

“And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.”

Hebrews 11:6 (NASB1995)



Marietta church of Christ

8150 Driggers St.
Jacksonville, FL 32220

Times of Worship

Sunday:

9 am - Bible Classes / 10 am - Worship / 5 pm - Worship

Wednesday:

7 pm - Bible Study/Worship

Evangelist: Devin Barber

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Thomas: From Unbelief to Faith

There's not much mentioned about the apostle Thomas in scripture. What is said has left some folks with the impression that "Doubting Thomas" is an appropriate nickname. Looking closely at his actions though, we could very well use adjectives such as "Courageous Thomas" or "Honest Thomas." One thing is certain, we would do well to adopt the mantra "when in doubt, be like Thomas."

In John chapter 11, we find the first mention of Thomas. Mary and Martha are in Bethany with their brother Lazarus who is gravely ill. Being a surveyor, it's a given that I look at the "Palestine in Christ's time" map when a location of an event is mentioned.

Jesus had just left Jerusalem (2 miles from Bethany). There, the Jewish leaders had just tried to seize and stone Him for blasphemy. Verse 40 says He went east beyond the Jordan +/-14 miles away, and was there when hearing the news of Lazarus. Jesus used this setting as an opportunity to teach and to demonstrate His power over death to the disciples. Like many things Jesus taught the disciples, they did not understand in real time, so in 11:14, He plainly stated "Lazarus is dead."

Jesus made His intentions known that He was going back to be with Lazarus. Back to the same area where the Jews had just intended to stone him to death. Thomas, looking at the dark side, anticipated the death of Jesus upon His return. He then boldly proposed to his fellow disciples, “let us also go that we may die with Him.” Clearly, Thomas was faithful to his Master although anticipating the worst. This event could have earned him the label “Courageous Thomas.”

John 13 reveals that Jesus knew His hour had come. Soon He would depart to be with His Father. He spends His last hours with the disciples teaching them with an act of service. Taking a basin of water around to each one of them, He washed their feet and with a towel dried them. Afterwards, He asks them if they knew why He had done this. He states the purpose (vs. 19) saying “when it comes to pass, that you may believe that I am He”.... the primary purpose of the book of John. He states that not all of them are clean and then with a troubled spirit foretells the betrayal by one of them (vs. 21).

The next mention of Thomas is in chapter 14. Here Jesus begins by speaking of His pending departure again. He knew they did not understand the foretelling mentioned in John 12:35-36, so he says it again. Here He tells them.... “believe in God, believe also in Me” and that he is going to be with the Father and prepare a place for them so that where He is, they may be also. I just imagine after saying this, there were several heads nodding in the affirmative to what Jesus had just spoken. Then, verse 4 loses all of them. “And where I go you know, and the way you know.”

Again, Thomas taking the initiative, said what they were all thinking. I imagine him saying.... wait! what? Then asking “we do not know where You are going, how can we know the way? Then Jesus says “I am the way, the truth, and the life” and subsequently the direct reveal that He and His Father are one and the same (vs.7). This act could have earned him the nickname “Honest Thomas.” Honest, because he had the courage to admit he didn’t understand what Jesus was saying.

And then we come to the event that occurred that we seem to be most familiar with when considering Thomas. In John 20:24 we learn that for whatever the reason, Thomas was not there with the other disciples when Jesus appeared to them after the resurrection. So, when the others told Thomas they’d seen Jesus, He did not believe them. He needed to see with his own eyes. His standard of proof would be to put his finger in the nail print and his hand in His side. That would serve as evidence sufficient to convince beyond a reasonable doubt according to Thomas.

Eight days later, Jesus presented Himself to his disciples again and this time Thomas was present. He was given the opportunity to see and to touch as proof. The very thing that Jesus was trying to get his disciples to understand in verse 7, Jesus’s oneness with God, is exactly what Thomas acknowledged upon seeing Jesus. In that moment, Thomas transitioned from unbelief to restored faith proclaiming, “my Lord and my God!”

Just as God provided exactly what Thomas needed in order to believe, the last verse says these are written so that you and I would believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Truly, the gospel is for all!

Written by; Scot Lowe

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