

SERMON
04-27-2025
John 20:19-31

Many challenges beset us in our lives. But too, there are many blessings and unforeseen joys that we receive. Each morning, we wake to a new walk with God.

I am often asked how we are to know that God is with us. How do we know that what we are hearing in our minds and hearts is the word of God? I think that coming to some understanding of this is found in the listening. Just as a parent becomes attuned to the cry of their baby, when we listen with our hearts, we become attuned to the voice of God in our lives.

I have sought the voice of God in moments of stillness. In moments when the world seemed at peace, and all was well. I have sought the voice of God in the roaring of a tumultuous world, when the seas of chaos broke their waves violently upon my emotional shores. I have longed to hear the voice of God when I've come to a fork in the road and had to choose the direction to which I would venture forth. I know that this is true for many of you too.

There were times when I knew that God was speaking to me. Perhaps I was correct in my assessment. Perhaps not. I think back on one occasion and truly believe if God had arms, he would have been waving at me saying, "No don't do it." I chose to make a mistake, but God stayed with me and saw me through the ordeal. It all worked out in the end.

And in all honesty, I think in the end it is better to attempt to hear God and to follow that voice, for better or worse, than to live in continual unresolved doubt. Mistakes might be made. Corrections to our chosen path might need to be taken. Still, to choose a life in the footsteps of God, to strive to live by a higher calling, is a life more profoundly lived.

As our Gospel passage shows us, doubt is not the enemy. Thomas doubted the incredible story of Jesus' death and resurrection. Call me sympathetic, but I hardly think he could completely be criticized for that. God does put some very miraculous things in front of us. Some of us might be a little slow to catch on. Some of us might want a second opinion or to see a bit of confirming proof.

Doubt offers us the chance to catch our breath and let things settle a bit. It allows us to discern what it is that God has in store for us. Could this be what God is asking of us we might ask. Is this where God is taking me?

Thomas upon seeing the wounds of crucifixion believes. "My Lord and my God!" he says.

Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

This Story of Thomas as a skeptic, illustrates how our faith is deepened by an examination of who this man Jesus claimed to be, how and why he died, --and what his rising means to us and the world in which we live and love.

Thomas with his doubts and a desire for more knowledge was not cast out by his fellow disciples. He was not pushed away by Jesus. No, in fact, he was drawn closer.

What Jesus is conveying to him through his words is, It's okay to ask Thomas. But my beloved one, the next time you see something miraculous, or hear the voice of God spoken to you, my hope is that you will hear it more clearly and accept it with more certainty. Because I, Jesus, the risen Son of God, have shown you today that I am who I am, and I am with you.

We are created in the image of God. We have been given eyes to see and ears to hear the message of Jesus Christ. The words that are spoken to us are those of love and forgiveness. Know that you walk with an anciently wise God, a God that is the creator of all things, who is the source of all life and thriving, Who is the source of our walk into eternal life.

Listen with the mindset of wonder, and with an open and trusting heart. Doubt when you need to discern but know that a patient and steadfast God is waiting for your return.

Amen

