I don't want you all to come in here and all be sober and not sing with joy. Don't pretend like you have weak faith when your faith is strong, okay?

That's not what I'm saying. But be aware that there might be people around you that are struggling, that are weak. Somebody that may need a sympathetic ear and an understanding heart.

[18 : 22] Though the church may unintentionally, without meaning to, at times, have put off doubters, listen, the head of the church, Jesus, never does. Amen.

And so think with me, secondly, about reassurance. So there's doubt. Now, reassurance. The next week, eight days later, verse 26 says, eight days later, or one week later, if you count those eight days inclusively, it probably started on the Sunday before, and so this would be the next Sunday, the next first day of the week.

The disciples are again gathered together. This time, though, Thomas is with them. Good for him. You can imagine maybe it had been a long, hard week for Thomas. If you have ever been in a state of doubt and uncertainty regarding your faith, regarding who Christ is, just an hour of it can be overwhelming.

Now, here, Thomas has got a week, and maybe you've gone months or years doing battle with that. But you can imagine it would have been a difficult week for Thomas. The doors are still shut like the week before, and as with the previous week, Jesus comes, stands in the midst of them, and repeats his blessing of peace.

And brothers and sisters, there's such encouragement. And when Jesus first appeared to them, he says, peace to you, and then he repeats it, peace to you. And I don't have time to preach that sermon, but it's a marvelous word from the only one who can actually genuinely give peace.

[19 : 46] And he repeats that to them again on this appearance. Peace be with you. And then this, this sweet reassurance from Jesus to Thomas.

Look at verse 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 could have said so many things to Thomas here. He could have given a swift, stern rebuke. He could have demanded repentance on the spot. And in some instances, Jesus may give us exactly that.

But here, this stubborn, wounded sheep with faltering faith, and not just faltering, he's got a, it's got a little tinge of rebellion to it. I will not believe in a tinge of demand to it.

I hope that when you're weak and faltering in your faith, that you don't, you don't come with demands to Jesus. I hope you come crying out, Lord, I need some tangible expression that shows me you're real, but I hope it's not tinged with, with anger.

[20 : 49] But even if it is, come to Jesus anyway. He's got a stubborn, wounded sheep before him with faltering faith.

And Jesus shows him compassion. He offers his hands and side to the one who had such great doubt. It's interesting. Jesus doesn't have to be told about Thomas' lack of faith. It's not as though, as though Jesus appears in the room and Peter grabs him and says, Hey, Lord, um, you're not going to believe this.

But Thomas said, unless he sees your hands and side, he's not going to believe. Jesus didn't need that. Jesus knew. Just like he knows about your, and my, weak, faltering, faith.

And he addresses it in love. You want evidence that Jesus won't snuff out a smoldering wick or break a bruised reed. Here it is on full, beautiful display.

Thomas needs some tangible expression. And Jesus condescends to give him what he needs. The, the old Testament example I think of here is Gideon.

[21 : 58] Gideon is, is appeared to by the, the angel of the Lord. I think it's probably the pre-incarnate Christ. And is commissioned to lead the Israelites against the Midianites.

And Gideon still has some weak faith problems. He says, Lord, look, I'm going to put a fleece out. And if you could just, you know, make the fleece wet and the grass dry, that would, that would really strengthen my faith.

And God doesn't say, look, Gideon, I sent the angel of the Lord. That's enough. God stoops to his weak faith. And then Gideon does it again.

Can we do it the other way this time where the fleece is dry and the grass is wet? I don't, maybe I flipped the order. Anyway, he did it twice. And God doesn't say, look, Gideon, get it together, man.

He comes and he, and he does what was asked. And Jesus doesn't come to Thomas and say, look, you need to have faith.

[22 : 56] These other 10 guys have testified. You heard my words before I died and rose from the dead. And here I am standing in front of you. You don't need to see my hands inside. He doesn't take that just barely smoldering wick of Thomas faith and crush it.

He goes, you ever had a few embers left in a fire? Just blowing them gently. And they start to glow a little bit more. And he starts to fan that tiny flicker of faith into a flame.

Instead of quenching it. What a savior this is. Condescends to our need. This disciple should have known better. He should have believed. That's true.

But Jesus makes accommodations for his weak faith. And how often has he done the same for us? And we may not, we may not demand it. We may not even ask for it. But how often has Jesus met us in our time of need and weak, faltering faith?

