Encounters with Jesus.

STUDY Thomas

Key verse: John 20:29.
Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Big Idea: Life transforming faith in Jesus is possible without people needing a first hand physical encounter with Jesus.

Kick Off

Discuss if you believe the following and why you hold that position.

a. The 1969 moon landing and Neil Armstrong's historic words, 'One small step...'

b. The existence of your great grandfather.

c. One day they will find the cure for snoring.

Thomas goes down in history as 'doubting Thomas', because of his demand for tangible evidence in order to believe in Jesus. Thomas doubts the resurrection of Jesus and the statements of his friends. He gets rebuked for both and John, in including this story, highlights how important it is for people to trust the eyewitness accounts.

STUDY

Read John 11:7-16

1. What does Jesus state he will do here v11?

   How does Thomas react v 16?

   What can we learn about Thomas' character from this event?

Read John 1-5 and 15-20

2. This is part of the misnamed 'farewell discourse'. Where exactly do you think Jesus is going to have to go in order to prepare a place for believers in his Father's house vv1-4?

3. Is Jesus really going to leave his disciples or not vv15-20?

4. How does Thomas misunderstand Jesus in v5?

Read John 20: 24-31

5. Who does Thomas doubt in verse 25?

6. Do you think Thomas' demand is more a demand for a personal experience rather than a demand for more concrete evidence?

7. Jesus chooses to meet Thomas' demand but what is the force of Jesus' words to him, 'stop doubting and believe'.

THINK AND APPLY

Think about the way we behave as Christians at ARPC. What concrete evidences are there in our collective testimony that would convince unbelievers that Jesus really is alive?

Why is preaching and reading and studying the Word of God more reliable than signs and wonders and religious experiences?

PRAYER

What can you pray about arising from this study?

For next week
Read Luke
20:1-19