Introduction

* I was a doubter, to be sure.
* I wasn’t raised in churches and so I saw a lot of Christian beliefs as untrue
* The people who were teasing me went to church so I figured it wasn’t doing them a lot of good
  + So my position became encrusted in doubt.
  + I even had a story, romantic though it was about why I wasn’t into church
    - Because they made you paint inside the lines and I wanted to paint outside the lines.
      * But the fact of the matter is that I didn’t want to get hurt, didn’t want to overcome my disbelief.
* I was a tough cookie
  + Took life getting really rough to get me through the doors but, I’d say, for the most part, it’s worked.
* Doubt is natural and it flows from one place…disappointment
  + So If you’ve ever been disappointed in your faith, you likely have some significant doubts about Jesus
    - I’d like for you to resolve those now so that, LIKE THOMAS you might make the same declaration, “MY LORD and my GOD!”

Jesus meets us in our Doubts

* IS there a better story than Thomas
* Called the Twin, he personally doubts Jesus resurrection, declaration that unless he sees his feet and his sides, that he will remain doubting.
  + Thomas has long been labeled "Doubting Thomas," almost as if he stands apart from the rest of the disciples. But if you read carefully, you'll notice that **every** disciple struggled with belief after the resurrection.
    - **Mary Magdalene** thought Jesus was the gardener at first (John 20:15).
    - The other disciples **locked themselves away in fear** (John 20:19).
    - **Peter and John** raced to the empty tomb but still didn't fully understand (John 20:9).
      * In many ways, **Thomas is just the most honest** about his doubt. He says aloud what everyone else had been feeling: "*Unless I see... I will not believe*" (v.25).
* **Doubt, at its core, is not necessarily rebellion against God — it is often the painful experience of wanting to believe, but being afraid to be wrong.**
  + Thomas loved Jesus.
  + Thomas had seen Him crucified with his own eyes.
  + And when your hopes have been smashed once, it’s not easy to hope againe
    - Remember, that there were seven other people in Thomas’ lifetime that would’ve claimed to be Messiah.
      * They weren’t and they were executed crucified, along with their follower
* **Maybe you know what that's like.**
  + You prayed for healing, but it didn’t come.
  + You trusted someone, and they betrayed you.
    - You stepped out in faith, and life still fell apart
      * And now, like Thomas, **you want to believe** — but part of you says, "*Not again. I can’t bear to be disappointed again.*"
  + **The amazing grace of this passage is this:**
    - Jesus does not condemn Thomas for his doubt.  
      Jesus doesn't shame him.
    - Jesus doesn't remove him from the circle of disciples.
* Instead, **Jesus comes back specifically for Thomas**.
  + A whole week passes between verses 25 and 26
* Think about that:
  + **An entire week** where Thomas sat with his questions.
  + **A whole week** where he wrestled between what the others said and what he himself could not yet embrace.
  + Jesus could have said, "*If Thomas can't believe with the rest of them, he doesn't belong.*"
  + But He doesn’t. Instead, Jesus **patiently waits for the right moment** and **meets Thomas where he is**.
  + When Jesus appears again, the doors are still locked. Fear hasn't vanished overnight for the other disciples either
* Yet **Christ enters right through the barriers**, both the physical doors and the emotional ones, and He speaks first: "**Peace be with you.**"
  + He doesn’t barge in with condemnation.  
    He steps into the room with **grace and peace**, announcing that reconciliation is still possible.
* **Key theological insight:**  
  Augustine once said that *"faith begins with understanding, but grows through the wounds of love."* Jesus' wounded body stands before Thomas as **proof that love can endure suffering and still win**.
* **My great fear**
  + Is that there are people here today, trapped in their doubts.
  + I want you to feel Jesus coming into your life, dispelling your doubts into heady fog of faith.

Transition Passage

* Thomas' story reminds us that **doubt does not disqualify us from meeting Jesus**. In fact, sometimes doubt becomes the doorway through which Jesus walks in with peace. But the beautiful thing about the grace of Christ is that He loves us too much to leave us in a state of uncertainty forever. Jesus meets Thomas in his locked room of fear — but He doesn’t intend for him to stay there. Christ’s goal is not merely to comfort doubters; it’s to **call them forward** into deeper trust.
* Now, standing face-to-face with Thomas, Jesus does something remarkable:
  + **He invites Thomas to move beyond his questions into personal faith**.  
    **This leads us to our second point: Jesus calls us to trust Him personally.**