Think about it. Have you ever had a ray of light sent by the Holy Spirit from the Word of God when you were overwhelmed in the darkness?

[24 : 07] And you don't even know where to go and you just say, I'm going to start reading my Bible. And the Holy Spirit opens your eyes to see something. And into your darkness shines a ray of light. That's Jesus stooping to strengthen your weak faith in that moment.

Or maybe a note or a text message arrives from a friend with a word of encouragement that meets your need. A need that you had not mentioned to anyone when your faith was at its flow.

And at just the right time, God puts it on the heart of somebody else to send you a message. And they do it. And you receive it. And Jesus has stooped to your or my weak faith at just the right moment.

To just give it a little, fan that back into flame. Maybe a point from a sermon.

No credit to the pastor. But a point from a sermon that was perfectly tailored to a particular doubt or struggle you were having. A providential circumstance.

[25 : 07] Listen. All circumstances are providential. Okay? All of them. Sometimes it's more apparent to us than others. And so, a providential circumstance that confirms a direction on a decision.

You're struggling with a decision. You don't know which way you should go. What you should do. You're leaning this way. But you're not sure. And Jesus just gives you something. Some circumstance. Something happens. That is the way we should go.

It's obvious now. Or maybe a decision you've already made. And you're not sure if you made the right decision. And you're second guessing yourself. And God gives you just some. Something happens. And you go, Thank you, Lord. I see that.

We did. By your grace. Make that right decision. And he is. And Jesus has come alongside you. He said, Here's my hands. Here's my side. And he strengthened your faith.

Maybe a particular answer to a particular prayer that you offered with very little faith that it would be answered. Or perhaps as you sing on a Sunday morning with God's people, the words of a hymn strike you in a way that you hadn't thought of before.

[26 : 08] And your heart is drawn out in love and deeper certainty in and confidence in your Savior. And your faith is strengthened. And your trust is deepened. Sometimes we sing a hymn.

Sometimes a light surprises a Christian while he sings. It is the Lord who rises with healing in his wings. He comes and heals your broken, faltering faith.

And these and other ways, Jesus holds out his hands to us and condescends to our weakness and says, Look, here is my side. When we're doubting and crying out or maybe keeping silent in fear and uncertainty, we don't need to wait for those things in order to trust.

And sometimes those things may not come. And you may spend an extended period of time. We're really struggling. But sometimes God does use them to strengthen our faith.

If he doesn't, we always go back to his word. We know what he says. We know it's true. And we can find confidence in that. But sometimes he gives us a little something extra. And we can thank him for those kindnesses as he showed to Thomas.

[27 : 16] With each of them, he says to us, as he did to Thomas there in verse 27, Do not disbelieve, but believe. Don't doubt, believe. Don't be unbelieving, but believe.

Don't be without faith. Have faith. I've given you good reason. Of course, long before this, Jesus had given Thomas good reason to believe.

As he has with us. But he knows our frame. He knows we're dust. He knows that we can be strong in faith one moment and weak the next. Do you ever find that?

Doing really good. And then you've got a period where you're not. Jesus knows that. He knows. He understands. He's sympathetic to it. And he comes and strengthens the faith of his people.

He gives us reason to believe and exhorts us to believe. Be done with your unbelief. Brothers and sisters, I pray that this side of the Savior's compassion on full display will itself be a faith building encouragement to you this morning.

[28 : 22] You need to believe. And not disbelieve. And I pray that God will strengthen your faith as you see the Savior this morning who is worthy of your trust.

And listen, if you're unbelieving and you've never trusted the Savior, your doubt has kept you away altogether, I just want you to know this morning that Jesus is not afraid of your doubt. He has the answers for it.

He is not overwhelmed by your skepticism and your questions and your uncertainty. If you're here as a skeptic today, a doubter who's never come to faith in Christ, Jesus is not put off by it. He's not troubled by it.

He's not in the sense that, oh, I hadn't thought of that before. Maybe you really shouldn't believe in me. Jesus has all the answers. And listen, bring your questions, bring your doubts, and come and talk to me.

Come and talk to your pastor, maybe your parents. Talk to a trusted Christian friend. There are answers to the questions and doubts that have kept you away from the Savior Christ. And if your parent or your pastor doesn't know the answer right off the top of their head, they can find it for you.

[29 : 28] They're good answers for the questions and doubts that you may have. You bring them to Jesus. And he will help you maybe, maybe a little bit at a time, one by one.

