



Rethinking Your Doubts

Luke 24:36-41

Weekly Life Group Guide

Easter 5 of 7

1) Start your group with the following questions:

Did you have anyone among your family and friends graduating this spring? Who? What are your hopes for them?

This week Mike Ott from our staff finishes his 12th year as OM's youth director. Jr. High / High School years are vital in faith formation. Were you active in a youth group? Was it important to your faith? What is your one hope for youth today?

2) Share joys and concerns, and use the prayer from last Sunday at Old Mission, followed by the Lord's Prayer.

O God, just as the disciples struggled with what to believe, faith does not always come easy for us either. And yet, we come again and again to this holy place, seeking your presence. At our baptisms, confirmation and graduation days, at our marriages, retirements and other transitions, we seek your blessing. And you always do. You bless us abundantly and always. And for that we give your praise, in Jesus name. Amen. (Lord's Prayer)

3) Read the text for this week (Luke 24:36-41) which is another experience of the disciples after the Resurrection with Jesus.

Then read just verse 36. (*"While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.'"*)

What meaning do these words have for you? How does he give peace?

Read verses 37-38. (*"They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, 'Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?'"*)

Which is more difficult in your faith - times of doubt or times of fear?

Read verses 39-40. (*"Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is me. Touch me and see - for a ghost does not have flesh and bones..." And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet."*)

Would tangible physical evidence (like the Shroud of Turin) give us stronger faith? What is the intangible evidence that gives us faith?

Read verse 41. (*"While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?'"*)

Can "joy" and "doubt" coexist as in the underlined words above?

4) Dr. Gardner says he has had a few doubts over 50 years of faith. Many of us have. Sometimes we wonder if there is room in honest faith for honest doubts. Poet / theologian, Fredrick Buechner answers the question this way:

"If you don't have any doubts, you are either kidding yourself or asleep. Doubts are the ants in the pants of faith. They keep it awake and moving."

What are doubts you have wrestled with from time to time?

In what way do doubts keep our faith on its toes or awake?

5) Read Dr. Gardner's words below about Luke 24:38 in our text and discuss the below questions.

"In our text Jesus asked his disciples, 'Why are you troubled? Why do doubts arise in your hearts?' As I read the text, he was not condemning them but inviting them to explore their doubts with him. I think he still invites us to do that today!"

How can we create an environment in the Church where people feel more welcome to honestly explore their questions and doubts?

Do people find it harder to believe in our modern culture? If so why?

6) Contrast the Luke text with John's Gospel where Jesus in John 20:37-39 says to Thomas:

"Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.' 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.'"

Who are those today who have "not seen and yet have come to believe?"

7) Review the remaining Easter Series Sermons

May 26 Luke 24:44-48 "Rethinking Your Theology"

June 2 Luke 24:50-53 "Rethinking Your Priorities"

8) Announce the recognition event for Dr. Gardner's retirement on Sunday, June 2 with services at 9am and 10:30 and a lunch at 11:30. Announce your next Life Group or Class meeting. Close your meeting in prayer for one another and Old Mission Church.