

## Be A Believing Thomas

One of the most relatable disciples in the Easter account is Thomas. You may be interested to know that in the first three gospels, we are told nothing about Thomas. It is in John's Gospel that he emerges as a distinct personality, but even then, there are only 155 words about him. There is not a lot about this disciple in the Bible but there is more than one description. When Jesus turned his face toward Jerusalem the disciples thought that it would be certain death for all of them. It was only Thomas who said: "Then let us go so that we may die with him." It was a courageous statement, yet we don't remember him for that. We also fail to point out that in this story of Thomas' doubt, we have the one place in all the Gospels where the divinity of Christ is boldly stated. The same story that gives Thomas his infamous nickname, is the same story that has Thomas making an earth-shattering confession of faith, "My Lord, and My God." It is the only place where Jesus is called God without qualification of any kind. It is uttered with conviction as if Thomas was simply recognizing Jesus is his Lord and his God! These are certainly not the words of a doubter. Unfortunately, history has remembered him of this scene where the resurrected Christ made an appearance to the disciples in a home in Jerusalem. Thomas was not present and when he heard about the event, he refused to believe it. Thomas said that unless I feel the nail prints in his hands, I will not believe it. Sadly, Thomas has separated himself from the disciples and therefore, in his solitude, missed the resurrection appearance, just like when we separate ourselves from the church, we take a chance on missing Christ's unique presence experienced in the Christian fellowship. Thankfully, the story doesn't end here. The second time Jesus made His appearance Thomas was present with the disciples and this time he too witnessed the event. This time he believed. I think Jesus understood that once Thomas worked through his doubts, he would be one of the surest followers in all Christendom. I am suspicious of people who say that they have never had any doubts, people who always seem so sure. Authentic faith always begins with intellectual honesty, and doubt is the bedrock of honesty. Faith is not the absence of doubt; it is the overcoming of doubt. It was Alfred Lloyd Tennyson who said: "There lives more faith in honest doubt than in half the creeds." Jesus said: "Thomas, you have believed because you have seen. Blessed are those who have not seen yet still believe." It is of great comfort to me that Jesus is talking about us. We will never see Jesus in this life like the disciples did. We will not have the chance to put our finger on the nail scars. We will not get the chance to touch His pierced side. Jesus understands it's harder for us to believe than for Thomas and He counts us blessed.

There is a sad danger when we live in a purely rationalistic world, one where miracles are removed from our way of thinking. Which is precisely what Thomas Jefferson did. As one of our nation's greatest intellects, he rejected the notion of miracles in the Bible. He could not tolerate those scriptures passages, which dealt with the supernatural. So, he wrote his own bible that only shared the moral teachings and historical events of Jesus' life. Excluding the virgin birth, healings, miracles, and the resurrection of Jesus. The Jefferson bible ends, "There laid they Jesus and rolled a great stone at the mouth of the sepulcher and departed." His bible ends at the foot of a grave. I am convinced that the church does not accomplish 2000 years of life inside the walls of a closed dark sepulcher. There is no power in that dark place; rather, the Church is alive because Jesus is alive forevermore. We had better leave some room for mystery and miracles in our worldview. Some of the most important things in your life will never be conclusively proven. Like the Apostle Thomas, we must move beyond doubt to faith. We can't get to Easter without passing through Good Friday. Real faith is trusting your life in God when that seems more foolish. Thomas is not a villain; he is a model for us. There are times in our lives when we face grief, disappointment, pain or depression. There are times when these things happen and our hold on God falters. When these moments of true, deep doubt come, let me urge you to never doubt in the dark, what God has told you in the light. God has told you that He will never desert you, God has told you that resurrection is reality and God has told you that the very hairs on your head are numbered. Don't ever doubt that! Blessed are those who have not seen yet still believe. My dear brothers and sisters in Christ move from doubt and be a believing, Thomas! Experience the resurrection power that Christ has provided for you.