

Sermon Series: Jesus in the Mess

January 29 Sermon: Doubt

Scriptures for Reflection:

John 20:24-29

Matthew 28: 16-20

Mark 9:14-29

1. In what ways can doubt be *messy*?
2. How do you define healthy doubt? Are there things you have doubted in the past, and as it turned out, this was the right approach?
3. Has someone ever doubted you? How did you respond?
4. In John 20, Thomas was not with the disciples when the risen Jesus appeared to the rest of them. How does Jesus respond?
5. Many throughout history have referred to Thomas as “Doubting Thomas.” In terms of the entire story, do you think this a fair label?
6. In John 20, the resurrected Jesus has a body still bearing marks of his crucifixion. What do you think is most significant about this detail in the story?
7. In the final passages of Matthew’s gospel (Matt 28:16-20), after the risen Jesus has shown himself to many people, the text says that still “some doubted.” What can we learn from this detail?
8. Mark 9:14-29 is a healing story of Jesus. Yet in the middle of the story, a man tells Jesus “I believe; help my unbelief.” What encourages you in this passage? What challenges you?
9. How can followers of Jesus help others see Jesus?

January 22 Sermon: Discouragement

Scriptures for Reflection:

Psalm 42

Other: 2 Corinthians 4:7-10, 16-18, Romans 8:18-19

1. What does it feel like to be trapped in a season of discouragement?
2. What leads to being discouraged? How does a person make it through discouragement? What role does our Christian faith play?
3. Psalm 42 depicts the raw emotion associated with discouragement. What contributed to the discouragement the Psalmist felt?
4. How did he cope with it? How was God involved in helping him through it?
5. Who do you turn to when you are discouraged?
6. How does hope play a role in overcoming discouragement?
7. The Psalmist had a robust spiritual life grounded in prayer and worship. How can these spiritual disciplines contribute toward us processing and working through our raw emotions?
8. What can you contribute to someone who is discouraged? What can you offer to them?

January 15 Sermon: Finances

Scriptures for Reflection:

Matthew 6:1-4, 9-11, 19-21 and 24-34

Other: Deuteronomy 8:18; Ephesians 4:28; Romans 13:8

1. Our second topic in the series “Jesus in the Mess,” focuses on finances. Why are some individuals and families in distress just after the Christmas holidays?
2. Why is this subject so private and sensitive that we find it difficult to share the burden or seek the help of others? How important is it that we invite Jesus into this messy area of our lives?
3. Do you know friends who have been helped by financial advisors like Dave Ramsey(www.ramseysolutions.com)? What were some of the most helpful insights learned?
4. As you read chapter 6 of Matthew’s gospel, do you see several applications can be derived from these verses:
 - a. Your Money Matters to Jesus
 - b. Your Worries Matter to Jesus
 - c. Your Priorities Matter to Jesus
 - d. _____
 - e. _____
5. In each application, can you determine “the why” behind these affirmations? Why does money management matter? Why is worry non-productive? What role do priorities play?
6. What impact do the matters of debt, work, generosity, financial freedom, materialism, and growth in faith have upon finances?
7. How do we put money matters in their proper place? What suggestions do you have for those struggling with their finances?

January 8 Sermon: Weariness

Scriptures for Reflection:

Matthew 11:28-30

Mark 6:30-31 (and 32-46)

1. As we begin a new series called "*Jesus in the Mess*," our first topic is *weariness*. How do you define weariness? Are there different kinds of weariness that you can describe?
2. What makes you weary in life? Or, what has made you weary in the past?
3. The Christmas anthem "O Holy Night" speaks of a weary world rejoicing. The hymn "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear" says "O rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing." How does Christmas speak to weariness? Do people keep this message with them after the holidays have passed?
4. Matthew 11:28-30 is a beloved saying of Jesus. Read this passage. What immediate thoughts come to mind when you read this invitation of Jesus?
5. What do you think Jesus means when he says, "you will find rest for your souls"?
6. Mark 6:30-31 is the beginning of a story in which Jesus invites his disciples to go rest. What significance do you find in this invitation for the disciples? How does this instruct us today?
7. Soon after Jesus invites the disciples to rest, they find themselves in another busy situation. Take a look at the rest of Mark 6:30-46. Do you think the disciples received the rest that Jesus wanted for them? Why or why not?

8. Are there steps you can take to lighten the weight of weariness in your life?
9. How does the presence of Jesus with us change our experience of weariness?
10. What does it mean to take the “yoke” of Jesus and learn from him (Matthew 11:28-30)?