

Resurrection: How Easter Gives Us Hope (John 20:19 – 31)



Chris finished our Resurrection series by looking at Thomas' interaction with the risen Christ. Thomas refused to believe that Jesus was alive, despite all the other disciples saying they'd seen Him. He said he'd only believe if Jesus met his conditions – to be able to see and touch his wounds. We can sometimes do the same thing, making conditions for God, despite having lots of good reasons to believe.

Chris picked 7 reasons to believe that Jesus is Lord:

- Creation
- The echoes of eternity in our hearts
- Jesus' life – evidenced in the Bible and other historical sources
- Over 300 Old Testament prophecies fulfilled by Jesus
- Jesus' moral teaching
- Jesus' miracles – including rising from the dead
- Jesus' influence – on our culture, history

A week after Thomas' refusal to believe, Jesus appeared to the disciples again, including Thomas. His first words to them were 'Peace be with you'. Jesus gives us peace, because Easter gives us hope – Jesus has died to take away our sin and defeated the biggest enemy there is – death. Death isn't the end for us and we don't have to be afraid of it.

Out of his grace, Jesus met Thomas' conditions, letting him see and touch His wounds. He also said that those who believe in Him without seeing are blessed. We can receive the Holy Spirit and know the living Jesus ourselves now!

Questions

1. Do you ever put conditions on your belief in Jesus? – e.g. "I'll only keep believing if he does this thing..."
2. Read John 20:19-31.
 - a. Imagine being in Thomas' position - what feelings do you think he would have experienced when he saw Jesus?
 - b. What does the way Jesus treated Thomas show us about Jesus?
3. Read through the list of reasons Chris gave for believing in Jesus. Which of these do you find most helpful, or are there any others you think of which help you?
4. How is the hope of Easter relevant to us, and the rest of the world, in the middle of the coronavirus crisis?
5. How can we know Jesus' peace during this time?