

## The 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter ~ Sunday, May 11, 2025

### “Risen Indeed! ~ Faith & Doubt”

#### John 20: 24-31

Thomas isn't willing to accept their testimony, and tells them that until he sees Jesus' wounds for himself, he won't believe. Because of his \_\_\_\_\_, Thomas has been forever dubbed “\_\_\_\_\_ Thomas.”

These commentators are being too \_\_\_\_\_ on Thomas, and I don't think it's fair that he should be forever stuck with the nickname “Doubting Thomas.”

In Thomas' defense, he wasn't asking for anything that hadn't already been offered to the other disciples. When Jesus appeared to the others, He met them where they were \_\_\_\_\_, and gave them what they needed to \_\_\_\_\_.

Thomas was a \_\_\_\_\_. He didn't automatically accept everything that he was told as truth.

No one has \_\_\_\_\_ faith, no matter how spiritually \_\_\_\_\_ they may be.

We're not perfect and we all have our \_\_\_\_\_. However, Thomas shows us the difference between imperfect faith and \_\_\_\_\_; between doubt and \_\_\_\_\_. Obedient faith isn't perfect faith—it isn't flawless faith without doubts and fears. It's a faith that accepts Jesus as its \_\_\_\_\_. And while the expression of that faith may stumble and stagger, it never loses \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ.

#### Can you relate to this tension between faith and doubt?

##### #1. The \_\_\_\_\_ of Thomas.

To help us understand Thomas' absence, we need to examine what the Scriptures say and don't say about him and his \_\_\_\_\_.

##### • John 11

“Let us go with Him that we may die with Him.” (John 11:16)

We can interpret these words as \_\_\_\_\_, and doom and gloom. And from a certain perspective, they do have \_\_\_\_\_ written all over them.

It was understandable to believe that if Jesus returned to Bethany, He'd experience the same reaction that He received last time—the threat of being stoned. And so, in suggesting that they go with Him, Thomas is actually displaying \_\_\_\_\_ here, and not pessimism.

In fact, you have to admire the strength of his \_\_\_\_\_, his desire to stand for Jesus, and his willingness to go, despite the potential \_\_\_\_\_.

These aren't the words of a gloomy \_\_\_\_\_, nor are they the words of a dreamy-eyed \_\_\_\_\_. This is \_\_\_\_\_ because, as far as Thomas is concerned, it could cost him his life.

##### • John 14

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.” (John 14:1-4)

“Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” (John 14:5)

We could interpret Thomas' question here as \_\_\_\_\_, based in \_\_\_\_\_, and displaying his \_\_\_\_\_ because he didn't understand.

Thomas is asking a question that I suspect the other eleven disciples were also thinking, but didn't have the \_\_\_\_\_ to ask.

It was a \_\_\_\_\_ question, given what Jesus had just said.

Whatever else we may think about Thomas, here is a man who \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus. Here's a man who wants to be in Jesus' presence, and the thought that most concerns him, is that there may come a time when he won't be able to find Jesus anymore. Again, this isn't pessimism, but \_\_\_\_\_.

##### • John 20

For whatever reason, he wasn't there that night in Jerusalem when the risen Jesus appeared to the ten disciples. The question is:

Because of the \_\_\_\_\_ against Thomas, it's tempting to say that he was brooding, he was lost in the depths of melancholia, he was engulfed by clouds of darkness and was wallowing in \_\_\_\_\_, and didn't want to be in the company of others

This might make for a great sermon on doubt, but again, the scriptural evidence for this is very \_\_\_\_\_.

The only thing we know for sure is that Thomas \_\_\_\_\_. The Bible doesn't tell us why, nor does it tell us where he was or what he was doing.

It may have been due to his personality; it may have been psychological, \_\_\_\_\_, spiritual, or a combination of all four. It may have even been his pig-headedness, to use a phrase which J. I. Packer gets close to using, or \_\_\_\_\_, that accounts for him not being there.

However, the only fair \_\_\_\_\_ that we can make from the Scriptural evidence about Thomas' absence that night, is that he missed a great \_\_\_\_\_. He missed seeing the risen Jesus.

## #2. The \_\_\_\_\_ of Thomas.

There was no sense in Thomas' words that he hoped his fellow disciples were right. In fact, he outright refuses to give them the \_\_\_\_\_, and believes that he has good \_\_\_\_\_ for his position. According to J. I. Packer, Thomas was guilty of what he calls, "\_\_\_\_\_ skepticism," =

When we allow our temperament, \_\_\_\_\_, or insecurities to get on top of us and control us, it really is a sort of \_\_\_\_\_.

Can you imagine the uncertainty, \_\_\_\_\_, and stress that he must have been experiencing during that time? Maybe that's what he was doing when he was absent; maybe that's where he was—off by himself, wondering what he was going to do with the rest of his life.

“Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt, but believe.” (John 20:27)

Jesus knew what Thomas had said to the disciples the week before because He knows everything. He knows our \_\_\_\_\_, He knows our thoughts, our doubts, and our fears. He knows our willful skepticism, our brooding, and our stubbornness to admit we're wrong even when we know it. Jesus knows everything there is to know about us, and He still \_\_\_\_\_ us. That's why He gave Thomas exactly what he needed to \_\_\_\_\_.

Jesus wasn't asking Thomas to believe in contradiction to his \_\_\_\_\_. In fact, Jesus seems to be saying that asking for empirical \_\_\_\_\_ isn't wrong. After all, that's what these post-resurrection appearances are all about. In appearing to the disciples, Jesus is giving \_\_\_\_\_, He's providing evidence and proof for the resurrection, for the \_\_\_\_\_ of His risen body.

We see the love and \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus on full display here. He knows our \_\_\_\_\_; He knows what we're made of; and whatever the reason, whatever the sins, whatever the complexities for Thomas' absence and the way that he's demanding empirical evidence, Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ to it and accepts it.

When we mess up, when we fail Him, when we wander from the path and fall into sin, Jesus doesn't \_\_\_\_\_ us; He doesn't say, “I told you so!” He doesn't rub our noses in our failure. Instead, He shows us \_\_\_\_\_, and wishes us \_\_\_\_\_.

This exchange between Jesus and Thomas also shows us the largeness of Jesus' \_\_\_\_\_—a heart that wants to see Thomas come to the \_\_\_\_\_ of faith.

## #3. The \_\_\_\_\_ of Thomas.

“My Lord and my God.” (John 20:28)

You can't a clearer statement of \_\_\_\_\_ in the risen Jesus that that!

Thomas was \_\_\_\_\_ by his encounter with Jesus, and made a personal \_\_\_\_\_ of faith in Him. Belief has been born; doubt has been replaced with \_\_\_\_\_, sadness with joy, pessimism with optimism.

A heart that now beats by reason of the \_\_\_\_\_ work of the Holy Spirit has been born in Thomas, and he has seen for himself the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ.

“And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14)

Whatever doubts, whatever concerns, whatever frustrations, whatever anger, whatever unbelief, whatever it was that was on Thomas' mind for those eight days, is now gone, and has been replaced by a \_\_\_\_\_ in the resurrection of Jesus.

“Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.” (John 20:29)

Jesus says this not so much as a \_\_\_\_\_ of Thomas, but to underline what is perhaps, the \_\_\_\_\_ of faith: In a world that tells us seeing is believing, Jesus shows us here that, when it comes to faith in Him, the opposite is actually true: believing is \_\_\_\_\_!

**Despite your doubts, are you willing to take the risk of faith?  
Are you willing to believe, see, and be transformed?**