

In **2 Timothy 3**, the apostle Paul warns young Timothy that the end times will be especially dangerous because of the moral degeneration of mankind

“For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good,”

(2 Timothy 3:2–3, NKJV)

- And of course, this is the world in which we are now living

In the world, we now live it can be easy to feel defeated and overwhelmed yet the Bible shows us that through Jesus we are More than Conquerors

“Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.”

Romans 8:37 NKJV

In this series, we will see how we can be over-comers and live in victory in every area of life!

The Apostle John says we have the capacity to overcome the world and everything that is the enemy of Christ

“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” **(1 John 5:4–5, NKJV)**

We have looked at overcoming Rejection, Fear, Comparison, Shame, Unforgiveness, and discouragement

Now let's look at overcoming Doubt

“Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, “Peace be with you.” When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, “We have seen the Lord.” So he said to them, “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.” And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, “Peace to you!” Then He said to Thomas, “Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.”

And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” (John 20:19–29, NKJV)

- Thomas is one of the most unfortunate disciples
- Every time we hear his name we think of doubt

Even though Jesus spoke about His resurrection many times before his death, and even though the disciples tried to convince him, Thomas refused to believe without hard proof

The good news is that Thomas overcame his doubts and went on to preach the Gospel in India

- There are many believers there, as well as a shrine to this disciple
- He was ultimately martyred by spears for his faith there
- He became a great man of faith who changed nations through his ministry

Thomas is well-known for his doubt yet he was not the only disciple who doubted the resurrection

“Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, “Peace to you.” But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. And He said to them, “Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts?”

Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.” When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.” (Luke 24:36–40, NKJV)

- They were all terrified and frightened
- Even though the Gospel of John only mentions Thomas they all had to touch him the same way

Jesus appeared to His disciples on several occasions after His resurrection

After those appearances...

“Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted.”

(Matthew 28:16–17, NKJV)

I’m sure most of us believe that if we had been there that we would never doubt again

- But that is simply not true
- The disciples were there
- They saw Him and touched Him
- We all have doubts at some point in life
- It is part of the human condition

The word doubt means “*to hesitate*” or “*to have a lack of conviction about something*”

- The literal meaning in Greek means “*two ways*”
- This is a picture of a person standing at a crossroads and hesitating about which way to go

Faith means that there is God's way and because I believe in God's way there is only one way I am going to follow

- I just see one thing
- I have completely resolved my doubts and now I look solely at God's way

Doubt means that...

- God says something but people say something else
- God says something but circumstances say something else
- God says something but my past says something else

The word of God says something but there are skeptics, unbelievers, atheists, and others who refuse to believe

- Doubt means I am standing between two ways, having double vision
- I hesitate because I lack conviction
- I can not make up my mind between these two directions

We, like the disciples, worship the Lord but still hesitate in our full acceptance of what He says that we can do in His name

Many of the Bible's famous characters who had very powerful encounters with God also doubted

- Abraham is known as the father of the faith yet he and Sarah doubted God's promise to them
- Instead, they tried to control the situation themselves
- In fact, they laughed when the Lord spoke His promise to them
- They had a hard time believing that they would have their own child – **Genesis 12:17; 18:12**

However, God was true to His word

“And the LORD visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken. For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him—whom Sarah bore to him—Isaac. Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. And Sarah said, “God has made me laugh, and all who hear will laugh with me.” She also said, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? For I have borne him a son in his old age.” (**Genesis 21:1–7, NKJV**)

- They named their son Isaac, which means “*laughter*”

King David doubted God's actions when Uzzah was struck dead for touching the ark of the covenant as it was being transported to Jerusalem

“ And David became angry because of the LORD's outbreak against Uzzah; and he called the name of the place Perez Uzzah to this day. David was afraid of the LORD that day; and he said, “How can the ark of the LORD come to me?” So David would not move the ark of the LORD with him into the City of David; but David took it aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. The ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite three months. And the LORD blessed Obed-Edom and all his household.”

(2 Samuel 6:6–11, NKJV)

Once David witnessed the blessing on Obed-Edom's house, he had faith to bring the ark to Jerusalem and honored the Lord with joy and celebration

“Now it was told King David, saying, “The LORD has blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God.” So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with gladness. And so it was, when those bearing the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, that he sacrificed oxen and fatted sheep. Then David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was wearing a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet.” **(2 Samuel 6:12–15, NKJV)**

Moses doubted the Lord when He wanted to use him to deliver His people from the hand of Pharaoh in Egypt

- Moses doubted God and especially doubted himself
– Exodus 3:1-4:17
- Moses did lead the Israelites out of Egypt, though, and God performed many signs and wonders

Even after they were freed, the people began to doubt God and Moses

- They witnessed the parting of the Red Sea yet doubted
- They saw the miraculous provision of food and water yet doubted
- They constantly doubted God's intentions and His ability to protect and care for them
- Because of doubt, they limited God

“Yes, again and again they tempted God, And limited the Holy One of Israel.” (Psalm 78:41, NKJV)

They even failed to enter the Promised Land because they didn't believe God could deliver them from the giants

– Numbers 13:31-14:10

“There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.” (Numbers 13:33, NKJV)

The disciples were on the Sea of Galilee one night when the sea became very turbulent

- They saw Jesus walking on the water and thought He was a ghost
- They were terrified, but peter said...

