
What Jesus Wants For Your Life

John 20:19-31

¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

²¹ Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

²⁴ Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵ 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."

²⁶ 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!"

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

³⁰ Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

JESUS WANTS YOU TO BELIEVE IN HIM.

What does Jesus want for your life?

This is a big day. It feels like a big step into the next phase of your grown-up life, so things like confirmation make people think about what they want for their future lives. Some things come to mind. Success, you want to do well in school and get a good job that you love. You want to be a good person, a helpful neighbor, generous, stay out of jail. I'm a pastor, and there are lots of church people here, so we want you to be active at church. I know we've got some great ushers, some musicians, and I told our church council last week that this class has more than its fair share of future Christian teachers and I think there's a few preachers in this room, too.

But what does Jesus want for your life? More than an easy life, more than good behavior, more than church membership, Jesus wants you to trust him, like you already do. He wants you to believe in him. That's what you're confessing today. You are going to get up here and tell everyone that you believe what God says. And we are so excited about that. That's why you're dressed up. That's why we've got a crowd here. That's why we're celebrating because you believe in Jesus!

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE IN JESUS.

But it is so hard to believe in Jesus for your whole life. It's hard because not every day is confirmation day. It's not every day you've got a crowd of people cheering for you and a pastor asking you questions. And so, I say this every year, statistically speaking more than half of confirmation students who get up here and tell us that they trust in Jesus, half of them don't believe in Jesus for the rest of their lives.

Confirmands you already know this. Moms and dads, you know it even better, some days are hard to trust Jesus. In fact, some days out in the world, Jesus doesn't seem to make much difference at all. The world is sad and scary and hard with Jesus or without him. And so, when you see one nation invade another one, or a virus makes life really complicated, sometimes your heart—I you're your emotions—doubt Jesus. When that happens to you, you're not alone.

EMOTIONAL DOUBTS ABOUT JESUS

That's how Jesus' disciples felt right after Easter. Easter, Jesus rises from the dead. The angel says, "He is not here, he has risen, just as he said!" Jesus meets the women, "Tell my disciples to meet me up North, in Galilee!" And what did the disciples do? They locked themselves in a room. They were scared! They were afraid that bad people would get them like the bad people got Jesus.

So, Jesus is sitting up in Galilee impatiently saying, "I thought I told those guys to"—no! He went to their house. He knew their hearts were afraid, and so the first word out his mouth is "Peace. Look at my hands. This is how much I love you. Now rest."

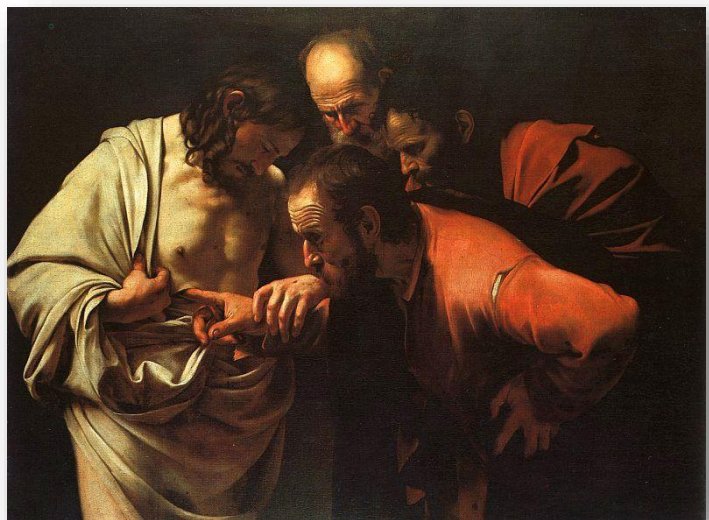
INTELLECTUAL DOUBTS ABOUT JESUS

Of course, some people doubt Jesus not because of their emotions, but because of their brain. The Bible doesn't make sense to them. Science books and smart people on the internet seem to disprove God. And when that happens to you, you're not alone!

One of Jesus' disciples, Thomas, wasn't in the locked Easter room. And no matter how hard the disciples tried, they couldn't convince him that Jesus was alive. You know his nickname, right? Doubting Thomas. He even said, "Unless I stick my finger in the hole, I won't believe it."

WHAT DOES JESUS DO?

What does Jesus do? "Thomas, how dare you doubt me"—no! He went to Thomas. And before Thomas could get a word out of his mouth, Jesus said, "Peace." You mind must be racing. Just relax. Wasn't there something you wanted to do with your finger, Thomas? This is how much I love you, and this is how real I am!"



In life after confirmation, you're going to have scared disciple moments. You're going to have doubting Thomas moments. When that happens, here's what you do with your brain. Picture Jesus walking into that classroom, walking into that dorm room, wherever you are, and he shows you his hands. You can see right through the hole. "You think I don't love you? I love you enough to do this. And I'm alive. You may find it hard to believe some things in the Bible, but if I can come back from the dead, then you can trust me." That's what Jesus wants for your life. He wants you to trust him so that your mind and your soul can rest.

