

**Sermon Notes of
Elder Laura Urista's Sermon on April 24, 2022:**

**"No Doubt – 'Rose' Lessons
(John 20:19-31)"**

[In today's sermon, Elder Laura Urista, at church in the Y, shows us that Jesus will help us to overcome our doubts in life and guide us to follow God's will for us.]

Introduction:

- Now some in our congregation are avid gardeners, especially JR who is a big-time gardener.
- There's a saying that someone who is really good with plants is called a "green thumb."
- And the term for someone who is really not that good with plants is called a "brown thumb."
- Laura then admitted that she was a "brown thumb", as she struggles to keep plants alive.

- Now, Pasadena is known as the "City of Roses," and in the spring we see roses blooming all over the area.
- Here in Southern California even a "brown thumb" like me can somehow manage to keep rose bushes alive, so that each spring we enjoy beautiful, vibrant rose blooms in front of our house.
- When we first moved in to their house, it was December and the rose bushes in front of our house were spindly and withered.

- Laura accidentally trimmed them back too far – or so she thought.
- She trimmed until it looked like there wasn't much left but a stump, and she thought they wouldn't survive.
- But Laura fed and watered them, and along with a little rain and a lot of sunshine they survived.
- Not only did they survive, but to her surprise and delight, that spring our rose bushes blossomed with beautiful, vibrant and fragrant roses.

- Now, we can think about trials, setbacks, etc. which can make us feel we've been trimmed back too far to ever return to normal.
- Trials, etc. can make us doubt that God is there or doubt that He cares about us or loves us.
- Many of us go through different kinds of trials, which cause different types of doubts.
- Yes, doubt is certainly a part of our lives and so today, we're going to talk about someone who's called the "doubter" in scripture.

- Now, before we do, let's review a little bit about what we learned last week, because we're going to read the verses just after what we read last week on Resurrection Sunday.
- Now, we learned that there were 5 questions asked in the passage that we read – John 20:1-18.
 1. Where is Jesus in the midst of change? (Change can be positive or negative.)

2. What do we do now? (Peter and John asked that question when they saw the empty tomb.)
 3. Why are you crying? (Sometimes change can lead to tears.)
 4. Who are you looking for?
 5. What will life be like now? (Will it be like it had been?)
- Now the resurrection caused absolute change, not only for Jesus' disciples but for all humanity from then on.
 - Now, humans really don't like change.
 - When the grocery stores change where they place various types of food, it can upset us.
 - Now, some deal with change better than others.
 - And sometimes, we feel more comfortable going back to our old ways that we feel secure about.
 - But, the only way to grow is to change.
 - Our bodies are not the same as they were a week ago, because our cells have completely have changed.
 - Last week we left off at verse 18, where Mary went to the disciples and told them that she had seen the Lord and told them the things that He had said to her.
 - And so, today, we're going to start at verse 19 in John 20.

John 20:19 (NIV), On the evening of that first day of the week,

- The evening of the first day of the week is the same day that Mary was at Jesus' tomb early in the morning.

19) On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"

- Can we imagine how we would have felt locked down in fear and Jesus then appears among us?
- They were flabbergasted but also excited, happy, thrilled, joyful and possibly a little scared, as well.
- So, Jesus said, "Peace be with you" to calm them down and that things would be OK.

20) After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. 21) Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."

- Jesus also gives them a mandate telling them that they have something to do.

22) And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23) If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

- So, the Holy Spirit, in them, was going to give them great power to share the gospel message with others.

24) Now Thomas (also known as Didymus [twin]) one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25) So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

- That’s kind of a strong stance showing that Thomas was practical and had a strong physical point of view.

26) A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though 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; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”

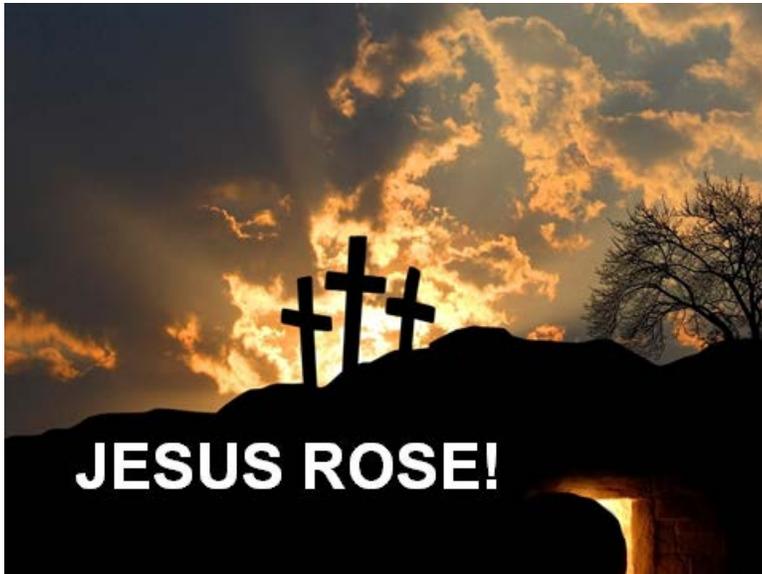
- Now, at first glance what Jesus told Thomas might seem a little harsh.
- The Message translation says it a little bit differently – **“Don’t be unbelieving. Believe.”**
- So, this translation is more encouraging than condemning.

28) Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!” 29) Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

30) Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31) But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

We’re all human:

- So, poor Thomas will always and forever be known as “Doubting Thomas.”
- Now how would we like to be remembered by future generations by our one big mistake?
- As we said earlier, we all have doubts at times, because we are all human.
- Now, on Maundy Thursday, Nan mentioned that the disciples eating with Jesus that evening were not perfect, they had their issues and yet Jesus allowed them to take communion with Him
- Two of the “faulty” disciples at the table could be called: the Betrayer and the Denier.
- And now we see that there was another faulty disciple at the table; he was the Doubter.
- As we said before, because we are all human, we have doubts.
- But the power of the Holy Spirit can help us overcome those doubts and can help us to be bold and not timid and to give us the strength to do what God calls us and sends us out to do.
- So, you may have wondered why Laura chose, as the title of her message today, “The Rose Lesson”?
- Earlier, she talked about physical roses, but there is another rose.



- Jesus ROSE and lives again in us by the power of the Holy Spirit!
- There is NO DOUBT that Jesus rose from the dead and is alive and there's no doubt that Jesus loves us beyond our imagination.
- And one of the lessons we can learn from this doubting Thomas story isn't that Thomas doubted because he was human, but rather that Jesus came back and was the "good shepherd" and went after this lost sheep.
- Jesus was caring and kind with Thomas and teaching him with His love.
- Now there's another lesson we can learn from roses.
- Roses need sunshine and rain.



- While roses need sunshine and rainwater to live, we need "Son-shine" and Living Water to truly live.



- Trials can make us doubtful but also help us be more aware of our true dependence on God.
- When we think we have everything under control, we're not really aware of God and our dependence upon Him.
- But when we're in the deep pits of a trial, that's when our dependence upon God becomes very real.
- We realize that God is our only hope, when we go through trials.
- Especially during a trial, we realize that we need the living water of Jesus.
- The Samaritan woman at well in John 4:10,14 really brings this out.
- The Samaritan woman was so surprised that a Jew, especially a male, would ask her for water.
- This was Jesus' reply to her question.

John 4:10, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water..."

14) "Everyone who drinks this water from the well will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

- What an amazing thought – that drinking in that living water of Jesus Christ brings us eternal life.
- Now we can go without eating for a few days, but the one thing we have to do is drink water.
- We're not going to survive without it.
- So, spiritually we have to drink that living water of Jesus.
- And one of the ways we can do that is by spending time with Him, drinking in of His presence.
- Now the spiritual disciplines that we talked about – reading His word, meditating, prayer, fasting, worship – all of these things can help us to drink in the living water and to soak in the presence of Jesus in our lives.

- The hymn, “In the garden” was one of Laura’s mom’s favorite hymns.
- Now, we’re going to sing it today as our closing hymn.
- Let’s read part of the lyrics of this hymn together right now and think about what this means.

Lyrics from the old familiar hymn, “In the Garden”

“I come to the garden alone, while the dew is still on the roses... And he walks with me and he talks with me and he tells me I am his own. And the love we share as we tarry there, no other has ever known.”

Conclusion:

- Now, when we really think about these words, it makes all the difference.
- He walks with us – He talks with us – and He calls us His own.
- And the love we share with Him, no other has ever known.
- These are beautiful words.
- Now, many of us have heard the saying that we should stop and smell the roses in life.
- What it means is that we should take time to notice the blessings all around us.
- That’s really, really good advice and well worth the extra time and effort to recognize and to drink in those treasures that God has created all around us.
- But don’t just stop and smell the roses.
- Take a moment to also ask God to show you where He is trimming you for new growth.
- So, thank him for the sun shine and the Son-shine that nourishes and helps us enjoy closer relationships with Him and with others.
- Praise The Father for providing the Holy Spirit and the Living Water of Christ that He promises “will become... a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”
- Amen. Let’s pray.

Closing Prayer:

O God, you raised up Jesus Christ as your faithful witness and the first born of the dead. By your Holy Spirit, help us to witness to him so that those who have not yet seen may come to believe in him who is, and was, and is to come. We thank you, we love you, we praise you. And we ask this all in Jesus’ name. Amen.