

St. Paul's Dorking Small Groups 11 April 2010

Dealing with Doubt

John 20 19- 32



Word: Key points from Sunday's sermon

Introduction :

Do you ever shout answers at the TV during quiz shows, berating contestants for their ignorance? Knowledge and hindsight makes doubting seem so irrelevant. But it is exactly that lack of knowledge that can make situations seem so uncertain, leaving us unsure how to act, what to think, what to believe. Right from Genesis 3 Eve (with more than a little help) doubts all she has been told and well, we all know the story. Yet she wasn't required to know and understand *all* the reasons why, simply to trust in what she did know. The disciples, huddled in that room, before and even after the resurrection still lacked an understanding of so many of the details that you and I take for granted. But doubt is not always a recipe for disaster. On the contrary, sometimes it can be a sign of growth taking place, a chance to put into practice what we have already learnt. Even Paul says "not that I have already achieved . . .but I press on . . ."

Is it normal?

A newly married couple come to you having just had a big argument. They fear their marriage is in jeopardy as they have never really disagreed about something before. What do you do? Are arguments acceptable in a marriage? Someone comes to you saying they are 'having a crisis of faith' and experiencing doubts that God even exists. What do you do? Is doubt an acceptable part of faith?

The key point is that a marriage that is riddled with dispute is not going to function properly. Arguing is not really a 'good' thing though it can produce good results, depending on how things are resolved. Doubt is crippling to faith. Yet it can produce good results depending how it is resolved.

People doubted:

Jesus' deity / Jesus' ability and power / Jesus' love and compassion / Jesus' existence.

Some people say "I find it easier to believe in God than Jesus."

Some say "I look in the sky and think. God's not there."

Some say "I've always know God is there. I just doubt he is interested in me."

Do you relate to any of these?

Explore the passage.

Read the passage together and discuss what are the dynamics of doubt and resolution going on here?

What things does Jesus say to them which can be seen as encouraging?

Was Thomas right to be so adamant?

Discussion.

Should we worry when we experience doubt?

Is it okay to share it with others?

Should we panic when others talk about having doubts?

Is doubt a sign of the enemy at work in our lives?

Overcomers

What as a group can you do to support each other?

How do we resolve doubts?

What tactics/ advice should we use to overcome doubts?

How can we use worship, prayer and bible study?

Checklist : (I'm thirsty - have I had a drink?)

How is your prayer life? Are you talking *to* God about your questions?

Are you worshipping?

When was the last time you opened your bible?

Are you connected to the body of believers?

Additional scriptures

Mark 11 v23 Matthew 14 v31 1 Timothy 2 v8