

*Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 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." 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!" 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." Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." – John 20:24-29*

Ever known that person who can never just say something, but has to make it into an announcement? I knew my fare share in high school. Maybe they were ignored in the past and so learned that they had to make a big deal about everything they said just to be heard. Or maybe they had a pompous streak in them, believing everything they said needed to be heard by everyone. Whatever the reason, they never just answered a question in class; they stood, cleared their throat, and proclaimed it! "THE ANSWER... IS 4!" they would state boldly, and the whole class would roll their eyes.

Thomas loves making pronouncements. He never just talked; he always proclaimed. "I am cooking supper tonight!" (insert fanfare here). Every time we have a record of something Thomas said, it seems to be accompanied by trumpets. When Jesus tells them He's going into danger to see the body of His friend Lazarus, it's Thomas who announces, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him!" But he was learning to curb this pomposity. When Jesus told them they knew the way to heaven, it's Thomas who speaks for the group and says, "Lord, we do not know where You are going. How can we know the way?"

And so it is fitting that Thomas, in his hour of greatest doubt, should revert back to his old ways. "While you were gone, Jesus appeared to us," the others told him excitedly. You can see Thomas' eyebrows furrow, and his hands raise to theatrical position as he proclaims, "Unless I can put my hand in his pierced side I WILL NOT BELIEVE!" Doubt brings fear and tends to revert us to our old habits of childhood. That's why deep fear can make us stutter, chew our nails, or even wet ourselves. It's a reversion to our old selves, those selves we've tried so hard to overcome.

But Jesus meets us in our fear and doubt, just as He did for Thomas. When Jesus showed up, He wasn't gentle with Thomas, but He gave him what he needed. "Here, Thomas, put your fingers and hands into the holes. Do what you must, but stop doubting!" He meets us the same way. If we need gentle, then He's gentle. If we need proof, He gives us proof. If we need courage, He will put us in places that grow our courage. The problem is trusting Him to give us what we need rather than what we want.

What do you need today to help grow your faith, your trust in Jesus?

What doubts do you have today (everybody doubts sometimes)?

Watch for the ways that Jesus is meeting your doubts and growing your faith today.