“And Peter answered Him and said, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.”

(Matthew 14:28, NKJV)

Peter stepped out of the boat and began to walk on the water toward Jesus

- However, he looked around and saw the turbulent waters and wind
- Suddenly his single vision toward Jesus became “*double vision*” he began to sink

“And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?””

(Matthew 14:31, NKJV)

- Why did you have double vision, Peter?
- Why did you hesitate between these two directions when I told you exactly what to do?

All of these examples are people who had powerful encounters with the Lord before their doubts

- They all had to deal with doubt and so will you and I

Three Truths About Doubt

There is a difference between doubt and unbelief

“Doubt is can’t believe; unbelief is won’t believe. Doubt is honesty; unbelief is obstinacy. Doubt is looking for light; unbelief is content with darkness.”

– Henry Drummond – Professor, Lecturer, and Missionary

Doubts occur when our intellect cannot grasp what is necessary for us to do what God requires of us

- We struggle to understand because we want to obey – that is the source of doubt
- Doubt does not make a person an unbeliever
- When I doubt I am trying to believe
- I am trying to find a place of faith
- I am looking for light

Unbelief is when we refuse to engage our intellect in an honest effort to believe

- Unbelief is the refusal of faith
- It will not even try
- It is a decision to not even try

Doubt can sometimes be translated as “*unbelief*”

“Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!” (Mark 9:24, NKJV)

- Look at the context
- The father is not rejecting the truth he is just being honest about his intellectual doubt

Jesus was always gracious to doubters

Jesus never expressed hostility toward those who doubted Him

- He had many opportunities to do so
- He was not hostile toward Nicodemus who came late at night – **John 3:1-21**
- He had sincere questions

He was not hostile toward Mary and Martha who questioned why He didn't come in time to keep their brother from dying – **John 11:17-32**

Jesus was not hostile toward Peter or Thomas when they struggled with doubt

- When Peter began sinking Jesus rescued him

When Thomas needed to touch Jesus to believe

“Then He said to Thomas, “Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.” (John 20:27, NKJV)

Jesus didn't reject Peter or Thomas for having doubts

- In fact, once they resolved their doubts He used them greatly

You may have doubts today – that's OK

- God is not offended by your questions or struggles of faith
- He knows they exist
- He wants to be a part of the process of our doubts becoming faith

Doubt in and of itself is not sin

God will not punish or reject you for your doubt

- If you have doubts but are sincerely seeking Him you have a friend in Jesus
- He can handle your doubts
- He wants to help us resolve them

Some Doubts that are common to All of Us

- Why did God allow my loved one to die? (especially when the death is tragic or untimely)
- Why does God allow me to suffer?
- Why does God not answer my prayers?
- If God loves me as much as He loves others, why am I not as blessed as others?
- Why do I not hear God's voice?

All of those questions are valid, and we need to be honest with God about them

We must not allow our doubts about God to keep us from taking our questions to Him

- God knows you are hurting
- He knows you are suffering
- He knows certain life events look as if He is uninvolved in our lives or doesn't care

The truth is there is a bad devil but God is good – All the time

- Don't let the devil get you to blame God
- All he wants to do is damage your relationship with God

Trust God to Resolve your Doubts

“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Romans 10:17, NKJV)

- Turn your doubt toward God and trust His word
- Don't listen to skeptics and unbelievers

Jesus told His disciples again and again that He would suffer and be crucified

“saying, “The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.” (Luke 9:22, NKJV)

The problem with Thomas wasn't that he didn't believe the other disciples

- He didn't believe Jesus
- Jesus told him He would be resurrected on the third day
- When Thomas rejected the reports that Jesus was alive he was rejecting the word God gave him
- He wanted further proof

However, God's word is the only proof necessary for our faith to exist, and doubt a lie

When Peter came to Jesus walking on the water the word of Jesus was all he needed to walk on the water

- His *“double vision”* caused him to reject the Lord's word and he began to sink
- That's why Jesus asked, *“Why did you doubt?”*
– **Matthew 14:31**

If the words of people or circumstances have much more credibility to you than God's word, your doubts will never be answered

- *“Has God indeed said...?”* – **Genesis 3:1**
- The devil always wants to get us to doubt God's word

He comes to steal the seed of the word – **Mark 4:15**

- He wants to keep us confused, disoriented, and defeated
- He uses difficulty, suffering, and problems to question God and His word

What will resolve your doubts?

- Will it be the word of an expert, critic, or skeptic who opposes God?
- Will it be a change in your circumstances?
– **Mark 4:16-19**

We must remember that the Word of God is our sword of the Spirit and the source of success in life

God will not reject us because of our doubts, but He will not reward us until we take a step of faith and acknowledge His presence and His promises – **Hebrews 11:1, 6**

- Don't allow doubts, problems, loss, or the voices of skeptics and unbelievers to shake your faith
- It is time to make God's word the standard of truth in your life

“But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.” (**Mark 4:20, NKJV**)