Aug 02, 2026

Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

Thomas, the Hesitant Believer
John 11:14-16; 14:5-8; 20:24-29; 21:1-2

The Oaks Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:
God doesn't require us to be dauntless in the face of adversity but instead invites us to come to Him with our questions

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:
Dear Father, when doubts and fears overwhelm me, help me remember I'm precious in Your sight. You're always in control, and You care for me

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:
And he said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord."
(Job 1:21 NKJV)

(from "Our Daily Bread", May 19, 2020)

Series: The Testimony of Faithful Witnesses

UNIT 3: Faithful Witnesses Spread the Good News

NEXT WEEK
Stephen, the Unwavering Martyr
(Acts 6:7-10; 7:54-60)

Lesson Background and Introduction

Skepticism, doubt, and questions characterize some journeys toward faith. Today's lesson highlights one disciple's willingness to ask questions and seek evidence toward sincere belief. Tradition has labeled Thomas as a pessimist and skeptic. The Gospel of John refers to Thomas as "Didymus" three times (John 11:16; 20:24; 21:2). All these texts are under consideration in today's lesson. Scholars have commented on this designation, which literally means "twin," as meaning "double," like "double-minded." This interpretation has led to the conceptualization of Thomas as a doubter. The reputation is not entirely fair, however, as it presupposes that Thomas's questions and requests for evidence were extreme or his disbelief was unwarranted. The disciples had no idea that Jesus would return to life. Thomas's desire for proof did not make him a "typical skeptic" because he alone, among the other disciples, had yet to see Jesus.

Thomas's doubt mirrors a common human experience: the struggle of faith, which asks us to trust evidence that we ourselves cannot see firsthand. Jesus often taught in parables, his words falling on his hearers' ears like riddles. And his resurrection is a fantastic miracle! Thomas's interactions with Jesus show humans' difficulty with stepping outside the physical world and into a more important spiritual reality. The way toward deep comprehension of Jesus as the Son of God, Messiah, and Lord is challenging. Understanding Jesus as fully God, one with the Father, is difficult too. It takes questioning and wrestling to overcome the doubts and puzzles that inevitably emerge along the journey of faith. We must have the eyes of our understanding enlightened to truly comprehend (Ephesians 1:18). Sometimes that requires honest questions. It always requires engagement with Jesus, with whom the text of Scripture is primarily concerned.

(*Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary*)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Thomas Believed Enough to Die (John 11:14-16)

Death of Lazarus (14)

Death sometimes can be overcome by prayer (1 Kings 17:17-22)

Death sometimes can be overcome by God's protecting His promises (2 Kings 4:29-35)

Declaration of wiliness to die (15-16)

Willing to die to prove faithfulness (Matt 26:35)

Willing to die thinking we are prepared (Luke 22:31-33)

Willing to die knowing that there is life after death (John 11:11)

Thomas was Hesitant because of the Unknown (John 14:5-8)

Unknown way of salvation (5)

Unknown because of hearts being hardened (Mark 8:17-18)

Unknown because of unbelief (Mark 9:19)

Unknown because of not understanding God's Word (Luke 24:25)

Unknown because of being immature (Heb 5:11-14)

Jesus is the Way (6)

Way of holiness (Isa 35:8)

Way that God reveals through Jesus (Matt 11:27)

Way of the Good Shepherd's gate (John 10:9)

Way of access to God (Eph 2:18)

Seeking God (7-8)

Seeking God by seeing Jesus (John 12:45)

Seeking God knowing that God is in Jesus (John 14:20)

Seeking God knowing that Jesus is the exact image of God (Col 1:15)

Seeking God through Jesus who is the radiance of God's glory (Heb 1:3)

Thomas was Hesitant because of Needing Proof (John 20:24-29)

Proof versus hearing (24-25)

Seeking proof through signs (Matt 16:1)

Seeking proof through actions (Matt 27:42)

Seeking proof because of unbelief (Heb 3:19)

Seeking through hearing the gospel (Rom 10:14)

Seeking through hearing about the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:2)

Seeking through hearing the Word of God (1 Thess 2:13)

Proof by seeing Jesus (26)

Seeing Jesus' body (John 20:20)

Seeing Jesus face to face (Job 19:27)

Seeing Jesus is seeing the Father (John 14:9)

Seeing because Jesus is the exact representation of God (Heb 1:3)

Proof by touching Jesus (27-28)

Touch of faith (Matt 9:20-22)

Touch to confirm Jesus' deity (1 John 1:1)

Touch of healing (Acts 19:12)

Proof by faith (29)

Faith in the word of God (John 20:30-31)

Faith in God's indwelling presence (Exod 4:4-5)

Faith in Jesus as the Son of God (John 19:34-35)

Thomas Believed Through a Gathering (John 21:1-2)

A gathering that accepted Jesus (1-2)

A gathering of the elect (Matt 24:31)

A gathering that will brings together the children of God (John 11:51-52)

A gathering of God's kingdom (Matt 12:30)

A gathering of that gives thanks, praise and worship to God (Ps 106:47)