

# THE CASE FOR *Thomas*

## **Romans 5:6-8; John 20:24-29**

There are few characters in the Bible who have a reputation worse than Thomas. Thomas is infamously known for declaring that he would not believe that Jesus had risen from the dead unless he saw and placed his hands into the holes in Jesus's hands and side. The epithet, "doubting Thomas" is used even outside of Christian circles to describe cynics and skeptics who aren't on board with a particular vision or plan. But is there perhaps more to the story of Thomas? Is there perhaps a grander rhyme and reason behind his infamous doubt? Perhaps Thomas is not so different than ourselves.

## **John 11:1-16, 14:1-6**

As we begin to dig into Thomas's life, he actually often showed courage rather than doubt. He was even enthusiastically willing to die with Jesus at one point (John 11:16). Thomas was a disciple who was willing to be upfront with Jesus when he didn't understand something that was said. It is Thomas's question in John 14:5 that sparked Jesus's famous response: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:5-6). Be real with God when you don't understand something; he already knows—you might as well ask Him for clarification.

Yes, it is true: Thomas doubted after having lived next to Jesus for three years, hearing Him speak clearly that he would be crucified. But it is also true that we often doubt even though have the Holy Spirit living inside us all the time. Yes, it is true that Thomas should have believed the other disciples who testified to him that they had seen Jesus in His resurrected body. But it is also true that the Holy Spirit often speaks to us through other people, yet we don't always believe. Yes, it is true that Thomas doubted after a lifetime of seeing Jesus's miracles face-to-face, and even doing miracles himself. But it is also true that God has shown us many miracles, including saved loved ones, healings, deliverances, transformations—that the very breath we breathe is a testament to His awesome power—yet, we still doubt.

Thomas doubted: under threat of his life for proclaiming the gospel; after seeing armed soldiers arrest his leader under the cover of darkness and threaten him, too; after a life of not knowing where his next meal would come from, so much so that Jesus had to break the laws of nature with a little boy's two pieces of fish and five loaves to feed him; after a life of not even knowing where he would sleep (Matthew 8:20); in the midst of misinformation, as the chief priests bribed the guards at Jesus's tomb to tell people that his disciples had stolen his body and he had not truly been resurrected; and after seeing one of his close friends in Judas Iscariot betray Jesus, perhaps making him question the loyalty of the other disciples as well. The conditions under which we doubt are often not as dire or dangerous.

God wants us to get to a place where our faith is not fragile, but firm, founded in the Word of God. Doubts are sure to come to all of us; in fact, without them, we could not truly have faith. Faith is only faith when it is tested in the fire of adversity, not in the context of comfort.

How does doubt come in? Just as faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God, doubt also comes by hearing, but hearing by the word of what is not God (Romans 10:17). We must be careful what we take in, for that is what will also come out. If you're not happy with the level of doubt you are facing, watch what you are taking in!

Don't let the enemy convince you that doubt disqualifies you from relationship with God. Take those doubts to the Lord and allow Him to grow your faith.

We overcome doubt with faith. Faith is persistent. Faith doesn't give up or throw in the towel. Faith is firm under fire and steadfast through struggles. When the need is great enough; when you get fed up enough, uncommon faith and boldness shine. We have two options: succumb to doubts, or overcome them with faith. *Which will you choose?*