Just dismantle those arguments. And show you that he is worthy of your trust. Right? So there's doubt, reassurance, thirdly, confession, verse 28. This elicits a remarkable confession from the lips of Thomas.

My Lord and my God. You see, his faith is strengthened. Jesus has taken that just barely smoldering ember, blown it into a flame.

My Lord and my God. The kindness and compassion and condescension of Jesus are not in vain. And have you found the same?

I hope so. And if not, don't quit. Keep looking to the Savior. He's not going to abandon you. Thomas acknowledges Jesus is his Lord, his Master.

[30 : 27] And more than that, he is God himself. My Lord and my God. You see, it's personal for Thomas. Not just the Lord and God, but my Lord and my God. This Savior is his.

And it's that personal for us as well. I pray that the kind work of Jesus in your life will elicit this confession from you to your Savior.

My Lord and my God. And if this is all you can muster, it's a good confession to muster. My Lord and my God. He is our Lord and our God.

Praise him for that. Now we should just note here, this is such a clear testimony to the divinity of Jesus. To the deity of Christ. That he is God. John begins his gospel.

And the word was with God. And the word was God. And the word became flesh and dwelt among us. And we have seen his glory. Glories of the only Son from the Father. Full of grace and truth. Jesus is God in the flesh.

[31 : 24] And Thomas here affirms that reality when he says, My Lord and my God. He affirms it in no uncertain terms. And, you know, sometimes in scripture, you'll see someone bow down to a human, to an apostle, or maybe to an angel, and they'll say, No, stop!

I'm a human like you're. I'm just an angel. Like, no, don't worship me. Worship God alone. You notice that Jesus doesn't do that here? When Thomas says, My God, Jesus doesn't say, No, no, no, no, no, no.

That's my Father. He's God. He receives it. Because He is God. The Jesus John writes about, the Jesus Thomas confesses, the Jesus that we place our faith in is indeed God Himself.

The fourth, faith and blessing, right? Doubt, reassurance, confession. Now faith and blessing. Look at verse 29. Jesus said to him, If you believe because you have seen me, blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.

Jesus gently receives Thomas, stoops to his weak faith, but He does have something of a rebuke for him as well here in verse 29. He either states, and I think the NIV translates it or punctuates it as a statement, You have believed because you have seen me.

[32 : 49] Or as a question, the ESV punctuates it as a question, Have you believed because you have seen me? Either way, Thomas' faith was renewed by what he saw.

The risen Jesus standing before him with marks in his hands and side. That's not a bad thing, that his faith was renewed by sight. It's good. It's better than apostasy. It's better than leaving the faith or continuing on in doubt.

But there's something, Jesus says, that would have been better, Thomas, to believe without seeing, to take God at His word, to believe everything that you've read in the Old Testament about me, Thomas, to believe everything that I've said in the last three years, Thomas, to take me at my word, even to believe the testimony of these other ten disciples.

That would have all been better than waiting and even demanding to see my hands and my side. There's a blessing there for those who believe without seeing.

Thomas and the other disciples, for that matter, would have done better to believe without seeing, but they didn't. They needed some sight to strengthen, to bolster, renew their faith.

[34 : 02] And let's not think that we would have done any better. I would have believed. Like, I would have caught all those anticipations in the Old Testament. I would have remembered that Jesus said, listen, they're going to kill me on the third day.

I'm going to rise again. I would have remembered all of that. I would have believed it. If we think that way, and you go, look, I've lived my whole life without seeing Jesus face to face, and I have faith. So I think I would have been all right if I was in the disciples' shoes.

I think I would have believed. If we think that way, we're too proud. If I think that way, I'm too proud. I think we would have been no better than the disciples.

We sometimes still need something by sight to strengthen our faith. There's a blessing there for those who believe without seeing. Of course, the stronger the faith, the better.

But what a merciful Savior to not trample on weak faith, full of doubt, but to welcome that weak faith and doubt and stoop to strengthen it, and then even to rebuke us and show us how we can maybe do better the next time to believe without seeing.

[35 : 06] And I love that Jesus starts with, here are my hands and my side. And then he moves to something of a rebuke for Tom. All right, we've got Thomas back.

Thomas confesses, my Lord and my God. He says, Thomas, it would have been better if you would believe without seeing. It's like when Peter is, he walks on water to Jesus and then he looks around at the waves and those waves become clearer to him than Christ is and his faith falters and he sinks in the water.

