

John 20:24-31 | Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.”

²⁶ Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.” ²⁸ Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” ²⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

³⁰ Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

John 20:24-31 | Easter 2026

I used to ask why Jesus came when he did. Why didn't he come after we had invented photography? If there had only been a camera on the empty tomb when Christ walked out then who could deny the Resurrection? But when I had asked those questions I didn't realize that video technology would in a mere 100 years be swallowed up by AI. Now Imagine if our evidence for the resurrection had been a video. What felt like proof would become inadmissible.

Today is about believing in Jesus. Specifically about what it takes to believe in Jesus. And here is my encouragement to you this Easter Sunday, do not disbelieve, but believe.

1. Jesus missed

John 20:24-25 | Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.”

On the Sunday of the resurrection, Jesus appeared to Mary at the tomb and to some other women, then he appeared to two men on the road to Emmaus, then Jesus appeared to ten apostles behind locked doors, brings them peace, and breaths on them granting them the authority to forgive sins. Now on this resurrection day, Thomas shows up late. After getting back into the room with the commissioned 10 apostles they inform him that they have seen the Lord.

What were witnessing is the first evangelism of the apostles and it does not go well. Thomas is not convinced. In fact he is clear at what would convince him of such an incredible claim, that his friend whom he had seen executed just over a week ago was in fact alive. He believes his own sense would be sufficient. And he puts a fine point on it. He doesn't say, Jesus will have to prove himself by telling him where they first met. Or how much fish they caught together in Galilee. Hold up a newspaper with today's date on it. Thomas says he must touch the cause of death. He must touch his wounded hands which he saw and his pierced side which he saw. One way to think of it is, unless I touch his dead body I won't believe he's alive.

The point is Thomas thinks his belief hinges on seeing and touching. Jesus will teach him, that his belief does not depend on seeing and touching, it depends on trusting the word of God.

1. Jesus Appears

John 20:26 | Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."

8 days later, Jesus appears to his disciples in the same place he had appeared 8 days before. The resurrection itself is an eighth day. The day after the seventh day sabbath is an 8th day. The eighth day is a new beginning. And here Jesus meets Thomas on a second 8th day. Peter Leithart points out this is the resurrection appearance raised an octave. It is the same note in a higher key.

Jesus miraculously appears within the room not constrained by the locked door. This time Thomas is there. Jesus once again greets the apostles with peace. It is not simple greeting. Jesus is declaring that peace is with them. He has made peace between them and God by the blood of the cross. He is announcing the good news. But then Jesus turns his attention towards Thomas' doubts.

John 20:27 | Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe."

Jesus invites him to test his theory. If he doesn't see and touch he would never believe, so said Thomas. Jesus instructs him by his word, do not disbelieve, but believe. It's a strange command. Can you really tell someone to believe something?

John 20:28 | Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"

Notice what Thomas confesses. My Lord and my God. Thomas doesn't confess, surely Jesus has risen from the dead. Surely you are the man who I lived with and saw crucified.

No, he confesses well beyond this. He in fact, although slower to believe the resurrection than the other disciples is first to confess the reality of what the resurrection means about Jesus to Thomas. My Lord, My God. The Lord of me, the God of me. We don't know if Thomas ever touched Jesus. But we know that what Thomas saw was a wounded man, and what he confessed was that this man was his Lord and God. That's not something you can see.

John 20:29 | Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Jesus' question to Thomas shows a rebuke of Thomas' previous declaration. Thomas said that he would never believe unless he saw and touched. But what he confessed is beyond anything he could see or touch. Thus Jesus shows the place where belief in him actually takes place, and it is the place in which belief in God always takes place. It is the place of taking God at his word. And this taking God at his word and believing him is what Jesus' blesses. And this is what the whole rest of the church will do for all time. We take him at his word. Now John turns from this blessing of Jesus in his gospel to extend it to you his reader.

John 20:30-31 | Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

How is it that you could believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God? By hearing it here in the word of God. Do not disbelieve but believe. Then in believing in Christ you may have life in his name. His resurrection will be your resurrection.

You see here is the essence of faith, it is trusting the word of God. Because that which you are believing you cannot see. You can see a resurrection, but you can't see that the man is God, you must trust him. But of all the most important things in your life this is the case. Trust is the basis of true knowledge. The fact that all videos are fake now helps us understand this. How do we know? Fundamentally it is trusting the one who tells us.

God has revealed himself to us in his word, and by his word we trust that this resurrection happened. And we trust that this resurrection happening means all the promises which attend it are trustworthy and true. Jesus is my Lord, and my God.