



# “Why I Believe” John 20:24-30

*The Incredulity of  
Thomas by Caravaggio,  
1603*

One of the most interesting accounts of the Resurrection of Jesus is that of Thomas. We are told that on the evening of the Resurrection in John’s account that the disciples were gathered together, undoubtedly to discuss the amazing reports of Jesus’ resurrection. Jesus suddenly appeared in their midst. Luke confirms this account.

Series: Palm Sunday, Easter, Passover

Garrison Church of God - Apr. 17, 2022





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Both accounts indicated that the room where they met was locked because they were fearful of the Jewish authorities. John tells us that Thomas for some reason was not with them. Eight days later they were once again gathered together, when Jesus appeared in their midst. He intentionally challenged Thomas with his physical resurrection.

## John 20:24-30 [ESV]

24 Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."

26 Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe."

28 Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"

29 Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." 30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

By calling ourselves progressive Christians,  
we mean that we are Christians who...

- 1 Believe that following the path and teachings of Jesus can lead to an awareness and experience of the Sacred and the Oneness and Unity of all life;
- 2 Affirm that the teachings of Jesus provide but one of many ways to experience the Sacredness and Oneness of life, and that we can draw from diverse sources of wisdom in our spiritual journey;
- 3 Seek community that is inclusive of ALL people, including but not limited to:
  - Conventional Christians and questioning skeptics,
  - Believers and agnostics,
  - Women and men,
  - Those of all sexual orientations and gender identities,
  - Those of all classes and abilities;
- 4 Know that the way we behave towards one another is the fullest expression of what we believe;
- 5 Find grace in the search for understanding and believe there is more value in questioning than in absolutes;
- 6 Strive for peace and justice among all people;
- 7 Strive to protect and restore the integrity of our Earth; and
- 8 Commit to a path of life-long learning, compassion, and selfless love.



"The 8 Points" (version 2011)  
The Center for Progressive Christianity  
ProgressiveChristianity.org

# "Why I Believe"

John

20:24-30

*The basic 8 points of  
Progressive Christianity*

The Progressive Christian movement developed out of the Emergent Church movement of the 1990's. In 2006 the THE PHOENIX AFFIRMATIONS were written by a group of Emergent Church leaders it formed the basis of the Progressive Christian Movement.

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# The Eight Points of Progressive Christianity

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*"The 8 Points" (2011 version), The Center for Progressive Christianity [www.tpc.org](http://www.tpc.org)*

## 1 John 4:4- [ESV]

4 Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. 5 They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. 6 We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

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Spiritual networking and resources for an evolving faith

"The 8 Points" (version 2011)  
The Center for Progressive Christianity  
ProgressiveChristianity.org

The most important point of Progressive Christianity is **cultural relevancy**. All Christian teaching is subject to the individual search for truth as it relates to personal well being and “moral action”. Salvation is based on conforming our actions to the intentions of “Christ’s teaching”. Many promote the idea of “developing the Christ Consciousness”. Doctrine, Scripture and Absolute Truth are subservient to “my” discovery and journey of faith. Morality is determined by social action through Social Justice, Environmentalism, etc.

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*The basic 8 points of  
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Series: Palm Sunday, Easter, Passover

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This is based on the concept of making a more just and accepting world. Its roots are in the concept of the "Social Gospel" of the Progressive Era [1880-1929]. Many "liberal" Christians of this era who supported the Social Gospel went on to support a evolutionary view of society. It developed into an elitism that led to Eugenics.

When cultural elitism determines ethics without a moral anchor you end up in terrible places.

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## **1 Corinthians 15:12-19[ESV]**

12 Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

14 And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.

15 We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised.

16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised.

17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.

18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

19 If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.



Rev. Harry Emerson Fosdick – 1878-1969. Fosdick grew up Baptist and age 7 had a “conversion experience”. As a teen he challenged the basic tenants of the Christian faith. In a real sense he is the popular father of liberal Christianity.

Series: Palm Sunday, Easter, Passover

# “Why I Believe”

## John 20:24-30

### The Progressive Christian

Movement traces its impetus back to Rev. Harry Emerson Fosdick. He was ordained as a Baptist minister in 1903, in New York. In 1911 he joined Union Theological Seminary Faculty and in 1918 became pastor of the prestigious First Presbyterian Church in NY City. He would serve there until 1925. At the time he was one of the best known ministers in the USA. He challenged much of foundational Christian doctrine.

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Fosdick was personable and charismatic as a speaker. A close personal friend of J. D. Rockefeller, and his family who though Baptist, were deeply antagonistic the the rising “fundamentalist” Christianity. The Rockefeller family also strongly supported the Social Gospel, Eugenics, abortion and Margaret Sanger [the founder of Planned Parenthood]. With the financial support of Rockefeller Fosdick became the most prominent Christian intellectual in the USA.



