

**Do Not Disbelieve, but Believe!**  
**The Gospel of John: That You May Believe | John 20:24-31**  
Southern Hills Baptist Church  
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**Introduction/Context:** Doubt isn't a cookie-cutter problem; it can be as unique as the individual and their experiences. Just as the cause of doubt is diverse, the remedies are diverse as well. With that in mind, we should be careful not to look to Thomas' story as a universal cure-all for doubt. Instead, we should try to understand Thomas' doubt and watch how Jesus addresses it.

**Context:** To understand Thomas' doubt we have to remember what led him here. Thomas spent 3 years following Jesus everywhere he went, witnessing miracles, sitting under His divine teaching, and observing His perfect and holy life. Thomas grew convinced that Jesus was the Messiah. Then Jesus was killed. He had no category for a dead Messiah and thus the foundation he had built his life on died with Jesus. He was crushed. Thomas' doubt stemmed from extreme religious disappointment.

**The Disappointed Doubter's Demand: Show me the Scars!**  
(John 20:24-25)

- **Thomas' Response:** When told of Jesus' resurrection by the other Disciples Thomas put up a wall, telling them he would never believe until he saw the scars on Jesus' hands and side.
- **Thomas' Heart:** Thomas was in effect saying, "Look, I can't go through this again. I have been devastated and I am not opening my heart back up to the possibility of hope, to the possibility of having my soul crushed again, unless I have undeniable evidence. I want to see the scars on Jesus' hands and in His side. I won't be fooled. You can't bring me a Jesus doppelganger or a look-a-like. I am going to be looking for the wounds I saw inflicted just a few days ago. Show me that and I'll believe."

**The Astonished Doubter's Adoration: My Lord and My God!**  
(John 20:26-28)

- **Jesus Knew, Jesus Cared:** 1 week after the resurrection Thomas and the other Disciples gathered together and Jesus miraculously appeared. Though He had not been there to hear Thomas' demand for evidence Jesus knew and Jesus cared. He approached Thomas, inviting him to see His wounds, fanning his flickering flame of faith.
- **Deity Confessed:** Upon seeing the risen Jesus, Thomas' response is to cry out in praise, "My Lord and My God!" This is a statement of joyful submission to Jesus!

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- **Thomas' Journey to Restored Faith:** While Thomas rejected the testimony of the other disciples on Resurrection Sunday he very likely couldn't shake the possibility from his mind all week. These thoughts probably had him revisiting many of the statements that left him confused when Jesus was alive. Here are a couple of examples...
  - **Seeing God:** In John 14, Jesus tells Phillip and the others that if they have seen Him, they have seen the Father. What did this mean? The Disciples were unsure, but if Jesus rose from the dead it had a very clear meaning!
  - **Sins Forgiven:** In Mark 2 Jesus healed a paralytic by saying "Your sins are forgiven." The scribes there questioned who could forgive sins, save God. A fair question. What gave Jesus the authority to do what only God could? If Jesus rose from the dead we know the answer.
  - **Conclusion:** While Thomas wouldn't accept the idea of Jesus being alive, he did consider what it would mean. The meaning was world-changing, it would mean that Jesus was God Himself! Thus, when Thomas encountered Jesus, saying, "My Lord and My God!" made more sense than anything else in the world.

**The Converted Doubter's Role: Evidence for Faith**  
(John 20:29-31)

- **Not a Lesser Faith:** The question Jesus asks in verse 29 is more likely statement (there is no punctuation in the original Greek). Jesus isn't belittling Thomas for having believed after seeing. Thomas and the other Disciples had a lot to overcome to see their faith reborn.
- **A Blessing Given:** Jesus knew that most wouldn't come to faith as Thomas did, thus He promised a blessing to those who believe without seeing. This was not an endorsement of blind-faith, however. John points to in verses 30-31. Eyewitnesses recorded the miracles of Jesus for us since we wouldn't be there to see them ourselves.
- **Thomas is Evidence:** The man who boldly said he wouldn't believe Jesus was alive unless he saw Him and His wounds ended up going to Greece and India preaching the Gospel. Thomas would eventually die a martyr, being run through with a spear. Would a doubter like Thomas make this sacrifice if he didn't really see Jesus?

**Concluding Thought: Jesus is Patient Towards Doubters**

Jesus owes us nothing, yet consistently shows a patience towards doubters (Matt 14:22-32). At some point and in some capacity, you too will struggle with doubt. When you do, know that Jesus will lovingly and patiently be there with open arms for you too. His call to you is the same as it was to Thomas, "Do not disbelieve, but believe!"