

Grace for Doubters

read

John 20:24-29

think

“Peace be with you” is not the most profound, oft quoted saying of Jesus. However, in the context it illustrates so much about the gospel. In the previous story, Jesus has revealed himself to the disciples after his resurrection. Thomas, though, is not in the room. When the disciples relay the news to Thomas that they have seen Christ, he is not buying what they’re selling: “Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe” (20:25).

Historically, the church has beaten up Thomas for his doubts. Not Jesus. As Jesus enters the room, he first says, “Peace be with you.” There is no shame. There is no, “Thomas, you’re a failure!” or “Thomas, how could you!” Jesus offers him the peace of Christ, then meets Thomas’ need. He allows Thomas to touch his wounds that his faith may be restored.

First, notice how Jesus responds to Thomas’ doubts. Christ moves toward the doubter. He offers him peace and grace. Did Thomas deserve this response? Let us recall that Jesus told his disciples several times that he would rise from the dead. Thomas failed in many ways. Christ still cared for him in his failure.

This shows us the dynamic of the gospel. In our sin, we fail often. Christ continues to move toward us and continues to offer grace.

apply

- How does the world and church generally characterize Thomas? Positively or negatively? Is this fair? Is this how Jesus characterizes him?
- What is doubt that you have experienced in your life? Do you feel comfortable with or ashamed with doubt?
- What is the gospel? What does the gospel tell us about God’s response to the failures of those in Christ?

pray

Almighty God, we thank you that you have forgiven our sins through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We thank you that we can come to you as we are, with our doubts and failures. We pray that your Holy Spirit would enable us to come to you with our doubts and failures, trusting in your immeasurable grace and mercy.

by Cameron Cole

Cameron Cole is the director of children, youth, and family at the Cathedral Church of the Advent in Birmingham, AL and the founding chairman of [Routed](#), which promotes gospel-centered youth ministry for churches and families. He is the author of *Therefore, I Have Hope: 12 Truths That Comfort, Sustain, and Redeem in Tragedy*.