John 17:14-16 [ESV]

14 I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

15 I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.

16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the



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Basically, in John 17, Jesus tells his disciples that they must be “in” the world but not “of” the world. There are 3 directions as we can go: 1. In but not Of the world. 2. In and Of the world. 3. Not In but Of the world. By “world” Jesus is means the culture and social structure around the individual. Christians are called to live in the reality of the world without allowing its cultural and ethical standards to dominate them.

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For most people in our culture who live in the reality of culture and social structure they live a survival lifestyle. The culture moves them along until it bumps up against the realities of surviving. People who are not affected by the realities of life but are of affected by the mores and norms of culture and social structure are among the saddest. Progressive Christianity is of this last sort.

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Progressive Christianity is of this last sort. It is a dalliance of the privileged, elite and self-centered who do not live in the real world and comfort themselves by trying to be “relevant” without moral or ethical certitude and “spiritual” without commitment to anything greater than themselves.

This is the sad history of “Liberal and Progressive” Christianity.

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## **Romans 5:1-6 [ESV]**

- 1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?
- 2 By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?
- 3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?
- 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.
- 5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.
- 6 We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

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*The Incredulity of Thomas by Caravaggio, 1603*



Thomas had been skeptical of the account of the previous gathering. Thomas had imprudently stated that unless he could place his fingers in the wounds in Jesus' hands and feel the wound in his side he would not be convinced. Jesus on this occasion invites Thomas to satisfy his skepticism.





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Skepticism is a normal part of human nature when confronted with exceptional events. Thomas’ reaction was reasonable, if not overstated. Undoubtedly if you were to go around Jerusalem on the day of the Resurrection there were all kinds of theories that were being bandied about by the community.



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Others, in the confusion, undoubtedly promoted an idea that the location of the tomb had gotten confused. The appearances of Jesus were probably accounted for by claiming his disciples were hallucinating, creating a false account for their own gain, or an imposter was playing on the gullibility of the disciples.





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These speculations only grew during the Feast of Unleavened Bread that follows Passover, leaving Thomas deeply confused. This feast lasted until the following Sabbath. This would explain why the disciples were still in Jerusalem 8 days after the Resurrection..

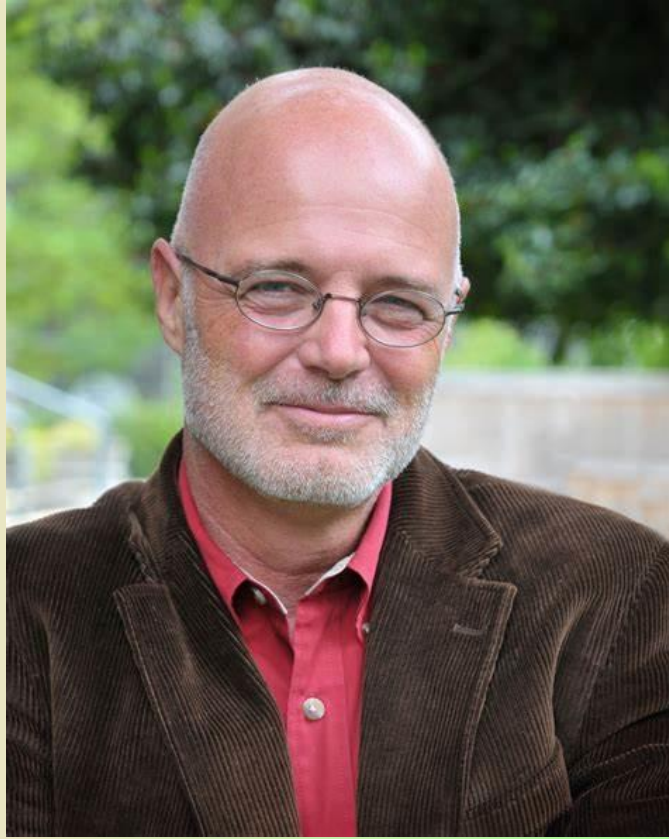


**1 Peter 1:3-5 [ESV]**

**3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

**4** to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,

**5** who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.



*Brian D. McLaren, pastor, speaker and prominent Progressive Christian leader. His roots were in Evangelical Christianity. He started the Cedar Ridge Community Church in Maryland while teaching college English in 1982*

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We know all these explanations were promoted as alternative explanations in ancient times. Skepticism can always find a way to reconstrue facts to explain away the miraculous. They still find support in the Progressive Christian movement which would like the “spiritualize” and “allegorize” the Resurrection of Jesus. Down through the centuries the Resurrection of Jesus has been the sticking point of faith. *Jesus’ claim to be God, his claim to forgive sins through his death and his claim of authority as Lord are proved by the Resurrection.* That is why this doctrine is central to the Christian faith.



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Ultimately the struggle for Progressive Christians is the “Lordship” of Jesus Christ. They would like him to be a stimulating, wise and idealistic teacher...not Lord. In a culture dominated by self-centeredness Jesus being Lord demands that I think of Jesus as the authority rather than myself. When I do that I must take his demands and Scripture seriously.

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For Thomas this question was answered in his inspection of Jesus' wounds.

*Doubt does not overcome the power of the resurrection in Jesus Christ.*