

Thomas, the Doubter— March 24-30

GAMECHANGERS

To prepare for discussion each week, group members should use the **Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD'S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scriptures at the bottom of this page. You will notice that we are continuing the pattern of your discussing scripture *after* the Sunday message on that passage.

Background for John 20:24-29

If Thomas could have picked his nickname, he probably would not have been known the way that we know him today. Just like Peter, who is known today for having a foot-shaped mouth, Thomas is known as Doubting Thomas. He gets this unfortunate nickname from John 20:24-29, but his other appearances in scripture offer a broader perspective on his personality.

In John 11:16, far from being a doubter, Thomas makes it clear that he is ready to die with Jesus. Lazarus, whose family knew Jesus, died near Jerusalem. Jerusalem a dangerous place for Jesus to be as many people there were trying to kill him. However, Thomas decides to go with Jesus and rallies the other disciples to join him. Though he was convinced of certain death, he went anyway.

So, his nickname is a little unfortunate. It communicates the idea that he had a lack of faith, but from what we see in John 11:16, he clearly had faith for which he was willing to die—his devotion was evident. A better name for Thomas might be “the pessimist”. Of course, the disciples did not die with Jesus when they went to go raise Lazarus, but no one could have convinced Thomas that they would not die.

In John 20:24, Thomas was not with the other disciples when Jesus appeared to them the first time. It could have been Thomas's doubt and pessimism that led him to separate. However, Jesus miraculously appeared to them again when Thomas was present. When Jesus shows Thomas his wounds, Jesus foreshadows a time when people will not have the same level of proof that Thomas had.

Considering how devoted Thomas was, it makes sense that he needed some reassurance. Matthew 28:17 makes it clear that Thomas was not the only one doubting. And according to John 20:20, Jesus showed his wounds to many as proof. Perhaps, it was not his doubt that was limiting him, but his devotion. Someone like Thomas who was that devoted, would want more than just rumors. Jesus graciously showed Thomas what he needed. When God changes the world, he uses those who need a little more reassurance, a little more time, and a little more patience.

Scriptures for the upcoming weeks:

March 31

Judas – *The Traitor*

John 12:1-6; Matthew 26:14-16

April 7

Peter – *The Performer*

Matthew 16:13-18, 21-23