

**“From Doubting Realist to Believer”**  
**John 20:19-31**  
**Pastor Steven P. Mueller**

Thomas gets a raw deal: he gets named “doubting Thomas.”

But the other disciples seem to get a pass on their failings.

Maybe we focus on Thomas’ doubts as a warning that we not doubt.

But we miss something important if we simply write him off as a doubter.

There were different reactions among Jesus’ followers when they first heard of the resurrection.

John & Peter saw the empty tomb but “They did not understand the Scripture that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples went back to their homes” (John 20:9-10).

Mary Magdalene, after seeing the Lord did not go to her home, but went to tell the disciples.

Today’s Gospel then picks up when the rest of the disciples gathered in a locked room. Jesus sudden appears, greets them with peace, shows them His hands and side, gives them the gift of the Holy Spirit and the authority to forgive. Jesus changed them!

But Thomas wasn’t there for any of this. Neither were we.

Thomas’ doubts

Having received the Holy Spirit, the disciples believe and they tell Thomas what has happened.

But Thomas fails. “Unless I see and touch Him, I will never believe.

Consider the words we just sang:

These things did Thomas count as real:  
The warmth of blood, the chill of steel.  
The grain of wood, the heft of stone,  
The last frail twitch of flesh and bone.

Thomas knew that dead is dead.

He didn’t close the door to belief, but he did make a condition: I have to see and touch for myself.

Our doubts

We are all like Thomas.

Perhaps we are even worse, since we have seen even more evidence of the resurrection.

Yet we are tempted to doubt. How often in time of trial or temptation do we ask for signs like Thomas did?

Satan is ready to encourage our doubts and make us feel Isolated.

You’re the only one who feels this way.

No *real* Christian would ever have doubts.

Jesus breaks through doubt and fear with the truth of His resurrection and life.

Just as with Thomas, our Lord graciously comes to us with what we really need.

He comes into the locked isolation of our sinful lives.

He shows us Himself, and we see that the signs of death have been turned into life.

He gently calls us to Himself again. My child. You are mine.

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we find faith to confess the truth once more: Jesus, our crucified Savior is living.

He is our Lord and our God.

We believe, and we are blessed.