

Marks

of Discipleship

Daily Prayer ■ Weekly Worship ■ Bible Reading ■ Giving
Time, Talents & Resources ■ Spiritual
Friendships ■ Service In & Beyond the Church

April 24, 2022

Day 1: John 20:24

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.

Thomas is the disciple that we hear from the most in John. He answers and asks questions that others are thinking about. Thomas is very much like the person who is a believer but wonders deep down if God's promises can be trusted. All believers have times of wondering if all that Jesus said is true, especially during times of great sadness. If one of the first followers of Jesus can wonder about God's promises then when I wonder and doubt, I am very much like Thomas.

Question: Why do you think Thomas was not with them?

Challenge: Name all twelve of the Disciples.

Day 2: John 20:25

So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.'

Thomas calls for a level of proof that offends most people who read this section. We tend to think of ourselves as better than Thomas because we have believed without putting our hands in Jesus' side. Note that Thomas does not say *what* he does not believe. He knows that the tomb is empty and he has heard from the others what they experienced. To put this whole scene in a different frame - the disciples are telling Thomas that a flower is real and Thomas will not believe that the seed that the flower comes from is real unless he sees it. He wants to see the plant seed, root, and flower.

Question: Was Thomas' request unreasonable? Why or why not?

Challenge: What did it take for you to believe?

Scripture: I Corinthians 15:1-11

Day 3: John 20:26

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.'

Jesus' words recall what he said in John 14:27. Jesus tells the disciples to have peace because he is going to prepare a place for them. Jesus' mission is not complete until he ascends to the Father. He had to go in order for the Spirit to come and be with the believers. The followers of Jesus felt at peace (complete) when Jesus was with them. Jesus knew He had to leave and wanted to leave them with that same sense of peace. He told them that they would recall all He had told them when they needed to recall His words.

Question: How would you get someone's attention if you did not want to scare them?

Challenge: To the best of our knowledge Jesus never wrote anything down. Why do think He did not?

Scripture: Luke 24:33-41

Day 4: John 20:27

Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not be unbelieving but believe.'

The term that is usually translated as doubt does not exist in the Greek. The word is unbelieving. Thomas does not doubt, he does *not believe*. Note that Jesus himself comes to deal with his unbelief. Instead of causing lightning to strike Thomas, Jesus comes to him. Jesus' response to Thomas is instructive for the church. Jesus did not curse or try to harm Thomas for his unbelief but instead came to him and allowed him to touch where he was wounded. The church has too often thought that unbelievers must be somehow punished but that is not what Jesus wants. The entire gospel of John calls for us to move from unbelief to belief. It is more important for persons to believe than for the church to be right.

Question: Would it have been enough for you to see Jesus?

Challenge: Why do you think the Church has been harsh with those who do not believe?

Scripture: Hebrews 3:7-17

Day 5: John 20:28

Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!'

Thomas has the fullest expression of faith in John's Gospel. John has been showing through various "signs" that Jesus is the Son of the Father. Jesus was given the power to give life from the Father and Jesus can give life to his followers. Thomas puts it all together and believes that Jesus is Lord and God. Jesus is fully human and fully God.

Question: Do you think that Thomas actually touched Jesus?

Challenge: Write out a brief statement of faith.

Scripture: John 6:60-70

Day 6: John 20:29

Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.'

This last verse is addressed to the community that John is writing to and to us down through the centuries. Jesus in John 17:20-24 prays for all those who will find new life in Christ through the witness of the disciples. The disciples were more than the twelve; they were all those who experienced the Resurrection and witnessed to the truth that Jesus is the Son of God. We are called to be witnesses to the whole world. We are blessed just as those who saw Jesus because in faith we also see Jesus.

Question: What does it mean to "witness" to something?

Challenge: If people cannot see Jesus today how does anyone come to believe?

Scripture: John 17:20-26