

The passage begins with, “But Thomas, **one of the twelve...**” This passage has to do with the last stronghold of unbelief *among the twelve* being completely overcome. FAITH IS REQUIRED OF YOU. No more serious crisis faces you as a Christian than the weakening of your faith.

READ: 20:24-31. God builds His work around our mistakes and even uses our sins to take us forward: this is certainly the case with Thomas. Thomas expresses the highest profession of faith of any of the apostles or anyone else recorded in the four gospels.

I. Complete faith does not come easily or automatically to any of us. This is clear from this chapter as well as the rest of the Bible.

A. Your personality has potential for good and evil. Much has been made of Thomas's personality.

1. He seemed to dwell on the dark side of conflicts: John 11:7,8,15, **16 “let us also go that we may die with him.”**
2. He had the constitutional tendency to be gloomy and pessimistic, accepting the darker possibilities as certainties.
3. To his credit Thomas was right. Exactly what Thomas thought would happen did happen—only worse. He wasn't stoned. He was crucified in public.
4. Thomas responded by doing the worst thing a person like him could do—he chose—in profound discouragement, to absent himself from other believers. Such persons must be sought.

B. Such a condition is bad. You and I will not merely become useless, but a plague to those around you.

1. Note the vexed skeptical tone of Thomas: not “I don't believe”; “I **won't believe** unless...”
2. Here is a man with excellent qualities: deep sense of justice, loyalty to death, exactness. And yet he is **vexed, grieved, confused**. Ever been that way? Are you that way?

3. When the women returned to the apostles after having seen the resurrected Lord, the apostles listened to their witness as “idle tales.” They did not believe it. See Thomas go beyond the ten.

4. **He is defiant** – all the while the women and ten of his friends and associates are saying to him “We have seen the LORD.”

5. **Understand that Thomas is sinning.** His disposition and talk are unacceptable. Can it be right for us to “**prescribe terms to God**” especially in this frame of mind? This is sin. Thomas is not doubting; he is defiant, doggedly digging in his heels.

II. Human witnessing is important but never enough to convert people.

Convert: Turning from former beliefs to new beliefs. Turning to God from your thoughts to His thoughts: Isaiah 55:8,9. Peter *when you are converted* strengthen your brothers. Thomas too. You too.

A. You may expect Jesus to help you as well as appropriately rebuke you: 20:26

1. The appearance is for Thomas's sake.
2. Granting the request was rebuking the request.
3. The reproduction of Thomas's exact words was intended to make Thomas “uncomfortable.” Something like employees talking about the boss's latest goof up—when just then the boss appears. Thomas knows that Jesus has been listening to every word.
4. We can probably discern the tone by the atmosphere Jesus created, vs. 26 “Peace to you!”
5. And yet there is a penetrating warning: “be not faithless, but believing.” **It is not a question of evidence, it is a question of disposition: I don't like this;** To me--this is absurd. I'm not subjecting myself to this—**that's just the way I am.**

I naturally think that I'm smarter than God; so do you. For this reason we do not acknowledge Him in all our ways.

B. Seeking God with a teachable disposition is still the issue today.

1. You need not expect or ask for a personal appearing of Christ such as Thomas had.
2. Christ came to bare witness of the Father. The Holy Spirit has come to bare witness of the Son.
3. You may ask for and expect the Holy Spirit to work with convincing power in you. Seek God with a teachable disposition. **If you have honest doubts, tell Him. Prone to wander Lord I feel it...**
4. Dan and Becky Jones experience has been repeated hundreds of times since then in this building, and countless times elsewhere. “We need to start all over; learn to crawl like babies.” My message was from Romans 8 about “The Effects of The Holy Spirit In People With Childlike Faith.” How did He know that? I didn't. **They had a proper disposition,** they sought the Lord; He answered with **stunning specificity.**

III. Who are those people who are in possession of true faith? 20: 28,29

A. Thomas and other believers calling Jesus, “*my* Lord and *my* God.”

1. “you have believed”: you are and continue to be in possession of true faith.
2. Jesus is our Lord—our ruler, our king. Jesus is God the Son—the object of our worship.
3. This has been John's point from the beginning—most of His own people “received Him not.”
4. But as many as did receive Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God.

B. The after life is real: Those who refuse Him will find out to their horror what Thomas found out to his joy—that Jesus hears and remembers everything in precise detail.

C. Christianity requires faith in God as He is revealed in Jesus Christ according to the *testimony of the twelve*, as well as Moses and the prophets: Luke 24:44,45; Romans 1:2 ; Jude 3,4,17