

CONDENSED SERMON NOTES

AUTHENTIC FAITH

Main points

1. Overview of Peter's amazing catch of fish and his calling/vision as a fisher of people in **Luke 5:1-11**.
 - As we begin to grapple with not just our faith to follow but now our faith to activate the vision God has placed in our hearts. As we do so we unearth our giants of fear and doubt. Our enemy will place guilt for our genuine struggles to believe...
 - Disregard his lies and walk in your authority as the follower and son/daughter of the Most High!
2. Jesus accepted the struggles to believe from Thomas and Nathaniel.
3. "Doubting Thomas" became a world changer!

Setting the scene: John 20:19-23 talks about the disciples huddled together for fear with the door locked and Jesus appears in their midst... they were afraid but obviously Thomas was not! (And BTW, Jesus met the disciples IN their fear!)

POINT 1. **God desires authentic faith, not borrowed faith.**

- **Thought** | Thomas refused to rest on the word of the other disciples... he wanted a personal revelation. Thomas wasn't rebellious, he was honest.
- **John 20:24-25** *Now Thomas (also known as Didymus, the twin), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the LORD!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."*
- Authentic faith says: "I need to know Him for myself." Thomas wanted his own encounter, not someone else's testimony. God is not impressed by borrowed faith, He responds to personal pursuit.

Describe the questioning of Zechariah (I need proof) versus Mary's genuine question about the Angel's statement, being an unmarried virgin.

POINT 2. **God isn't scared of (or mad at) our *honest* questions...**

- He meets us right where we are. Let's look at the story of "Doubting Thomas" ...
- **John 20:26-28** *A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said,*

"Peace be with you!" 27 *Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."* 28 Thomas said to him, "My LORD and my God!" (OT equivalent of Adonai [Master] Jehovah and Elohim)

- **Struggling to believe is not always a sign of rebellion or a missed calling. Where the struggle is accepted it is often the place where calling is forged.**

The example of Nathanael

- **John 1:43-51** *The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "Follow me."* 44 Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida (Northeastern side of the sea of Galilee). 45 Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." 46 "**Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?**" (An honest question?) Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip. 47 When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit." 48 "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you." 49 Then Nathanael declared, "**Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel.**" 50 Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that." 51 He then added, "Very truly I tell you, you will see 'heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.'" (fulfillment of Genesis 28:12, "Jacob's ladder.")
- **Thought** | Nathaniel had no guile, meaning **no deceit, pretense, hidden agendas, or playing a part.** Jesus was saying, "This man is exactly who he appears to be." Authenticity always precedes revelation.

POINT 3. **The "doubter" becomes a world changer!**

- Beginning with children's Sunday school, Thomas has often been called "**Doubting Thomas!**" Thomas said he needed to see Jesus for himself... for verification, not just taking something like the supernatural Resurrection at face value.
- Jesus didn't shame Thomas but met him with grace and invited him to believe. Thomas then made one of the strongest statements in the gospels: "My LORD (OT Jehovah) and my God (Elohim)!" (John 20:28).
- **Key** | **After that, Church tradition says that Thomas carried the gospel far to the east... through places like Iraq, Persia, and all the way to India!! Many believers in India trace their roots back to his ministry. Tradition also says Thomas was martyred there.**

Altar call where they are standing...