

INTRODUCTION

Thomas is the disciple with one of the most recognizable nicknames – Doubting Thomas – used even by secular people to indicate someone who doesn't believe. It's a nickname that does a great disservice to a man of God who loved Jesus. Tradition tells us that ultimately he died a martyr's death because of his great faith. Moments can have the power to define you, and one moment in Thomas' story has defined him to most of Christendom for millennia. Can you choose which moment will define you?

GROUP QUESTIONS

1. At family or friend get-togethers, what is one story that always comes up that people remember about you?
2. Read John 20:24-29. How would you describe Thomas based on this passage?
3. Thomas appears in all the Gospels, but his words are only recorded three times in John. The other two passages are John 11:5-16 and John 14:4-6. According to these verses, what else do you learn about Thomas?
4. In his sermon, Pastor Joe spoke of the power of defining moments. John 20:25 records such a moment for Thomas. Discuss with your group why you think it is so easy for us to only see Thomas as a doubter, and forget about the commitment he had to Jesus.
5. Joe's second point was that you choose how you define yourself. How difficult is it for you to be completely honest with how you define yourself? Why?

APPLICATION

“Faith is allowing one moment (the cross) to define your next moment.” If you feel trapped or defined by something (bad) that you've done or that has happened to you, what do you need to

do to let it go and move forward with a new definition of who you are based on what Jesus did for you?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Do you believe it was a sin for Thomas to have and/or express his doubts? Why or why not?
2. Is there anything about the Christian faith that you find difficult to believe? How can you overcome these doubts? Is there anything in Jesus' interaction with Thomas that helps you deal with your own doubts, or helps you to deal with the doubts of others?
3. Many commentators point to Thomas' declaration, "*My Lord and my God!*" as the climax of the Book of John, echoing the beginning of the book: "*The Word was with God, and the Word was God*" (John 1:1). Jesus noted Thomas' belief, and added what is sometimes called "The Last Beatitude" – "*Blessed are those who have not yet seen and yet have believed.*" 1 Peter 1:8-9 states, "*You have not seen him, but you love him. You do not see him now but you believe in him, and so you rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, because you are attaining the goal of your faith—the salvation of your souls.*" Have you made a declaration of faith like Thomas? Are you living out what it means to love Jesus, to believe in Him, and to rejoice in Him?

SCRIPTURE

²⁴Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵So 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." ²⁶A 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!" ²⁷Then 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." ²⁸Thomas said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹Then 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