And it's not as he's singing that Jesus says, oh, you of little faith, why did you doubt? Let him bubble down under the water and never to be seen again. No, he grabs him first.

He pulls him up and he gets him in the boat. He shows him mercy and compassion. And then once he's in the boat, safe, he says, oh, you of little faith, why did you doubt?

What a kind, thoughtful, savior he is. We need rebuke sometimes. But often doesn't it follow the strengthening of our faith by our savior Christ.

[36 : 17] Jesus' words here, though, should be comforting to us who live in an age where we've never seen Christ with our physical eyes. Jesus says, blessed are those who did not see and believe.

Do you know who that is? That's you. It's me. Maybe Old Testament believers are in view here. They had some theophanies and a lot of visual aids to their faith. But it's almost like Jesus here is preparing his disciples in his church for what's coming.

He spent the whole upper room discourse, the whole evening with his disciples before he died, preparing them for his departure. And it's like that is now continuing here. He's like, listen, guys, I'm not always going to be physically present with you.

I'm about to ascend to my father. That's coming. And pretty soon, you're going to be walking not by sight. I'm not going to be here anymore. Physically, bodily, present with you. You've spent three years literally walking around with me.

Laying eyes, it's not going to be that way. I'm going to be gone. Physically, bodily, present by my spirit dwelling in you. That's part of how he equips them for when he's bodily gone.

[37 : 24] Now I'm preaching the upper room discourse. Anyway, he's getting them ready. There's going to be a time coming and until Jesus returns where we walk by faith and not by sight.

2 Corinthians 5, 7, for we walk by faith, not by sight. A life of walking by faith, seeing him with the eyes of faith, not walking by sight, seeing him with physical eyes, physically present with us. That's no more.

And so blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. And so do you know what Peter writes later? Peter, who we assume would have heard all this interchange with Thomas? Listen to what Peter says.

1 Peter 1, 8. Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory.

Brothers and sisters, that's our testimony. We haven't seen him, but we love him. We don't now see him, but we believe him. We are filled with joy because of what he has revealed to us about himself in the pages of his word.

[38 : 34] What a blessing we receive. We haven't physically walked with Jesus, but that's okay. We believe in him and so are blessed and have an even greater blessing than those who believed because they saw.

We don't now see him, but we do believe in him and rejoice with joy, inexpressible. And Peter goes on to say, 1 Peter 1, 9, that we will obtain the outcome of our faith, the salvation of our souls.

That can be our lot. It's a good way to go through this life, the best way actually, walking in faith in the risen and ascended Christ, though he is unseen. So even in this implicit rebuke of Thomas, Jesus is speaking words of encouragement to his church.

Friends, Jesus is gentle and lowly. His burden is light. He will not crush you. He will not cast you out. And so may we trust in him.

We need to have faith in this Jesus whom our eyes have never seen. And we need that faith to grow and be strong. And so let me ask you lastly, in the fifth place, do you believe?

[39 : 44] All right, we've seen doubt, reassurance, a confession, a word about faith and blessing. And now a question, do you believe? Look at verses 30 and 31. In a way, this is a wrap on the whole of the Gospel of John, even though there's one more chapter.

But John writes this, verse 30, now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

John tells us why he wrote his Gospel. Isn't that nice of him? He tells us what he wrote too.

He says, look, there's a lot more than what I wrote. He was selective under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. All the Gospel writers are. He says, at the end of chapter 21, now there are also many other things that Jesus did.

Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. So John's given you though enough to accomplish his purpose.

[40 : 48] And what is that purpose? Well, it's what Jesus was aiming for with Thomas at the end of verse 27. Do not disbelieve, but believe. The goal is faith. It's faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

John wrote, so that you will believe. The Holy Spirit inspired John to write. So that you will believe. Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And the way that they're saved is by believing in Jesus.

Jesus did the things that He did. He taught the things that He taught so that you would come to faith in Him. And then John wrote it down so that you would come to faith in Him. The goal is faith.

Not blind, empty faith. You know, the faith that John and Jesus want us to have has content. It's faith that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the promised one, the Son of God. It's not generic.

It's specific. It's focused on the second person of the Trinity, the Son of God, Jesus, who is the Christ. And so, to that end, John has loaded up his Gospel. You should read John's Gospel sometime if you haven't.

[41 : 48] Or read it again if it's been a while. He loads up his Gospel with testimony to who Jesus is, including the Old Testament and how Jesus fulfills it. He's shown us signs to bolster our faith.

