Doubting Thomas

Doubts come in many different kinds and many different degrees. While doubting is not desirable, neither is it necessarily deadly. To doubt is to be double-minded (literally, two-souled, James 1:6-8). The opposite of doubt is a united heart (Psalm 86:11). A doubter vacillates between belief and unbelief. **If you honestly face your doubts, God may enable you to resolve them.** That was the case with Thomas. In our text, we see—

**1. The *pessimistic doubt* of Thomas**

Thomas’s problem—

A. Was not a lack of *evidence*

B. Was a matter of his *temperament*

John 11:16; 14:5

**2. The *gracious rebuke* of Jesus**

A. Jesus graciously confirmed his *faith*

B. Jesus mildly rebuked his *unbelief*

C. Jesus did not encourage *blind faith*

**3. The *bold confession* of Thomas**

A. His theological *conviction*

B. His personal *commitment*

**Application**

A. Look for the *root cause* of your doubt

B. Bring your doubt *to the Lord*

C. Seek help in *resolving your doubt*

**For Private Meditation or Family Discussion**

1. How did the Lord speak to you through the message? Did He put His finger on any habits or attitudes that you need to change? Did He encourage you regarding some difficulty, move you to undertake some new challenge, or open your heart to some truth you hadn’t seen before?

2. What effect does a divided, doubtful heart have on our prayers (Mark 11:22-24; James 1:5-8)?

3. Why were the apostles doubtful when Jesus appeared to them on the evening of His resurrection? What did He do to remove their doubts (Luke 24:36-43).

4. Why did Peter doubt (Matthew 14:31)?

5. Why is it important not to engage in practices you consider doubtful (Romans 14:23)? How would engaging in those practices affect your faith?

6. How might the following root problems undermine faith, and what might be done to address these problems (paraphrased from *In Two Minds* by Os Guinnes)

* A failure to recognize the depth of sin and a failure to be continually grateful for forgiveness
* A faulty view of what God is like
* An insufficient grasp of the evidence for Christianity
* Lack of commitment to Christ; a desire to keep one foot in the world and one in the church
* Seeing little growth in one’s life
* Unruly emotions overwhelming faith
* Scars from an old wound that make it difficult to trust
* Stifling certain emotions and denying that you feel them because they seem unworthy of a Christian
* Unjust suffering for which we can find no answer
* Waiting a long time for God to act
* Physical problems such as fatigue, overwork, or a long, debilitating illness

7. Why is foolish to blame a doubter for his doubts and simply to exhort him to believe.