



KICK OFF

Over the past few weeks we have looked at the problems people in our culture have with Christianity. What do they all have in common?



KEY VERSE

John 20:11 'But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb.'



BIG IDEA

The common door of doubt can be answered as we unmask our doubt, examine our faith and fuel our hope.



INVESTIGATE

UNMASK YOUR DOUBT

Read John 20: 1—8

1. Who comes to the tomb? What surprise do they find?
2. How do verses 3—8 help answer objections to the resurrection such as: the disciples stole the body, they went to the wrong tomb?
3. How do Mary and John respond to the empty tomb?

EXAMINE YOUR FAITH

Read

4. Richard Dawkins who wrote 'The God Delusion' said in an interview: '*I cannot know for certain but I think God is very improbable' and I live my life on the assumption that he is not there.*' Is there anyone who is not a person of faith?
5. What is 'faith?'



DIG DEEPER

Tim Keller writes 'Let's begin with believers. A faith without some doubts is like a human body without any antibodies in it. People who blithely go through life too busy or indifferent to ask hard questions about why they believe as they do will find themselves defenceless against either the experience of tragedy or the probing questions of a smart skeptic. A person's faith can collapse almost overnight if she has failed over the years to listen to her own doubts, which should only be discarded after long reflection.it is no longer sufficient to hold beliefs just because you inherited them....likewise....skeptics must learn to look for a type of faith hidden within their reasoning.some people say 'I don't believe in Christianity because I can't accept the existence of moral absolutes. Everyone should determine moral truth for him—or herself.' Is that a statement they can prove to someone who doesn't share it? No, it is a leap of faith, a deep belief that individual rights operate not only in the political sphere but also in the moral. There is no empirical proof for such a position. So the doubt (of moral absolutes) is a leap. The only way to doubt Christianity rightly and fairly is to discern the alternate belief under each of your doubts and then to ask yourself what reasons you have for believing it. .pto

FUEL YOUR HOPE

Read John 20: 9—16

6. Verse 9—what do we learn about believers from John’s response?



THINK THROUGH FURTHER

7. How do reading the Bible, prayer and being involved in a community of Christians help to deal with our doubts?

THINK &
APPLY

8. From verses 16—18 do you think Mary thought Jesus’ resurrection was too good to be true?

9. How is the resurrection an indication as to how the world will end? Is the resurrection of Jesus better than any ‘fairy tale ending’?



Praise God for the challenges raised Praying for others in your group: by God’s Word through this study?

PRAYER



Discuss the evidence for the resurrection.

FAMILY
DISCUSSION

Keller goes on...

I commend two processes to my readers. I urge skeptics to wrestle with the unexamined ‘blind faith’ on which scepticism is based, and to see how hard it is to justify those beliefs to those who do not share them. I also urge believers to wrestle with their personal and culture’s objections to the faith. At the end of each process, even if you remain the skeptic or believer you have been, you will hold your own position with both greater clarity and greater humility. They there will be understanding, sympathy, and respect for the other side that did not exist before. Believers and non-believers will rise to the level of disagreement rather than simply denouncing one another.That achieves civility in a pluralistic society, which is no small thing. (Keller from *The Reason for God* pages xvi-xix)

PRAISE GOD for the resurrection of Jesus in space and time.

CONFESS to God our lack of clarity on the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus.

ASK GOD we would hold our position with a greater clarity and greater humility, with understanding of those who disagree.

PRAY ALSO for the Christian church this Easter in its proclamation



For next week—see you on 21st April.

READ AHEAD