

Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?

Luke 24:36-53

Pastor Jason Van Bommel, Forest Hill Presbyterian

"Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you!" But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." - Luke 24:36-39, ESV

After numerous eye-witness reports of the resurrection from both women and men, the disciples of Jesus still doubted. They still questioned in their hearts. Even when He Himself came and stood among them. they were "frightened and thought they saw a spirit."

Why are we so quick to doubt and so slow to believe?

Jesus gave His disciples a gentle rebuke, in the form of a question: "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?" And then, in gentle compassion, He offered them further proof that He was not a ghost or a spirit: "Touch me, and see. . . Have you anything here to eat?"

*"a bruised reed he will not break,
and a faintly burning wick he will not quench" - Isaiah 42:3, ESV*

Not only did the Lord offer them physical proof to satisfy their doubting hearts, but He also explained the Scriptures to them to satisfy their questioning and confused minds. *"Then he said to them, 'These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.' Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures."* (vv. 44-45)

When we doubt, we need to turn two places with our questions: To the Lord in prayer and to His word in study. He is gentle and compassionate. He is wise and patient. He will comfort our hearts, if we earnestly seek Him. He will enlighten our minds by His Holy Spirit to solidify our understanding of the truth.

Peter, who was one of those doubting and questioning disciples on that first Easter, later wrote this to help reassure us:

For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts - 2 Peter 1:16-19, ESV