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“But, It Doesn’t Work for Me”

Michael W. McLemore

Two generations ago two questions were prominent: Did Jesus really rise from the dead historically, bodily? Or, Did He not rise from the dead? This became a line of demarcation between believers and unbelievers. Today, the questions commonly pondered seem diverse from other ages — Does it really matter to me? Do I care? Do I find it helpful? — but are they?

Jesus’ resurrection from the tomb was met with mixed responses. Luke records Peter and John, empowered by the Holy Spirit, fearlessly declaring the truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ before the council and the people, *Acts 4:13*. Their confidence and boldness stemmed from their firsthand experience of encountering the risen Savior and being transformed by His power. They saw the resurrection not as a mere historical event but as the pivotal moment validating Jesus as the Son of God and inaugurating a new era of redemption and hope.

The council, comprised of religious leaders and authorities, viewed the resurrection of Jesus as a threat to their status quo and perceived it as detrimental to their influence and control over the people. They saw Jesus as a disruptor of the established order, whose teachings and claims challenged their traditions and authority. Rather than embracing the truth of the resurrection, they sought to suppress it, fearing its implications for their power and prestige, *Acts 4:17-18*.

Lest we immediately assume ourselves the former of the two, what other areas of “faith” do we believe unhelpful to our present life? Jesus said of marriage, what God has “joined together, let not man separate,” *Matthew 19:6*. Some retort, “My happiness is important, this is unhelpful to me.” The Hebrew writer cautioned Christians about “neglecting to meet together,” *Hebrews 10:25*. Some say, “but it doesn’t work for ME.” While it may seem innocuous, it is far from true. ☐

Doubt & Faith

Michael W. McLemore

DOUBT among believers is often viewed as a dissonant thread, threatening to unravel the fabric of faith. Yet, paradoxically, it is through the interplay of doubt and faith that faith can be refined and strengthened. Enter “Doubting Thomas,” *John 20:24-29*. His early doubt soon turned to a catalyst for later deeper trust in Christ.

Doubt unveils the depth of our humanity and the limitations of our understanding. As Thomas famously declared, “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,” *John 20:25*. Thomas’s doubt was not a sign of weakness but a testament to the genuine humble struggle of the human heart to grasp the mysteries of God. In acknowledging our doubts, we admit our finite nature and our need for divine revelation.

Doubt compels one to seek truth with greater earnestness and sincerity. Interestingly, Jesus did not rebuke Thomas for his doubt. Rather He graciously invited examination of the evidence and believe – “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe,” *John 20:27*. Doubt, when approached with humility and openness, can propel seekers on a quest for deeper understanding and intimacy with God. It prompts good hearts to wrestle with Scripture, to engage in earnest prayer, and to seek divine guidance.

Doubt serves as a crucible for refining and purifying faith. Like gold tested by fire, seeking answers to one’s doubt exposes the impurities of faith—whether they be misconceptions, idols, or misplaced trust—and refines them into a stronger, more resilient faith. Peter spoke candidly about the necessity of “various trials” as the proving ground for genuine faith – “so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ,” *1 Peter 1:7*. One’s reservations function similarly if

room is given to search for truth. It is in the midst of hesitation that we are confronted with the choice to cling to our doubts or to trust the divinely endorsed process of “examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things are so,” *Acts 17:11*.

Doubt, when surrendered to God, becomes a pathway to a deeper, more authentic faith. Thomas’s confession — “My Lord and my God!” — remains not a lasting legacy of skepticism, but a powerful testimony to the transformative power of doubt when met with the revelation of Christ, *John 20:28*. When those seeking faith bring their doubts to the throne of God, embracing His Word and seeking a relationship with the living Christ, the resultant faith transcends mere intellectual assent but anchors itself in the foundation of God’s revelation of Himself to man. Seeing Christ’s revelation Thomas believed.

Doubt reveals God’s omniscience. Jesus knew the very words Thomas had spoken, revealing his doubt about the resurrection, *John 20:24-25*. The risen Christ provided His seeking disciple needed. Jesus’ awareness not only underscores His deity but also demonstrates God’s ability to provide answers to our doubts even before we articulate them, or even become aware of them. It speaks to the intimate knowledge God has of each of us, understanding the doubts that plague our hearts and offering reassurance and revelation precisely when we need it most. In this encounter, we are reminded of the comforting truth that God is not distant or aloof but intimately acquainted with our struggles, ever ready to meet us in our doubts with grace, truth, and understanding.

John 20:24-29 might be understood as the interplay of doubt and faith reminding readers that doubt, far from being a hindrance to faith, can be a catalyst for its growth and maturation. Perhaps you are wrestling with doubt. Seek understanding. Plead in prayer for guidance and wisdom. Draw near to the One who is the author and perfecter of faith, *Hebrews 12:2*. Trust the He will provide what is needed. You can find His answer.. Thomas did. ☐

Watch LIVE!

