

John 20: 19-end

True/false/not sure

Nessie

Great wall of China from space

King Arthur real

You can Lick you elbow

(Cartoon)

Who would believe me if I said I have a six foot snake in this bag?

Why would you believe me? Why/why not?

Today we are thinking about doubt and about `doubting Thomas`.

Personally, I think it's a bit mean calling him `doubting Thomas`

If you were in his situation would you be any different?

What he's been told is just bonkers crazy stuff – delusions of a bunch of grief stricken people

`Unless I can see it, I ain't believing it`

Imagine his stock when suddenly Jesus is there and he's like `go on then, put your fingers into the hole in my hands...`

Let's be honest, all of us doubt sometimes – to doubt is to be human

There is a lot about faith that is just a bit mind bending and requires us to step out of our every day reality and see things in a different light

Is doubting wrong?

No, not per se, but I think it's what you do with those doubts.

The whole story of the Bible, the very essence of who God is is so much bigger than us. Trying to understand everything about faith would be like trying to wrestle a tiger into a shoebox.

You can't wrestle a tiger into a shoe box. a shoe box. You'd be stupid to try, you'll only end up causing yourself a lot of pain and if you did manage it, I'd be questioning whether the tiger you put into the box was a real tiger.

Of course you can't understand everything, but that doesn't mean you can't have faith.

Faith revolves around a complex mix of evidence and questions. We trust what we know to be true from our experience and of those around us and we treasure the questions to which we don't have an answer.

I gave up a long time ago trying to provide answers to every question of faith and I found that people outside of church respected that when they asked a question and I said, `I don't know`.

Going back to Thomas, I have every sympathy with him saying `unless I see, unless I touch` because he needed that proof.

But what I admire is that when he is presented with the proof, his reaction is right. He falls to his knees and says `my lord and my God.` He doesn't understand everything. He's probably got a world full of questions in his mind but he now has enough to know that Jesus is his Lord and God.

But also, Jesus doesn't tell him off. There's no ticking off for doubting. There's no reprimand for asking for proof. Because I think Jesus knows that it's a lot to take in. And Jesus is the same with us. There is a gentleness and an understanding. You will never know everything, you will never understand everything, you'll always have those questions and those doubts. But do you have enough to, like Thomas, proclaim `my lord and my God`

There's a lot that we all don't understand in this world. We have to choose to live where we are now and trust God from whatever evidence we have.

In the end, our faith is built on Jesus not on our ability to understand everything.

Let's pause and let's bring to mind maybe some of the doubts and questions that we have.

In the silence, hand those doubts and questions over to God. Remember that he isn't judging you for having them and that he loves you unconditionally.

In the silence, ask God to give you the faith you need for today. Ask him to speak his words of truth into your mind and words of peace where they are needed.

Father, there is so much we don't understand but we acknowledge that you are Lord and God, within you lies truth and salvation. Help us to be people of faith that, even though we may not be people who see Jesus, we can be people who believe.