

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Red Bud, Illinois

Adult Bible Class

Popular Proverbial Phrases Inspired by Bible Passages

John 20:19-31 "Doubting Thomas"

When and why do we use the phrase, "Doubting Thomas"? _____

Verse 19: This is the evening of Jesus' resurrection.

Where are His disciples? _____ **Why?** _____

The disciples are afraid that they will be the next ones rounded up by the Jews because of their association with Jesus. In His resurrected body, Jesus is able to appear in their midst, not limited by space. In theology this is called His "illocal presence." "Christ was no longer with His disciples according to the mode of an earthly, visible body, but He came to His disciples according to His invisible, illocal presence, and so He could appear before them even 'when the doors were shut' (John 20:19)." (Francis Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, Vol. II, page 323)

Why does Jesus' first word to them have to be "peace?"

Verse 20: **What is the purpose of Jesus showing them His hands and His side?**

While there is a difference in Jesus' resurrected body, there also is a sameness to it. Perhaps this is an indication of our own resurrected bodies in eternity, the same but different.

What now is the disciples' reaction to this appearance of Jesus? _____

Verse 21: Jesus here renews His sending of these "apostles." He is sending them in the same way that the Father has sent Him into the world.

Verse 22: **Jesus' action and His words are a preview of what event that will happen to them?**

Verse 23: Jesus gives the authority of forgiving sins to His church, not to any one particular person. *Matthew 16:19* (Jesus said) "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Verse 24: **How is Thomas described?** _____ **&** _____

John 11:14-16 Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died, ¹⁵ and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." ¹⁶ So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

Verse 25: **Why should Thomas have believed the message of the other disciples?**

What does Thomas want? _____ (visible and physical)

And if he does not get that, then what? _____ (absolute statement)

Why would he not believe? _____

While we might look down upon Thomas for his strong stand of doubt, he just wants to have the same experience that the other disciples had. “We feel shock at Thomas’ skepticism. Jesus had foretold His death and resurrection. Now Thomas’ closest friends and Jesus’ closest disciple confirmed the resurrection. Still, Thomas wasn’t convinced. But was he much different from the rest? Thomas example demonstrates how impossible it is for human beings on their own to believe that Jesus truly rose bodily from the dead. Thomas’ insistence on receiving proof, however, created one more instance of proof also for us” (John, People’s Bible Commentary, CPH, page 265).

Verse 26: “Eight days later” means the following Sunday using the Jewish method of reckoning time inclusively. This would be at the end of the Feast of Unleavened Bread which follows the Passover festival. Perhaps these men had gathered one last time before returning to Galilee their separate ways. “inside again” is probably in the same room as the week before. There is the same type of sudden appearance by Jesus. He gives the same message of peace as He did in verse 19.

Verse 27: Jesus directs His next statement to Thomas personally.

What do Jesus’ words prove to Thomas (and to us)? _____

How does Jesus challenge Thomas? _____

“The injunction ‘be not faithless’ implies that there can be no permanent faith in Jesus except faith in Him as the risen Lord who still bears the scars of His atoning death. Thomas was therefore faced with the alternative either of Christian faith or unbelief” (John, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, page 227).

Verse 28: **What does Thomas apparently not do?** _____

What confession does he make? _____

Verse 29: **To what does Jesus attribute Thomas’ belief?** _____

What does Jesus call those who believe without seeing? _____ (beatitude)

Whom does this include? _____

“The time will nevertheless come, and come very soon, when the evidence neither of sight nor of touch will be possible, for Jesus will have completed His return to the Father beyond the range of the physical senses. Yet He will still be visible to the eyes of faith” (John, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, page 223). “After Jesus’ ascension, people would come to faith without seeing Jesus, on the sole basis of the apostles’ witness” (Lutheran Study Bible, page 1826).

John 17:18 & 20 (Jesus prayed) “As You sent Me into the world, so I have sent them into the world...I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word.”

Romans 10:17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

Verse 30: This is John’s wrap-up statement. There is much more that he could have written about Jesus’ ministry, particularly His “signs” (i.e., miracles).

Verse 31: This is the theme verse for John’s Gospel, written to bring people to faith in Jesus.

What does such faith say about Jesus? _____ & _____

What is the result of such “believing”? _____

Prayer: “Let me gladly share this Good News, O God, that others may believe and live. Amen” (Lutheran Study Bible, page 1826).