

## Believing Thomas

If you've ever been saddled with a nickname, maybe for something embarrassing you once said or did, you should feel some sympathy for the apostle who will for all eternity be known as "Doubting Thomas." People don't remember anything else about the man – not his bold loyalty to Jesus in John 11:16 and not even his tremendous statement of faith later – only the "doubting" incident that happened after Jesus' resurrection.

*Now Thomas... was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it." A week later...Jesus came and stood among them... Then he said to Thomas. "Put your finger here, see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." (John 20:24-27)*

It's there in black and white: Thomas doubted. But we've all been there at some point, including the other disciples before Jesus appeared to them. God doesn't condemn us for having honest doubts, but he does instruct us to move beyond them to full faith with his help. That's what happened with Thomas. Treating him as a sincere follower whose faith was ebbing low, Jesus graciously showed himself to Thomas before telling him to *stop doubting and believe*. Doubts vanished, replaced by rock-solid faith. The now-believing Thomas then rightly declared Jesus, "My Lord and my God!"

Jesus went on to say, "*Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.*" People tend to read this as a reproof against Thomas, but I'm not sure Jesus meant it to be. The first part just states what happened. The rest (*blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed*) really has more to do with us than with Thomas. We are some of the millions since that time who have not seen Jesus in the flesh. Yet the savior's blessing falls on us when, despite that fact, and with God's help, we believe.

The enemy will always challenge our faith, trying to get us to doubt God's goodness and our own salvation. And although, this side of heaven, we will never know all the answers, we can be faithful to what we DO understand. We can keep in God's Word, keep in fellowship with other believers, keep serving, and keep praying. If we do, God will reveal himself to us according to our needs. He will show us Jesus and the nail prints in his hands.

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