

# Doubting Thomas<sup>1</sup>

John 20:19-31

January 9, 2022

## Some observations:

At least five resurrection appearances – Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-18), the other women (Matt 28:9-10), Peter (1 Cor 15:5), the two Emmaus disciples (Luke 24:13-32) and the disciples minus Thomas (John 20:19-25).

It's an important reminder for us that we know and remember we are not saved by seeing or acknowledging, but believing. Many saw Jesus and His miracles, but they did not believe in Him.

Christ followers saw the glory of the kingdom, but failed to see the suffering. They saw the crown, but not the cross.

Our “doubter” had two names - Thomas (Hebrew) and Didymus (Greek) – His name means “twin.” We don't know who his twin was, but we can assume that it may be us!

We often refer to Thomas as doubting Thomas. “Jesus did not rebuke him for his doubts. He rebuked him for unbelief: ‘be not faithless, but believing.’ Doubt is often an intellectual problem; we want to believe, but faith is overwhelmed by problems and questions. Unbelief is a moral problem; we simply will not believe. Doubt says, ‘I cannot believe,’ whereas unbelief says, ‘I will not believe unless you give me evidence or meet my demands.’ Therefore, Thomas had more of a problem with unbelief than with doubt.”<sup>2</sup>

## Questions that sometimes arise:

**Is God really in control?**

**Does God know what I am going through?**

**Does God care?**

## What to do with doubts and unbelief?

### 1) Feed them the Truth.

The word “life” is used 36 times in John's Gospel. Jesus offers sinners eternal and abundant life, if they place their faith in Him. As we read God's Word we can know more and more of Jesus and grow in our belief. In a recent article by Dr. Al Mohler, entitled The Scandal of Biblical Illiteracy: It's Our Problem, he shares that we as believers often don't truly know the Word of God simply because we are not reading it. Now, obviously, you are reading God's Word as you are doing today's devotion and for that I am thankful. But might we really jump into God's Word and understand more fully what it says. In his article, Mohler says that: 60% of Christians can't name five of the Ten Commandments, 82% believe the phrase “God helps those who help themselves” is a Bible verse, and 12% believe Joan of Arc was Noah's wife. That last one may sound humorous, but I am not making it up. ~ **Warren Wiersbe**

*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. Psalm 119:105*

*Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You. Psalm 119:11*

What are you feeding your doubt and unbelief?

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<sup>1</sup> Portions taken from Warren Wiersbe, BE Series

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

## 2) Surround myself with Godly people.

The reason we have today's passage is because Thomas wasn't with the other disciples when Jesus first appeared. We don't know for certain why Thomas was not there, so we can only speculate, at best, but because he was not with the other disciples, as he probably should have been, he had to endure a week full of unbelief and fear when he could have been experiencing peace and joy. This should be a great reminder for us to be where we are supposed to be, particularly when it comes to worshipping with other believers. We may never know whether God may have us there for someone else or whether we may need to be there to hear what someone else has to say or for God to speak especially to us. When we do things on our own and become careless with our spiritual walk, we have the potential to hurt others and ourselves. Just ask Thomas. He endured a week of unbelief and fear, most likely because he simply wasn't with the other disciples, as he should have been.

Solitude only feeds discouragement and helps it grow into self-pity, which is even worse.

## 3) Do what I have already have been instructed.

Love God and Love Others. (Matthew 22:37)

*He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?* **Micah 6:8**

Obey the last thing the Lord told you to do.

## 4) Study those that doubted and didn't believe.

Thomas, Peter, Moses, and Abraham just to name a few.

Remember in our reading this week God comes and sees the disciples and commissions them, He sends them out to do His work.

It must have given the men great joy to realize that, in spite of their many failures, their Lord was entrusting them with His Word and His work. They had forsaken Him and fled, but now He was sending them out to represent Him. Peter had denied Him three times, and yet in a few days, Peter would preach the Word and thousands be saved.

## 5) Prepare for doubts and disbelief before they come.

If you are not currently facing doubt or disbelief, the time is coming, prepare now!

If you are in the middle of them be reminded that God is in control!

Jesus commissioned the disciples to go into the world.

He came to them.

He reassured them.

He commissioned them.

They had forsaken Him and fled, but now He was sending them out to represent Him.

It is an encouragement to know that the Lord had a personal interest in and concern for doubting Thomas. He wanted to strengthen his faith and include him in the blessings that lay in store for His followers. Thomas reminds us that unbelief robs us of blessings and opportunities.

## Prayer Focus:

**When I face times of doubt and unbelief I will take those to the Lord and His Word.**

**I will surround myself with other Godly believers.**

**Pour out to God this morning your doubts and unbelief, He can handle them!**