

Small Group Discussion Guide

“Alive” (pt. 3) – 5/4/2014

Scripture: John 20:24-31

Bottom Line: Jesus calls us to believe and find life in his name.

INTRODUCTION:

What is the difference between doubt and disbelief? Doubt is being unsure of something or questioning something whereas disbelief is coming to a certain definite conclusion. At first, Thomas disbelieved that Jesus rose from the dead. He did not doubt. Just as Jesus calls Thomas to believe, he also calls us to believe and find life in his name.

UNPACKING THE GOSPEL IN THE BIBLE:

Read John 20:24-29

What does verses 26-27 teach you about Jesus?

There are many things that members of your group could answer to this and be right. One point that Adam emphasized was that Jesus met Thomas right where he was in life. Thomas said he needed to see and touch Jesus in order to believe, and Jesus presented him with the opportunity. The point is Jesus pursues us! However, it is important to note that we may not always know what we need but God does. He knows exactly what we need in order to bring us to himself.

What is special about Thomas' response to Jesus in John 20:28?

This is one of the clearest examples of one of the disciples calling Jesus God in the Bible. Some read this and think that he was just saying a phrase like “OMG”, but a phrase like this most likely didn't exist in a culture where the word “God” was not used so loosely like it is in American culture. Thomas meant exactly what he said. For Thomas to call Jesus “God” after disbelieving is a powerful statement of who Jesus is.

Read John 20:30-31

How has following Jesus given you “life”? Is this just referring to eternal life or also everyday life? Explore the depth of God’s love by discussing how Jesus has shaped and given your life meaning.

UNDERSTANDING HOW THE GOSPEL APPLIES TO MY LIFE:

John 20:31 says the stories of Jesus were recorded so that you may believe and that by believing that you would have life in Jesus’ name. Often, people are kept from coming to faith in Jesus because they have heard arguments against the Christian faith. Some of these problems include: can I trust the Bible, what about pain and suffering, why would a good God send people to hell forever, etc...

It is important to know that with most intellectual problems that people present against Christianity, there is almost always a heart problem as well. Some are genuinely confused. They want to love God but feel like they can’t. Others are actually looking for a reason not to believe because their hearts are in rebellion even if they do not realize it.

- 1) *What are currently some things that keep you from believing in Jesus?*
- 2) *Was there ever anything in the past that kept you from believing?*
- 3) *Did you overcome those problems and if so, how?*

LIVING OUT THE GOSPEL IN MY EVERYDAY LIFE:

Well what about doubts....what do I do if I have persistent doubts about my faith?

- 1) *Seek God even in the midst of your doubt.*
- 2) *Find a friend who is a faithful Christian and share your struggles.*
- 3) *Commit to be involved in Christian community frequently.*