

# I Doubt It

Our text today centers around a man commonly known as “Doubting Thomas.” Actually, Thomas' problem was not that he doubted too much, but rather that he doubted too little—he failed to doubt his disbelief in the resurrected Jesus. But before we come down too hard on Thomas, let's also remember that none of the disciples were quick to believe in the resurrection of Christ: the eleven disciples considered the women's report an “idle tale,” Mary Magdalene, when seeing Jesus, thought He was the gardener, and Cleopas, on the road to Emmaus, had no idea that he was talking directly to Jesus. Let's read our text:

## John 20: 24-31

<sup>24</sup> Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> 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.”

<sup>26</sup> 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.” <sup>27</sup> 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.” <sup>28</sup> Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” <sup>29</sup> Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

<sup>30</sup> Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; <sup>31</sup> 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.

### I. Thomas didn't believe (vv. 24,25)

John, the author of the fourth gospel, takes a special interest in Thomas and gives us three unique accounts of Thomas' words and actions. In John 11:16 we learn that Thomas is, by personality, a loyal pessimist. In John 14:5, we learn that he is a skeptical analyst. All of us, actually, quite naturally do not believe in Christ. Jesus could have said, “I've spent three years telling that boy on multiple occasions that I would be crucified and three days later be raised from the dead. I'm through with him!”

### II. But Jesus loved him (vv. 26,27)

Jesus came into this fearful little group and spoke peace to them, made himself available to them for inspection, and then commanded them to stop disbelieving and begin believing.

### III. Thomas believed (v. 28)

There is no evidence in the text that Thomas actually physically inspected Jesus' scars, but Thomas seems to be converted to believe because of the loving, gracious, compassionate presence of Jesus Christ---the same reason people believe today. Thomas, seemingly the most skeptical of all the disciples, then gives the highest confession of faith in all the pages of the gospels (including Peter's high confession): “My Lord and my God.”

### IV. Jesus blessed every future believer (vv. 29-31)

“Blessing” is a very important concept in both the Old and New Testaments. Jesus promises blessing upon all who later come to know and follow Jesus without seeing Him with our physical eyes. How does this blessing come to us? John tells us in verse 30 that it is through faith. What is this blessing? In verse 31 John tells us it is life. What is this “life through faith?” John gives us several aspects of it in his gospel:

1:12 “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God...”

3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

5:24 “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.”

6:35 “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.”

6:40 “For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

12:46 “I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.”

14:12 “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.”

17:20 “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word...”

The consequences of belief and unbelief are great. In Thomas' case, tradition tells us that this pessimistic, skeptical disciple went on to minister in Iran and India and was reportedly stoned to death in India for his courageous witness to the resurrected Christ. If Christ can use him, surely He can use us to—as long as we come to believe that He is alive and makes Himself known to us.

## Discussion Questions

1. Why is doubt not necessarily bad? Why do we doubt?
2. What is it about Christ that normally converts us from unbelief to belief? How can we experience His presence today, even though we can't see Him with our physical eyes?