Signs that validate the claims that Jesus made. That He really was the defined Messiah He claimed to be. He's shown us others who believe in Jesus and some who struggled to believe but did believe, like Thomas.

And the goal of all of it being written down is your faith with the result of having eternal life in His name instead of... Listen, make sure you don't just let that roll off you.

The goal of faith in Christ is having eternal life in His name instead of eternal death. what an unfathomable gift it is that Jesus gives.

And so this morning, I want to ask you, do you believe? Now I know you haven't been in all of John's Gospel with us. I've just finished a series in John's Gospel.

[42 : 52] You've just heard a little portion of it today. But from your previous reading of John's Gospel or hearing it preached and the little portion that we've looked at today, has John hit his mark with you?

If you're a believer, is your faith strengthened by reading about Christ in the Gospel of John? And reading about how he deals with Thomas in his weak, faltering faith?

If you're a believer, reading John's Gospel can blow fresh wind into the sails of your faith. This view of the glory of Christ, our Savior, can draw out your heart and love and affection and gratitude and greater faith.

If your faith is weak and struggling, let me encourage you to read John's Gospel. He wrote so that you will believe. You may be here this morning with weak faith and lots of doubt.

And I hope that just this little glimpse of our Savior this morning reminds you of how kind he is and how he welcomed and received weak, struggling Thomas and other weak, struggling believers like him, like me, like you.

[44 : 11] We don't get to see Jesus in person, but what a beautiful record we have to read with our physical eyes, to encourage our spiritual eyes, to see by faith the Savior who came into the world to save the world and absolutely succeeded in that mission.

Hallelujah. He came to seek and to save the lost. He accomplished it. Have you put your faith in him? And if so, and that faith is weak and faltering, I pray that you come back to the Savior today and say, Jesus, I'm kind of with Thomas today.

I know that I should believe without seeing, but I need some expression. Don't be afraid to pray that prayer. Lord, condescend to me. Give me something in my weak faith that's going to strengthen it. I know I should just take you at your word, but I'm really struggling like Thomas did.

And see if Jesus doesn't meet you. When your faith is faltering, come to him anyway and he'll receive you and strengthen you according to his, in his perfect time, perfect will, perfect plan, perfect purpose for you.

Brothers and sisters, he receives all who come to him in faith. Weak faith, medium faith, strong faith, he receives you. Do you believe?

[45 : 27] What about any here who do not have faith? We mentioned earlier you might have some questions that haven't been answered, some skepticism, some doubt that you've not been able to lay aside.

I would encourage you to spend some time in John's Gospel. If you're genuinely interested and you're trying to say, get into John's Gospel, even if you're not. Get into John's Gospel. Read it. You could read it in one sitting if you wanted to.

Or maybe over the course of a week, a few chapters a day. There's 21 chapters. Seven days, three chapters a day. You've got John's Gospel done in a week. Spend a little time with John.

And if you've never come to faith in Christ, Christ, why not? Will you? He's worthy of your trust.

I hope you've seen that today. And many other places in Scripture. And you are headed for eternal death. You've sinned against a holy God who cannot tolerate sin and punishes sin.

[46 : 30] You are worthy of that eternal punishment, that eternal death instead of eternal life that comes to all who don't believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. But Jesus came and He took that punishment.

He absorbed it on the cross. The infinite wrath of God absorbed by the infinite Son of God in a finite period of time on the cross. So that if you don't repent and believe in Jesus, you will take that punishment.

But if you do trust in Jesus, He's taken it in your place. You're headed for eternal death. You desperately need eternal life. And in your most honest moments, I think you know that.

So whatever it is that's holding you back, if it's doubt, come get answers. And shake off the doubt. And come to Christ. Maybe it's something else other than doubt.

It might be your attachment to the world and the pleasures that are offered in it. It might be your love of sin. It might be your fear of persecution. For faith, get rid of every possible excuse and run to the Savior Jesus.

[47 : 40] Put your faith in Him. Listen, He will not cast you out. He is gentle and lowly. His yoke is easy and His burden is light. And all who come to Him in faith, He absolutely will not cast out.

Will you come? He welcomes you. And so may we all believe and not disbelieve. Let's praise and thank our God for the Savior who is worthy to be trusted.

Let's pray together. our Father, our Lord, and our God, many of us here believe.

Help our unbelief. And help those that don't believe to come to faith. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.