

**Doubting Thomas**  
**John 20:19-31**  
**HUMC April 18, 2021**

My text is John 20:19-31.

**<sup>19</sup> On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" <sup>20</sup> After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.**

**<sup>21</sup> Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." <sup>22</sup> And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup> If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."**

**Jesus Appears to Thomas**

**<sup>24</sup> Now Thomas (also known as Didymus<sup>[a]</sup>), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> 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."**

**<sup>26</sup> A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" <sup>27</sup> Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."**

**<sup>28</sup> Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"**

**<sup>29</sup> Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."**

**<sup>30</sup> Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. <sup>31</sup> But these are written that you may believe<sup>[b]</sup> that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. This is the WOG.**

I don't know if this next story is true or not, but it is thought provoking. Tom, a high school student, sat at his desk in a science class. Several days before the Easter break, Tom's high school science teacher said to the class, "The Easter story is nothing but a myth. Jesus did not rise from the grave and there is no God in heaven who would allow his son to be crucified in the first place".

Tom who was bold in his faith, raised his hand and said, "Sir, I believe in God and I believe in the resurrection." The teacher who was rather confident in his opinions said, "Tom, you can believe what you wish, however the real world excludes the possibility of miracles like the resurrection. The resurrection is a scientific impossibility. No one who believes in miracles can also respect science."

Then the teacher proposed an experiment. He reached into a classroom refrigerator and took out an egg and said, "I am going to drop this egg on the floor. Gravity will pull to the floor and it will most certainly break apart. Tom, I want you to pray and ask your God to keep this egg from breaking when it hits the floor. If he can do that, then you'll have proven your point and I will have to admit that there is a God."

Tom pondered the challenge and then he stood. This is what he prayed. "Dear Heavenly Father, I pray that when my teacher drops the egg, it will break into a

hundred pieces. And also, Lord, I pray that when the egg does break, my teacher will have a heart attack and die.” There was a gasp and the class sat in silent expectation.

For a moment, the teacher did nothing. He looked at Tom and without a word, he put the egg back into the refrigerator and dismissed the class. Apparently, the teacher believed in God’s existence more than he thought and wasn’t willing to bet his life on it.

Like the teacher in this story, many have their doubts about God’s existence or Jesus’ resurrection. And it was on that first Easter, the Apostle Thomas had his doubts. And what I would like us to look at is how Thomas’ doubts are our doubts and to see how we gain and strengthen our faith.

Friday was the day of death. Saturday had been a day of gloom. But Sunday, the first day of the week was like a shaft of sunlight that pierced the darkness.

The appearance of Jesus brought amazement and fear. Locked doors could not stop our Lord and it was clear that his resurrection body had unique powers. His physical presence was validation that he was the Way, the Truth and the Life.

But Thomas was away. He was not present, but he certainly heard the good news, but he dismissed it as false, very much the same way we respond to those outrageous stories that we see in the tabloid magazines that we see at the checkout counter at the supermarkets.

On Christian radio, there is a program that I occasionally listen to and it called **Back to the Bible** by J. Vernon McGee. The radio host Dr. McGee has been dead for over 30 years; however, his radio program is still on the air.

Before each program, Dr. McGee will read questions sent to him from his radio audience. One unforgettable letter went like this. "Dear Pastor McGee, our preacher said that on Easter, Jesus swooned on the cross and the disciples nursed him back to health. What do you think?"

With a bit of humor, Dr. McGee said: Dear Sister, beat your preacher with a leather whip with bits of bone at the end with 39 heavy strokes. Nail him to a cross. Hang him in the sun for 6 hours. Run a spear through his ribs. Wrap him in a burial cloth with 75 pounds of spices in between the layers and put him in an airless tomb for three days and see what happens."

I am sure if Thomas were in the room the first time Jesus appeared and another apostle were absent, what we would have are Doubting Peter, Doubting Matthew, Doubting Philip, Doubting John sermons. But it was

Thomas who was absent and understandably he required some type of proof or material evidence. Verses 26-28.

**<sup>26</sup> A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" <sup>27</sup> Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."**

**<sup>28</sup> Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"**

Thomas was fortunate and got the proof he looked for. Thomas made an immediate transition from declared unbelief to radical belief. He addressed Jesus with titles of deity and called him Lord and God. But down through the ages, a personal visit from the risen Christ is not the norm. That is why our Lord said, "**Blessed are those who have not seen yet believe.**"

A number of years back, a lawyer named Frank Morison who was quite proud of the fact that he was not a Christian. He was so convinced that the resurrection was a complete falsehood, he decided to write a book and expose the lies of Christianity that it was an unreliable and a false religion.

Frank pulled out the stops and went to Israel to do extra research. He examined the many aspects of the resurrection and slowly he began to see

the light. His theories of why Jesus should and could not rise from the dead began to evaporate. What really hit home for Frank were three things:

- There were multiple post resurrection eye witnesses.
- Disciples who days before hid in fear now they were transformed and were willing to die for their faith.
- But what really resonated with Frank the lawyer was that a woman's testimony in Biblical times was not admissible in court. If the resurrection was a made-up story, it would have to be a man, not a woman as the first witness.

Frank came to the conclusion that the resurrection did happen and he later rewrote the book called, "Who Moved the Stone".

I think on occasion, it is good to question the beliefs of our religion and do research. And if we honestly do that, we can grow in our faith. As a young person, I had my own questions and doubts if Jesus was really the Son of God. But it wasn't until I read John 15, 16, 17 and let Jesus' words speak for themselves that I was able to say Jesus is Lord.

The Apostle Thomas was blessed. Jesus had physically appeared and he got the proof he needed.

This morning, there maybe someone who might feel like a Doubting Thomas. Perhaps you are not really sure of what to believe and have doubts.

May I suggest you read Frank Morison's book "Who Moved the Stone", Josh McDowell's "More than a Carpenter". Lee Strobel, "The Case for Christ"

Read the four gospels for yourself. The scripture says: **Blessed are those who have not seen yet have believed.** May we sincerely be like Thomas and say to Jesus, my Lord and God.