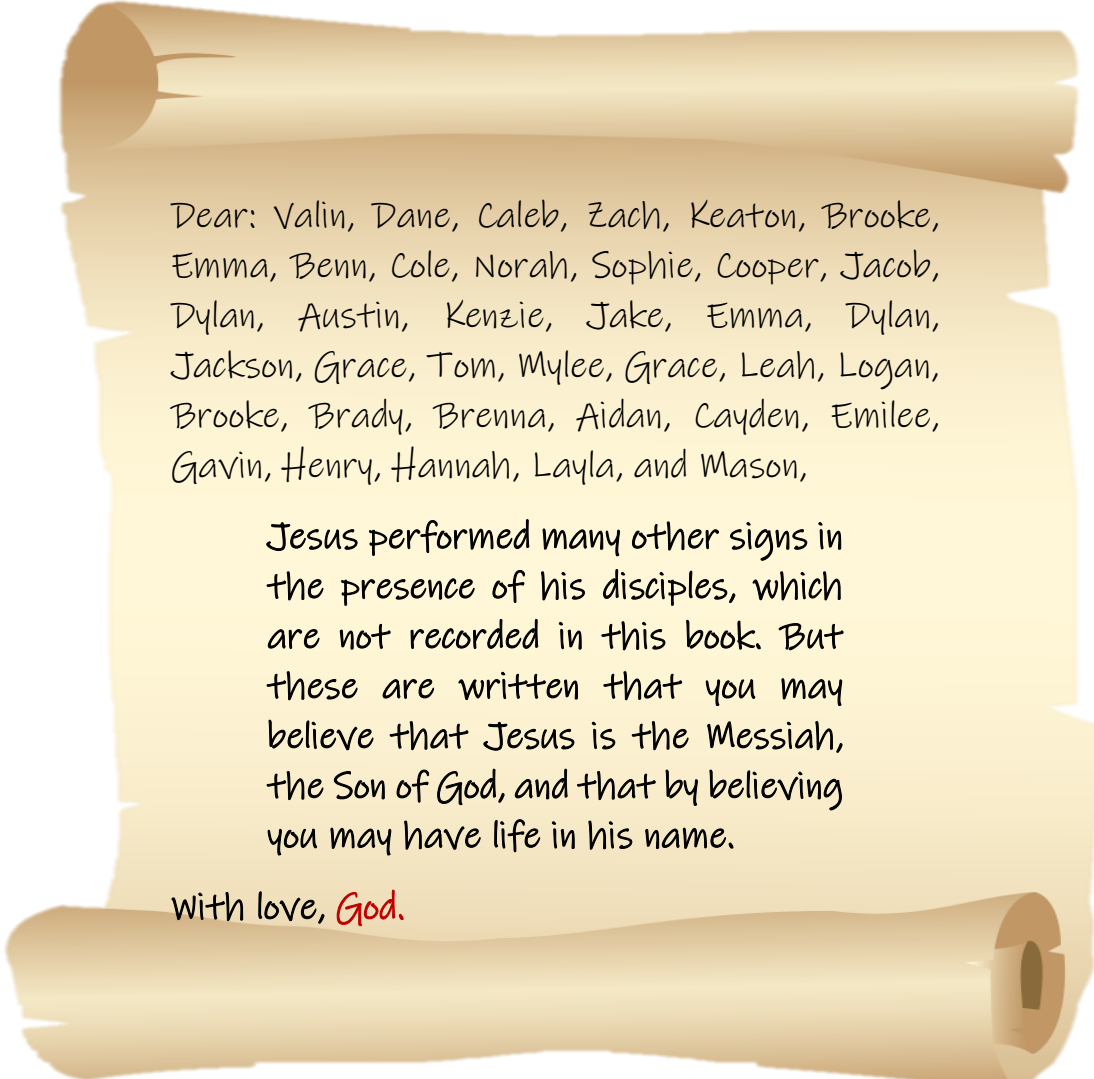
JESUS COMES TO US THROUGH HIS WORD.

But chances are, you won't see Jesus. He's really here, just invisibly. Jesus doesn't usually appear before your eyes like he did for Thomas. In fact, he said to Thomas, "You believe me because you've seen. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." To get you to believe in him, Jesus hasn't appeared before you, he provided you with eyewitness testimony.

That's what the Bible is. It's the eye-witness testimony of people who saw Jesus. They saw him do miracles. They saw him die. They saw him come back to life, and the Holy Spirit gave them the perfect words to write it down for you. I do mean you, specifically you.

GOD'S LETTER TO YOU

That's what this passage says. Certainly, God wrote the Bible for all people of all times, but his mind is so brilliant that as he's writing down the stories about Jesus, he was thinking of your face. Picture this verse like this: At the top of the page, it is addressed to you:

A scroll with a light beige background and a darker beige border. The scroll is unrolled in the middle, showing text. The text is written in a simple, black, sans-serif font. The scroll has a slight shadow and a textured appearance.

Dear: Valin, Dane, Caleb, Zach, Keaton, Brooke, Emma, Benn, Cole, Norah, Sophie, Cooper, Jacob, Dylan, Austin, Kenzie, Jake, Emma, Dylan, Jackson, Grace, Tom, Mylee, Grace, Leah, Logan, Brooke, Brady, Brenna, Aidan, Cayden, Emilee, Gavin, Henry, Hannah, Layla, and Mason,

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

With love, *God*.

Signed in blood because that's how he proved that he loves you.

What does Jesus want for your life? He wants you to live life in his name. That's what those scared disciples did. They went out and they had good days, and bad days—not like “lots of homework” bad days; “thrown in jail and got their heads chopped off” bad days. You know how they dealt with that? They went back to the words written about Jesus. Doubting Thomas ended up being a missionary in the country of India. He had faith. He had doubts. What got him through it were these words written about Jesus. And in the end, when they had received all the life that Jesus had to give them on this earth, they continued their life in his name in heaven.

That's God's plan for you too, for all of you. And these truths that our students know so well, these are written that you may believe and by believing you may have life in his name. Amen.