Jesus Calls us to Trust Him Personally

* After speaking peace over all the disciples, Jesus turns His full attention to Thomas.
  + He doesn’t make Thomas come forward awkwardly.
  + He doesn’t make an example out of him in front of the others.
  + Instead, He lovingly, directly **invites Thomas into a deeper encounter**:
* **“Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”** (v.27)
  + What’s remarkable is that Jesus **repeats back Thomas’ very own demands** —
    - "*Unless I see...*"
    - "*Unless I touch...*"  
      Jesus knew every word Thomas had spoken — even though, as far as the story tells us, Jesus wasn’t physically present when Thomas said it!
* **This reveals something powerful about the nature of Jesus:**
  + He hears the cries of the human heart, even when they’re spoken in secret.
  + He knows our inner wrestling, even when no one else understands.
  + is fully aware of our honest struggles, and He responds with **grace, not anger**.
* Jesus does not offer Thomas **new evidence** — He offers **Himself**.
  + It’s not more arguments that Thomas needs.  
    It’s not more facts.  
    It’s the **wounded, living Christ** standing before him that invites Thomas' trust.
* **Notice the order:**  
  Jesus first invites Thomas to see and touch — but the real command follows: "**Stop doubting and believe.**"
* In the original Greek, it’s even more vivid:
* μὴ γίνου ἄπιστος ἀλλὰ πιστός — *"Do not become unbelieving, but believing."*
* Jesus is saying: "*Thomas, don't let your doubt define you. Don't live in the identity of unbelief. Become the man of faith I called you to be.*"
* Doubt does not have to be your final chapter.
  + **Faith is not just about having correct information; it's about personal surrender.**
* **Illustration/Example:**
  + It’s one thing to believe that parachutes work.  
    It’s another thing to actually **put one on and jump out of the plane**.  
    Faith isn't passive agreement. It's **personal commitment**.
* Thomas’ issue was never a lack of knowledge — it was a **reluctance to risk his heart again**.
  + Tightwalker story
    - Are you ready to walk to rope?
* And so Jesus invites him: **Trust Me. Even through your scars, even through your pain, even though your understanding is incomplete — trust Me.**
  + **Will you trust Me? Will you stop living with doubt as your final identity? Will you move from struggling to surrender?**
* Some of you have been standing in the room with Jesus for a long time — it’s time to reach out your hand, touch the wounds, and **say yes to trust**.
* **Transition Sentence to Point 3:**  
  *When Jesus invited Thomas to touch His wounds, He wasn't just offering proof — He was offering****Himself****.* 
  + *Faith isn’t built on cold evidence; it’s built on the warmth of a living relationship.*
  + *Thomas is confronted with a choice:* 
    - *Will he stay stuck in cautious analysis, or will he take the step of trust and surrender?*
    - *And when Thomas steps across that bridge of trust, something beautiful happens:****doubt gives way to devotion****.*
    - *That brings us to our final point:****True faith leads to personal devotion.***
* *"And when Thomas touches not only the wounds but the very heart of Christ, something amazing happens — a confession that echoes across eternity."*

TRUE Faith Leads to Personal Devotion

* Thomas doesn’t need to actually reach out and touch after all.  
  The invitation alone, the presence of Jesus before him, is enough.
* And Thomas answers with a confession so profound that it becomes the high point of the entire Gospel of John:
* "**My Lord and my God!**" (v.28)
* **Notice what Thomas says:**
* He doesn’t simply say, "*You were right after all!*"
* He doesn’t say, "*You really did rise!*"
* He doesn’t say, "*Now I have all the facts I need!*"
* Instead, Thomas speaks **personally** — **"My** Lord, **My** God."
* **This is personal faith. This is devotion.**  
  It’s not a mere acknowledgment that something happened; it’s **surrender to Someone alive**.
* **Key Theological Insight:**
* In John 1:1, the Gospel opens: "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*"
* Now here at the end, **Thomas declares it personally**: "*My God.*"
* **The narrative arc of John comes full circle.**
* Jesus isn’t just a wise teacher.
* Jesus isn’t just a resurrected figure.
* **He is Lord. He is God.**
* **Personal Devotion vs. Detached Belief:**
  + True faith does not remain clinical or detached.
  + True faith bows the knee and worships.
  + True faith confesses **Jesus not just as Lord in general, but as *my* Lord personally**.
* **Illustration** You can know all about a person — their biography, their favorite foods, their history — and still not love them.
  + But when you fall in love, facts move aside. Relationship takes center stage.
* **Facts inform.**
  + **Love transforms.** Thomas’ devotion isn't just informed — it's transformed.
* **Preaching Application**
  + Has your faith moved from facts to devotion?
  + Is Jesus merely a figure of history to you — or your living, breathing Lord and God?
* **Confession is the natural overflow of true encounter.**
* Jesus is not looking for spectators today. He’s looking for worshipers.
* And Jesus doesn’t stop with Thomas.  
  He lifts his eyes to the future — to you and me — and He pronounces a blessing over all who would believe without physically seeing:
* "**Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.**" (v.29)
* **That's us.**
* We have not touched His wounded hands.
* We have not seen His pierced side.
* Yet by the testimony of Scripture and the power of the Spirit, **we believe**.  
  And Jesus calls us **blessed**.