

# THE SCROLLS

Easter | John 20:24-29

## Life Lesson

Darkness doesn't mean God is absent; it often indicates that He is working in ways you cannot see yet. The disciples believed all hope was gone, and Thomas wrestled with doubt, but Jesus met them exactly where they were and brought peace, clarity, and renewed faith. Similarly, we are called to trust Christ even when we don't fully comprehend our circumstances. Don't let doubt or temporary hardship define your faith. Instead, let those moments deepen it. What seems like the end might actually be the beginning of what God is about to do—because hope is never lost, and Sunday is always coming.

## Examine Scripture

**24 But Thomas (called "Twin"), one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples were telling him, "We've seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "If I don't see the mark of the nails in his hands, put my finger into the mark of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will never believe." 26 A week later his disciples were indoors again, and Thomas was with them. Even though 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 look at my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Don't be faithless, but believe." 28 Thomas responded to him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Jesus said, "Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have**

## What Thomas Missed

There is something both unsettling and thrilling about darkness. In a moment, it can evoke a strong sense of excitement, like when the lights go out in the theater just before the movie you've been eagerly waiting for. But overall, darkness is often associated with evil and despair. It can create an eerie atmosphere that may provoke feelings of fear.

After Jesus' death on the cross, a thick darkness covered everything, taking away hope from His disciples and followers. Imagine the disciples on Friday evening and throughout Saturday sitting in this darkness and despair. Consider how terrible it must have been—an overwhelming darkness that touches the very core of your soul. Picture yourself as one of the disciples, watching Jesus being led away to be crucified, then hearing that He had died. They entered the upper room in complete darkness and hopelessness. It was awkward. It was haunting. It was hopeless. Jesus was dead. His body was placed in the tomb. The stone rolled over the door. Their Master was dead. Their hopes and dreams were dead. Darkness had won.

But something was about to change! This change was not only in this moment but also throughout human history. For Sunday had come. This changes everything! The resurrection of Jesus transforms human history; it breaks the grip of sin and death. It reshapes our hopes and dreams; it redefines our eternity. Easter changes everything!

In (John 20:9-10), we read: "Jesus came, stood among them, and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' Having said this, he showed them his hands and his side. So the Disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord." Seeing the resurrected Jesus, the disciples were filled with hope and peace. They saw His scars on His hands and side. They saw His eyes. They heard His voice. They knew it was truly Jesus. Jesus fulfilled His promise and

***not seen and yet believe.***

- Circle “Thomas” in (v. 24) and write “Me” above it to remind you that we are all like Thomas at times.
- Underline “the other disciples were telling him” in (v. 25).
- Bracket “If I don’t see the mark of the nails in his hands, put my finger into the mark of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will never believe” in (v. 25). Underline “unless” and “I will never believe.”
- Circle “Then He said to Thomas” in (v. 27).
- Underlined “Don’t be faithless, but believe” (v. 27).
- Circle “My Lord and My God” in (v. 28).
- Bracket “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe” and write “Me” above it.

**Personal Notes**

demonstrated that He has power over all things, including death and the grave. The Disciples were not just hopeful; they were energized. All except one: Thomas.

**Vs. 24-25**

When Jesus appeared to the ten Disciples (at this point, Judas had taken his own life), Thomas “was not with them when Jesus came” (v. 24). John provides no commentary on his whereabouts. However, given his pessimistic tendencies, it is likely that Thomas saw no reason to gather with the Disciples. For all he knew, there was no hope; Jesus was dead. Thomas had already expressed a pessimistic view of following Jesus when he said He was going to raise Lazarus from the dead: “Then Thomas (called “Twin”) said to his fellow disciples, ‘Let’s go too so that we may die with him’” (John 11:16). When Jesus said that He was going to prepare a place for them, referring to His death, resurrection, and ascension, Thomas responded: “Lord, we don’t know where you’re going. How can we know the way?” (John 14:5). So, it is possible that this cynicism clouded Thomas’s faith.

Before judging Thomas too harshly, we need to understand the profound darkness the Disciples experienced when Jesus was crucified and died. If Thomas already had even the smallest doubt, Jesus’ crucifixion surely intensified it, leading to deep grief, doubt, discouragement, and hopelessness.

Even when the Disciples told him, “We’ve seen the Lord,” Thomas expressed his skepticism: “If I don’t see the mark of the nails in his hands, put my finger into the mark of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will never believe” (v. 25). Notice the strength of his words: “Unless . . . I will never believe.” What emotions may have been heightened by Jesus’ crucifixion are now confirmed by the silence after His death. Thomas admits that he will never believe unless he sees proof of the resurrection himself. The testimony of others is not enough. In fact, he seems to embody exactly what Jesus said of the Capernaum official: “Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will not believe” (John 4:48), which is exactly what Jesus will provide him.

