

Ol' Thomas the Doubty-mus (*Doubting Thomas*)

John 20:18-22

It's the evening of the resurrection. Without a doubt, the hearts of the disciples were full of fear and amazement at all the things that had happened – **V. 18**. They had met in a room with bolted doors, because they were afraid of their enemies, and they needed to think through the whole situation. But Jesus – who died to save them, put all their doubting and their fears at rest, by suddenly appearing with them, in the room! **(1)** He gave them peace and reassurance – **V. 19**; **(2)** He showed Himself as the Crucified One – **V. 20**; **(3)** He Commissioned them to go and tell – **V. 21**; **(4)** He gave them the power of the Holy Spirit – **V. 22**. But what about Thomas? He's no where to be found!

Thomas loved the Lord. In **John 11:16** – he was willing to follow Jesus and get stoned by an angry mob of Jews in Judea, just for trying to see Lazarus. But Thomas doubted. He was skeptical of what the other guys had told him about seeing Jesus. Maybe he thought they had seen “a vision.” Or maybe he thought they had snapped under the pressure. Those guys had lost it – they were out of their minds! Jesus certainly didn't come here! But Jesus addressed his problem – **V. 27** = “be not faithless.” Thomas doubted the truth. Doubting is like termites – it works behind the scenes and if left unchecked, it can cause catastrophic damage... eating away at the structure of our beliefs and our faith in the Lord and His Word.

I. What Caused Thomas' Doubt? – V. 24-25

A. Absence From The Fellowship – V. 24 “...*was not with them when Jesus came.*” In **V. 19**, Jesus appeared to the disciples on Sunday night. Like most Christians today, Thomas was absent from the fellowship.

1. Disciples rejoice for 8 days, Thomas living in doubt, defeated – **V. 26**
2. Thomas was in bad company: Only one other disciple missed Jesus that Sunday night: Judas! Two disciples missed the chance to meet with Jesus.
 - a. One denied Jesus and one doubted Jesus.
 - b. One strangled by unbelief, one tangled in doubt.
3. When we are able to attend church and miss, we weaken our faith and strengthen our doubt. We miss out and cast a vote to shut the doors.

B. Ignoring The Facts –

1. Jesus first convinced the disciples that He was the Christ – the Messiah. They willingly followed Him. THEN... He told them what was going to happen = **Matt. 16:20-21** “Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ. From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.”
2. Thomas had heard about the resurrection. But he had not personalized this truth. **Luke 24:44-45** “And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.”
3. If we will “Feed our Faith, then we will “Starve our Doubts!”

II. What Cured His Doubt? – V. 26-27

A. Getting Back In The Group – V. 26 “...*and Thomas with them...*”

1. “Doctor J” – “*Without the collective accomplishment in a team sport like basketball, individual achievement means very little.*” The early Apostles (including Thomas) went on to influence the church at Jerusalem. In turn, the Gospel reached Saul, who was later known as the Apostle Paul. People served the Lord together! Eventually it was said by unbelieving Jews in Thessalonica in **Acts 17:6** “...These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;”

B. Accepting the Lord's Peace – His Peace Comes With His Presence V. 26 “...then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.” **John 14:27** “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

1. His Peace Will Give Confidence – One day a little League baseball game was being played in a park near a guy's home. As he sat down behind the bench on the first-base line, he asked one of the boys what the score was, “We're behind 14 to nothing,” he answered with a smile. “Really,” He said. “I have to say you don't look very discouraged.” “Discouraged?” the boy asked with a puzzled look on his face... “Why should we be discouraged? We haven't been up to bat yet.”
2. His Peace Will Bring Satisfaction – The Lord's placement for you in life is the peak of achievement. Be willing to do whatever He asks!
 - a. It's like the story about little Jamie Scott. Jamie was trying out for a part in the school play. His mother said that he'd set his heart on being in it but she was afraid that he wouldn't be chosen. On the day the parts were awarded, Jamie rushed up to her after school; eyes shining with pride and excitement, “Guess what, Mom,” he shouted, and then said what should always be a lesson to us.... “I've been chosen to clap and cheer!”
 - b. A Sunday school teacher asked her class of small girls if one of them could quote the 23rd Psalm. A girl timidly raised her hand and said she could. She stood in front of the class and said, “The Lord is my shepherd. That's all I want.”

C. Changing his mind, Choosing to believe – V. 27 “...and be not faithless, but believing.”

1. **Thomas had to eat some humble pie...** proclaiming that he wasn't going to believe (**V. 25**), didn't change a thing! Don't live in denial... It's like the girl that married the wrong guy and her parents didn't like it... She was still married!
 - a. She was the daughter of a fashionable couple from a big city who went to Africa as a Peace Corps volunteer. She had been to finishing school and her parents had done everything to see that she was properly prepared to fit-in with the social elite. When the young lady's term on the field was over she sent a telegram saying that she would be bringing her new husband home with her. So... her mom and dad waited with excited anticipation at the airport gate. Their daughter got off the plane, holding onto the arm of a man about seven feet tall who was wearing feathers, beads, skulls, tigers' teeth, and few pouches of magical potions around his neck. He even had a bone through his nose and rings in his ears! The mom fainted. Then... as the dad held his now unconscious wife, he shouted to his daughter, “No, no, dear. We said we wanted you to marry a rich doctor.”
2. Thomas learned to get his eyes off people... and look to Jesus – **V. 28**. Jesus chose Thomas to follow Him and serve Him – just like He chose each one of us! Someone once approached Joseph Parker, the famous preacher in London, and asked him about Judas Iscariot. “Why did Jesus ever choose Judas?” Dr. Parker answered, “I have never worried much about why Jesus chose Judas. The question I have not been able to find an answer for is why Jesus ever chose me.” Why Jesus chose to love us is one of life's greatest mysteries, but He did.