

WHEN DOUBT TURNS TO FAITH

Pentecost #2, John 20:24-31

April 18, 2021

*Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"
Then Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed;
blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."
John 20:28-29*

A study in doubt: it's never just about the evidence

²⁴ Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came.
²⁵ So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"
But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it."
John 20:24-25

- 1) The disciples were doing their jobs; it was Thomas who missed out on fellowship and Jesus!
- 2) The problem was not in the evidence or his character (11:16; 14:5) but in how he saw the evidence

Learning to trust

A week later we were together in a house, and this time Thomas was with us. Again Jesus appeared in our midst, although the doors were closed and securely locked. "Peace be with you," he said. Turning to Thomas, he said, "Put your finger here where the nails were driven through. Put your hand into my side. Stop doubting and learn to trust."
Thomas exclaimed, "It is you! My Lord and my God!"
John 20:26-28 (Robert Mounce's first person account in *The Story of Jesus*)

- 1) The disciples are already gathering on that first day!
- 2) Jesus responds directly to Thomas' "demands"
- 3) Trust is a heart issue not a head issue
- 4) Thomas' confession is both shocking and evidence of a changed heart (see Matthew 27:54-55)

Who is the “you”?

²⁹ Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

³⁰ Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

John 20:21-23

- 1) This is John’s _____ (along with 13:17, “you will be blessed if you do them”)

- 2) I am the “you”!

- 3) Don’t underestimate the ways Jesus gives us to know him today:

Three lessons

- 1) Wounds matter for our theology of the atonement

⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

⁹ Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him! ¹⁰ For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

Romans 5:8

- 2) The content of our confession matters – for fellowship and for eternity

Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he be able to unite with Thomas heartily in this creed, “My Lord and my God.” I do not go in for all the minute distinctions of the Athanasian Creed, but I have no doubt that it was absolutely needful at the time it was written, and that it materially helped to check the evasions and tricks of the Arians. This short creed of Thomas I like much better, for it is brief, pithy, full, sententious, and it avoids those matters of detail which are the quicksands of faith.

Spurgeon, “My Lord and My God”

- 3) The rest of the New Testament is given so that I don’t miss the assurance and the blessing!

⁷ These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹ for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

1 Peter 1:7-9

Resources for further studies in John's gospel

The Bible Project team has great stuff on John at <https://open.life.church/items/179216-john-poster-jpg>

Spurgeon has sermons on this text at <https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/my-lord-and-my-god/#flipbook/> and http://www.malankaraworld.com/Library/Sermons/Sermons_new-sunday-Lords-wound-spurgeon.htm

J. C. Ryle's commentary on John at http://www.tracts.ukgo.com/ryle_gospel_of_john.htm

Deffinbaugh's sermon at <https://bible.org/seriespage/46-seeing-and-believing-john-2010-31>

I have really appreciated D. A. Carson's commentary in the Pillar New Testament Commentary series (Eerdmans, 1991) and Earl Palmer's *The Intimate Gospel* (Word Books, 1978)

The two resources on our union with Christ are John Murray's *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Eerdmans, 1955) and Rankin Wilbourne's *Union with Christ* (David C. Cook, 2016). I also recommend Marcus Peter's short study at <https://www.crossway.org/articles/10-things-you-should-know-about-union-with-christ/>

S. M. Lockridge's "That's My King" at <https://thatsmyking.wordpress.com/words/>

Merril Tenney has a helpful paper on the authorship of John's gospel in a four part *Bibliotheca Sacra* series (1963) at faculty.gordon.edu/hu/bi/Ted_Hildebrandt/NTeSources/NTArticles/BSac-NT/Tenney-LiteraryJohnPt2-BS.pdf

Robert Mounce's *The Story of Jesus* at <http://media.thestoryofjesus.org/TheStoryOfJesus-download.pdf>

Leon Morris has a short essay on the atonement in John's gospel at http://faculty.gordon.edu/hu/bi/Ted_Hildebrandt/NTeSources/NTArticles/CTR-NT/Morris-JohnsAtonement-CTR.pdf