

Share prayer requests with the small group. Ask someone to take notes and share the requests with group members after the meeting.

# Sermon Study

April 16, 2017

EASTER 2017: Thomas & Doubt

John 20:24-31

## vision

Eastview  
Christian  
Church is a  
fearless church  
of Christ  
followers whose  
ridiculous love  
and dangerous  
witness are  
irresistible.



*Eastview Christian Church small groups provide the optimal environment for the life change Jesus Christ intends for every person. Our groups typically have 8-14 people who **GATHER** together (Hebrews 10:24-25), **GROW** to be more Christ-like (Romans 12:1-2; 1 Peter 1:14-16), **GIVE** of themselves in various ways (1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 4:11-16), and **GO** on to impact the world around them (Matthew 28:19).*

**Gather** (your group getting to know each other)

Can you think of something (maybe a popular conspiracy theory) that it seems like everyone else doubts, but you're convinced is true?

**Go**  
(your group on mission)

To Thomas' credit, he knew exactly what sort of "proof" he would need to see in order to believe. Do your non-believing friends? The next time someone says they need proof in order to believe, rather than giving them an answer, consider advancing the conversation by asking them a question like, "Exactly what sort of proof are you looking for? What, exactly, could I possibly show you that would convince you to believe?" You might discover that your friend hasn't really considered this before, which may force them to realize they're clinging onto an impossibly high standard of proof which conveniently insulates them from dealing with what Jesus says in verse 29.

**Grow** (your group growing as Christ-followers)

### Key Scripture

"Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them." (John 20:26, ESV)

### Key Word Study

The word *eido* is one of the Greek words for "see" or "saw," and includes a "certainty" component to it, as though seeing something and being sure about it.

### Discussion

1. Have someone begin the discussion time by leading the group in prayer, then read John 20:24-31.

2. The big concept for tonight is doubt...specifically, how to interact with doubters, and being a doubter yourself. There are probably a lot of lessons to take from this passage, but we'll spend most of our time in verse 26. Have someone read it aloud again.

3. Thomas told the disciples he didn't yet believe Christ was risen. Then we suddenly fast-forward to eight days later...and Thomas was with them. This means the disciples (who knew the truth) apparently still welcomed Thomas into their presence while knowing he didn't yet believe. *They didn't cast him out because of his doubt.* In your group, consider this 8 day "waiting period" from the perspective of both Thomas and the disciples.

### Disciples Perspective:

4. How do you think the disciples felt knowing their friend Thomas didn't yet believe?

- What might they have thought of his demand that he would only believe after seeing a specific, rigid sort of "proof" dictated on his own terms?
- Do you think they were tempted to abandon him? To keep trying to convince him?
- How might you react toward Thomas during these 8 days if you were one of the disciples?

### Thomas' Perspective:

5. Imagine being told a man whom you followed, loved, and saw dead and buried had just been seen alive again. Do you think his initial reaction is reasonable?

- And how do you think he felt hanging around with the disciples over the next couple days, watching them act like this resurrection story was unquestionably true?
- Do you think he was ever tempted to break off and never come back, like his "friends had changed" and he didn't fit in anymore? Do you think he tried to persuade them there was no possible way that could've happened, that there must be some other explanation?

### Our Perspective:

6. How should we treat, interact with, and behave toward others who express initial doubt about the truth of the resurrection?

- What should we do if we, like Thomas, find *ourselves* experiencing those doubts?
- Is it okay to have doubt? Is it understandable, or does it mean we have "weak faith?"
- Read v.28. What is Thomas' reaction once he encounters Jesus for himself and gets the proof he demanded? In other words, the truth of Jesus' resurrection can't be left at mere historical trivia. What does it *mean* if you accept the truth of the resurrection?

**Give**  
(your group serving each other)

Hopefully your group is a safe place to honestly express doubts you may have about certain aspects of the Christian faith. This week, consider serving each other by sharing and exploring those doubts, praying together about them, and searching God's Word for guidance.