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SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

BOTH+AND — ?

Warm-Up Question:

How would you respond if a neighbor were to ask you, “Are there any real reasons to believe Christianity is actually true? If so, what are 1-2 you’d give?” (1 Pet. 3:15)

READ:

Genesis 1:1; Matthew 16:1-4; John 20:24-29; 1 Peter 3:15

I. CHRISTIAN FAITH IS REASONABLE

- ▶ How can you identify with Thomas’ feeling, “Unless I see, I will never believe”?
- ▶ The sermon mentioned ways science is affirming Christian faith: 1) the start of the universe, 2) the fine-tuning for life to exist, 3) how order doesn’t come from chaos, 4) the historicity of Jesus’ life, death & resurrection, & 5) the disciples willingness to die for it. Which of these (or others) most strengthen your faith?
- ▶ Is there any particular part of God’s creation that leads you to “clearly see” an aspect of God’s attributes or divine nature (Rom. 1:20)?

II. CHRISTIAN FAITH IS MORE THAN REASON

- ▶ When you think of people seeing Jesus’ miracles (like Lazarus raised, feeding 5000, etc.) and still not believing, how is faith more than “seeing” & reasons?
- ▶ What is Jesus communicating by saying they can’t interpret the signs because of “an adulterous heart” (Matt. 16:4)? How can you suppress the truth by your “unrighteousness” (Rom. 1:18)?
- ▶ What were some of the unseen feelings/desires in Thomas’ heart in light of all the circumstances that led to his doubt?
- ▶ Jesus met every one of Thomas’ requests (vs 25 to vs 27) to see, but how did experiencing Jesus’ wounds for him, his peace, love and gentleness toward him probably change Thomas more than having proof he’s alive?

III. WHY IT MATTERS

- ▶ Picture Jesus coming to you in your greatest struggle of faith, doubt, insecurity or failure. There’s not disappointment or condemnation, but rather gentleness and love. How does that strengthen your faith?
- ▶ How should our faith make us want to arrange all our life around Jesus?

“We know the truth, not only by the reason, but also by the heart.” — Blaise Pascal

“Faith is trusting in what we have good reason to believe is true.” — William Craig Lane

“The doubt of Thomas has done more for our faith than the faith of the other disciples.” — St. Augustine

For Prayer:

- Praise God for giving us such reasons to believe
- Ask God to strengthen your faith and that of others around you who might be struggling in theirs
- Ask God to help you let your faith have access to control all parts of your life



SEVEN RIVERS
CHURCH

BOTH + AND — FAITH + REASON

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Scriptures Used

Gen. 1:1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

Matt. 16:1 And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test him they asked him to show them a sign from heaven. **2** He answered them, “When it is evening, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.’ **3** And in the morning, ‘It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. **4** An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.” So he left them and departed.

John 20:24 Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. **25** So the other disciples told him, “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 into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.”

John 20:26 Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” **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.” **28** Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” **29** Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

1Pet. 3:15 but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,

Rom. 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. **19** For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. **20** For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.