

## **DOUBT OR NEW LIFE**



*I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 1:19-20 NLT)*

God's great love for men and women caused Him to send His son into the world to pay the price of sin. Jesus willingly gave His life to purchase the world's freedom from sin. Jesus said, ***"No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again. For this is what my Father has commanded."*** (John 10:18 NLT)

All of humankind's sin – from the beginning of time to the end of time – was laid on Jesus and not even the weight of that could hold him down. Jesus rose from the dead. Jesus' resurrection demonstrates that no darkness or evil, no pain or brokenness can overcome the power and love of God for those who live in Christ Jesus.

No matter how deep or frightening our broken lives seem to us, not even the weight of that can hold us down when we are in Christ. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is in us who completely surrender our will and our lives to God. Are we willing to push back doubt and unbelief and turn our will and our lives over to the care of God? The Bible says, ***God works for good in all things for those who love Him, those who are called according to His purpose*** (Romans 8:28 NIV)

Most of Jesus' friends abandoned him before He died. After his death they huddled together in a locked room wondering what to do next. They were sure that the troubles that awaited them outside the room were more than they could handle. They didn't know how to go forward because even though they had believed Jesus would give their lives meaning, now He was dead and they had no more hope -- or so they thought. While they sat in that room, surprisingly, Jesus appeared to them.

***On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace***

***be with you!” After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. (John 20:19-20)***

Initially the disciples found it hard to believe that Jesus was alive. Jesus gave them convincing proof that He was alive by eating a meal with them. He wasn't just a vision or a ghost or a delusion, but a person they could feel and touch. He was real. He was alive. He was with them. It's no wonder joy and peace filled their hearts.

However, one disciple wasn't with them that night. His name was Thomas. Thomas had seen Jesus suffer and die and was convinced that was the end of life as he knew it, so when the disciples came to tell him that Jesus was truly alive, Thomas doubted and said, ***“Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”*** (John 20:25 NIV)

Like Thomas, we may think we have reason to doubt God's presence with us and His ability to make something new of our broken and fearful lives. Our worlds have crashed as dramatically as Thomas' did when he saw a very dead Jesus laid in a tomb and a huge stone rolled in front of the entrance. We have felt disappointment. We've experienced bad things happen to us. We've known hopes dashed and opportunities wasted. But God is doing more than we know. The living Jesus came and showed Himself to Thomas and He will to us also.

***A week later Jesus' disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."*** (John 20:26-27 NIV)

Jesus did not judge Thomas for having doubts but He did invite Him to stop doubting and believe. Jesus asks the same of us. The question for us is, will we, like Thomas, realize something absolutely incredible takes place when we ask Jesus to show us the truth of who He is? When Jesus did show Thomas the marks of the nails in His hands and His wounded side, Thomas said to Jesus, ***"My Lord and my God."*** (John 20:28 NIV) Thomas' doubt disappeared. He was now convinced Jesus was alive!

Jesus then referred to each of us when He told Thomas, ***"Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."*** (John 20:29 NIV) Are we willing to put our feelings, our thinking, our memories, and all our failings -- all that we are -- into the nail-scarred but living hands of Jesus?

What seems impossible for us to believe is only impossible when God is not involved. When God shows up, things happen that are way beyond all that we could imagine. God's ways are better than we ever dared to hope. God's power is stronger than anything we have ever encountered. God's kindness extended to us is

more loving than any response we've ever experienced.

When Jesus comes into our lives He brings peace and joy. He brings power and solutions and hope for a new way of life. He fills us with His Holy Spirit. It's time for us to deal with our doubts and decide if we truly believe that Jesus is alive in us with power to do everything we need for new life and godliness.

Today, in recovery, are we prepared to enter into life with God? Are we willing to turn our will, and our life, including all our doubts and wonderings, over to God as we now understand Him?

#### Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. How does Jesus' resurrection affect my life in recovery?
2. What fears do I have about turning my will and my life over to God?
3. What doubts do I still have about God's power to change me?
4. As I consider Step Three and this resurrection story, what do I need to do today to move further from doubt towards trust in a living Jesus?

Heavenly Father, You know me and You know all my ways. I confess that I have isolated myself from the truth by listening to the lies going around in my head. I have allowed these lies to determine who I am and have behaved accordingly. By the mighty power of Your Holy Spirit within me, I ask you to strengthen me to demolish the

strongholds and arguments and every bit of posturing I put up which is contrary to the truth of Your word. Help me to take captive, every lie that presents itself in my mind and make it conform to the truth of Your word. Give me ears to hear what You and others have to say to me. I desire to be whole in every area of my being. In the precious name of Jesus, I ask You to bring me to reality.  
AMEN