

From Doubt to a Discovery  
of Faith!  
John 20:24-29

# Observations

- It is my hope that Thomas, the Apostle, gets more respect from you when I'm finished with this lesson
- Rather than being called: "Doubting Thomas," maybe "Thomas the Defender" would be a more appropriate name (one bad week changed our perception of him)
- For Example: John the Baptist is not called "John the Doubter," though he had once proclaimed of Jesus: *"Behold the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" John 1:29*. But yet while in prison (which was a season of discomfort for him), John sends his disciples to Jesus to answer a question for him to reassure him that Jesus was indeed the Christ:

*"Art thou He that should come, or do we look for another?"* Matthew 11:3

# Observations

- Notice that Jesus answered both John the Baptist, and Thomas His disciple, personally and individually, in their quest for more faith in Him
- Doesn't He answer us personally and individually as well?
- Question: Has Jesus ever addressed any of your problems in a way that convinced you, that only He would have known the particulars, the peculiarities, and the idiosyncrasies of your problems enough, and that with "providential orchestration," handle them the way they were handled?
- Question: How did that affect your faith?
- Like John the Baptist? Like Thomas his disciple?

# What Was Cause of Thomas' Doubt?

- Well, none of the disciples were exactly, “Pillars of the Faith,” at this time
- On the evening of the Sunday morning when Jesus rose from the grave, John’s gospel says that they were altogether in one room, and locked in, due to their fear of the Jews (John 20:19)
- They were not strong BUT they stayed together and did not scatter (Ten of the disciples were together, but Judas and Thomas were not with them)
- Notice in John 20:20-21, Jesus comes to that meeting, precipitating their joy with the evidence of His resurrection
- If Thomas had been there, his wounded heart would have been healed as well

# Observations

- Notice that Thomas was not reportedly doing anything wrong, to explain his absence; but *he just wasn't where he should have been!*
- The point is: The other disciples got answers for their anxiety that he didn't get
- Question: How many times has God given us answers to our issues to increase our faith, but we weren't present with the disciples to get what we needed?
- The truth is: Forsaking the fellowship is the first step in forsaking the faith (Hebrews 10:25). Your answer may be coming in your next gathering together

# Observations

- Sunday evening when the disciples came together, Jesus met with them; but Thomas was not there
- I would suggest to you, that though Thomas was not there when Jesus first appears to the disciples after His resurrection, this was not the cause of his doubt
- The cause for his doubt was not what he had not seen, but what he had already seen
- That is why when the other disciples said we have seen the Lord, he says: *“Unless I see the nail marks in His hands and put my fingers where the nails were, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.”*  
*John 20:25*

# Observations

- **The implication is that Thomas had stayed long enough to see the crucifixion, and for Christ to now be alive was too good to be true (He had seen Christ murdered with his own eyes, therefore with his own eyes he would need to see “The Risen Christ.”)**
- **So, the cause of Thomas’ doubt was the reality of the death of Christ, which he had seen; and the cause of his prolonged doubt was his absence from the fellowship**
- **While the other disciples rejoiced because of what they had experienced at the assembly, Thomas was still in a state of sadness because he wasn’t there**
- **What a week that must have been for Thomas; John 20:26; When we miss the assembly consistently, who knows what answers to life and blessings we forfeit?**

# But Let's Give Thomas Credit!

- The fact that he missed the first meeting of Jesus with the disciples, but stayed with them and was there one week later, shows that he was what I would call, “an honest doubter.” Even though he did not yet believe, he was willing to look for evidence.
- The “dishonest doubter,” does not say, “I can’t believe,” but instead says, “I won’t believe.”
- The “dishonest doubter,” doesn’t truly look for evidence, because they know that if evidence is found, it would condemn them, *and who would admit that?*



# John 3:19

***“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”***

- **Jesus says that people want to live selfishly without the consequences of selfish living, though man was not created as self-governing organism; Jeremiah 10:23**
- **Even in religion, people would rather decide how best to please God rather than let God decide how best to please Him; Hebrews 11:4, Romans 10:17**
- **Basically, Abel obeyed God’s word in worship and Cain didn’t (Deciding to worship God in His own way, Cain wanted to change the terms of defining acceptable worship, an action with which God was not pleased)**

# Observations

- **Thomas proves then, that a Christian's doubt is an experience that we all may pass through; but it is not the end for us. We all pass through suffering but it is not the end**
- **We all may pass *"through the valley of the shadow of death, but life doesn't end there!"* For the Christian, light is coming! 2 Corinthians 5:1**
- **Doubt allows life to do something to you, but faith allows you to do something to your life (live out your life in faith) Galatians 2:20 *"I am crucified....and the life.."***
- **Faith is *"the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,"* so when Christ invited Thomas to "check the evidence," that experience removed his doubt; Thomas says, *"My Lord and my God"* John 20:28**

# Then Jesus Uses a Conversation With Thomas To Speak To Us!

***“Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet believed.” John 20:29***

- **John’s gospel now goes back to his original thesis in John chapter 20, verses 30 and 31 which he began in chapter 1, verse 1, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the word was God... verse 14 “And the Word was made flesh.....”**
- **John 20:30-31, “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written that YE MIGHT BELIEVE”**

# Jesus Also Prayed For Us to Trust the Scriptural Integrity of Thomas and the Apostles!

***“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” John 17:20,21***

- We should only trust the scriptural authority of the Apostles for our walk with God, 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- Do not trust man-made “unauthorized doctrinal conjectures and recommendations,” as requirements to satisfy God’s pleasure,” Matthew 15:7,8 (catechisms, manuals, disciplines etc.)
- God’s pleasure, is for NO RELIGIOUS DIVISION, as the Apostles urged, 1 Corinthians 1:10

# The Plan of Salvation

**Hear the Gospel**

**Acts 15:7**

**Believe the Gospel**

**Acts 15:7**

**Repent of Sins**

**Acts 17:30**

**Confess Christ**

**Acts 8:37**

**Be Baptized**

**Acts 8:38**