We share the same mistake. How often do we set conditions on our faith? We often say, “Unless this or that, I will not believe.” Too frequently, we allow circumstances or situations to ignite the small spark of doubt, which quickly spreads throughout our hearts and leads us to have conditional faith.

## Personal Notes

### Vs. 26-27

A week later, the Disciples gathered again, and this time Thomas was with them. When the other Disciples told Thomas how Jesus appeared to them behind a locked door, he was skeptical of their story. To remove all doubt, Jesus appeared to them again in the same way. This not only shows Jesus' miraculous ability to appear behind a locked door, but it also confirms everything the Disciples told Thomas. Jesus even gave the same greeting, "Peace be with you" (v. 26). Now, Thomas has experienced exactly what the Disciples experienced first: the appearance of the resurrected Jesus and the comforting greeting of "Peace be with you." This must have been a comfort to Thomas, easing his lingering skepticism and pessimism. Yet, a more challenging moment comes to Thomas.

Proving His omniscience, Jesus confronts Thomas about his conditional faith. Jesus tells Thomas to "put your finger here and look at my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side" (v. 27). Imagine how Thomas must have felt being called out like this. His challenge was accepted. In front of the others, Jesus provides the evidence Thomas requested. It was not in a judgmental way or scolding Thomas; Jesus simply offered the proof Thomas needed to believe fully. Whether Thomas actually reached out to touch His hands and side is unclear in the text. Though there is some ambiguity, the flow of the passage suggests Thomas did not need to touch Jesus' hands or side. Seeing His face was enough. Hearing His voice was enough. Seeing the wounds was enough.

Along with providing evidence to Thomas, Jesus tells him, "Don't be faithless, but believe" (v. 27). In English, these words sound somewhat weaker. In Greek, Jesus says, "ginomai me apistos alla pistos," which literally translates to "become not unbelieving but believing." Understanding the original language helps us see that Jesus is not just urging Thomas to believe but also emphasizing the importance of His words: "become not unbelieving." Jesus indicates that Thomas's doubt and skepticism are like seeds that can grow. He knows that if those doubts aren't addressed, Thomas might completely lose his faith and distance himself from Jesus. Therefore, Jesus commands—more than simply encouraging—Thomas to "become unbelieving," but more accurately, to "become believing." This shows that faith and belief should constantly develop. We need to move from "I do believe.

## Personal Reflection

1. Where in your life have you experienced “spiritual darkness,” and how did it impact your faith, hope, or view of God?
2. In what ways might you be imposing conditions on your faith—saying, “Unless God does this, I will not believe”?
3. How do you usually respond when doubt or discouragement starts to grow in your heart—do you withdraw like Thomas or lean into community and truth?
4. What does it personally mean for you to confess Jesus as “my Lord and my God,” and how does that show up in your daily life and decisions?
5. Jesus said, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.” What helps strengthen your faith during times when you cannot see or feel God clearly?

## Commentaries

*Exalting Jesus in John* by Matt Carter

*Expositor's Bible Commentary (Abridged Edition): New Testament*

*NIV Application Commentary: John* by Gary Burge

## Mt. Zion's Mission

*Mt. Zion Baptist Church exists to **MAKE, MATURE, and MULTIPLY** disciples of Jesus Christ.*

Help my unbelief” (Mark 9:24) to “take up your cross and follow Me” (Mark 8:34). This growth requires intentionality, time, and effort.

### Vs. 28-29

Thomas’s response demonstrates that he now truly believes, and his faith and hope have been renewed: “My Lord and my God!” (v. 28). Thomas’s words are more than just a moment of praise and adoration; they are a strong confession of faith. Notice how personal Thomas’s confession is when he uses the possessive “my.” It shows that he has shifted from shared faith with the other disciples to a deeply personal faith. In other words, he takes ownership of his faith. First, when Thomas calls Jesus “my Lord,” he expresses complete surrender to Jesus’s lordship. Second, when he says “my God,” he shows his full belief in Jesus’s divinity. There is no doubt that Jesus is Lord and God (as He claimed), because He has truly conquered death and the grave.

Jesus concludes the conversation by telling Thomas, “Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe” (v. 29). This was not an accusation toward Thomas; it was simply a statement of fact. One commentator writes, “Thomas’s faith is not necessarily blemished because of his need for sight; it is simply privileged, for few would ever have the gift of what these disciples have experienced.”

Thomas now believes because he looked at Jesus, saw the wounds on His hands and side. However, many will come to fully believe in and follow Jesus, not by sight but by faith. Jesus has in mind all those who will read and hear the Gospel, perhaps not “seeing His hands and side,” but, nonetheless, can have the same assurance and confidence that Thomas had in the end. Thomas, the Disciples, and all who saw the resurrected Jesus were privileged with that experience, but our experience with Jesus is just as real.