

April 12, 2026  
John 20:24-28/Psalm 111

## *“When Honest Doubt Meets a Faithful Savior”*

### *Introduction*

Let’s face it, we are experts at labeling each other. Fix one printer and suddenly you’re “tech support.” Bring one casserole and now you’re “the chef.” Trip once in public and you’re forever “Grace.”

These nicknames follow us around whether we like it or not. The Bible also gives us people whose names became labels- **Abram** → **Abraham** – God changed Abram’s name to Abraham, meaning “father of many nations,” marking a covenant and a new identity. **Jacob** → **Israel** – After wrestling with an angel, Jacob received the name Israel, meaning “struggles with God,” symbolizing perseverance and divine blessing.

Sometimes nicknames describe us unfairly. Take *Thomas*, for example. One moment of hesitation and he’s been known for centuries as “*Doubting Thomas*,” even though the rest of the disciples weren’t exactly winning awards for unwavering confidence either.

Oh, we all have long memories too. Miss one Sunday and suddenly people are texting you like you’ve been kidnapped.

Miss two Sundays and they’re forming a prayer chain. Miss three Sundays and someone’s bringing a casserole to your house because they assume you’ve gone on to glory.

Poor Thomas missed *one* meeting – just one – and for 2,000 years we’ve called him “Doubting Thomas.” Imagine if your whole reputation were based on the one Sunday you overslept. Some of us would be known as “Snoring Sarah,” “Forgot-the-Kids Frank,” or “Left-the-Crockpot-On Larry.”

But Thomas wasn’t a chronic doubter. He wasn’t weak. He wasn’t rebellious.

He was *honest*. And Jesus met him with *faithfulness*, not frustration.

To understand Thomas let us surmise his personality from ancient writings and from the Bible.

He had a twin brother, and the villagers called them *the Two Lamps* because one was bold and bright, while the other — Thomas — burned with a softer, steadier glow.

Where one climbed fig trees and raced along the shoreline, Thomas preferred to sit with the elders, listening to stories of Abraham, Moses, and the prophets.

By age ten, he had developed a habit that frustrated his father: **He questioned everything.**

Why did God speak through fire? Why did the sea obey the wind? Why did people suffer?

His father would sigh, *“Thomas, you ask questions only the Holy One can answer.”* But his mother would smile and whisper, *“Keep asking. One day someone will answer you.”*

As a young man, Thomas became known for his **honesty**, sometimes to a fault. He refused to cheat in the marketplace, refused to flatter the wealthy, and refused to pretend certainty when he felt doubt.

He often traveled with caravans to nearby towns, carrying baskets of salted fish to sell. These journeys exposed him to new ideas — Greek philosophy, Roman politics, and the whispered hopes of Jews longing for a Messiah.

Yet he felt a growing restlessness. He believed in God deeply, but he struggled with the silence between prayers. He believed in the Scriptures, but he longed for a teacher who could make them breathe.

One night, sitting beside a dying fire, he confessed to his brother:

*“I feel as though I am standing on the edge of something. But I do not know what it is.”*

His twin brother laughed. *“Then step forward, brother. The world is wide.”*

Thomas first heard of Jesus from fishermen returning from Capernaum. They spoke of a rabbi who healed the sick, spoke with authority, and looked at people as if he saw straight into their souls.

Curiosity overcame him.

When Thomas finally saw Jesus teaching by the lakeshore, he felt something he had never felt before — **a quiet certainty**. He heard Jesus speak of the Kingdom of God not as a distant dream but as something near enough to touch.

After the crowd dispersed, Jesus approached him.

*“You have many questions,”* Jesus said, smiling gently. Thomas felt exposed. *“Rabbi... I do.”* *“And you seek truth, not comfort.”* Thomas nodded. *“Then walk with me,”* Jesus said. *“Truth is a road, not a resting place.”*

Thomas followed.

Among the Twelve, Thomas was known for his **earnestness**. He was not quick to believe, but once convinced, he held to truth with fierce loyalty.

He questioned Jesus openly — not out of rebellion, but out of longing to understand.

The moment in John 11 reveals something extraordinary about Thomas. When Jesus announced, He was returning to Judea — a place where people had recently tried to kill Him — the disciples panicked. But Thomas stepped forward and said:

*“Let us go with him, that we may die with him.”*

That’s not the voice of a doubter. That’s the voice of a disciple whose love for Jesus was stronger than his fear of death.

Thomas shows us that courage isn't the absence of danger. Courage is choosing loyalty over self-preservation. It's choosing presence over safety. It's choosing Jesus over everything else.

His courage teaches us:

- Faith sometimes means walking into places that scare us
- Love can make us braver than we ever imagined
- Following Jesus is worth more than protecting our own comfort

Thomas didn't know what would happen in Jerusalem. He only knew who he wanted to be with.

In John 14, Jesus speaks of going away to prepare a place for His disciples. The others stay silent, maybe confused, maybe afraid to admit they didn't understand. But Thomas speaks up:

*"Lord, we don't know where you are going. How can we know the way?"*

That question wasn't disrespectful. It was honest. It was real. It was the kind of question that only someone deeply invested would ask.

Thomas's honesty teaches us:

- God doesn't want fake faith
- Real discipleship includes real questions
- Honesty opens the door to deeper revelation

Because Thomas dared to ask, Jesus gave one of the most powerful truths in Scripture:

*"I am the way and the truth and the life."*

Thomas's honesty didn't weaken the moment – it unlocked it.

After the crucifixion, Thomas wandered alone through Jerusalem's alleys, unable to reconcile the death of the one he believed was the Messiah. His grief was sharp, almost physical.

When the others told him Jesus had risen, he could not accept it. Not because he lacked faith — but because he feared false hope.

*“I must see him,” he said. “I must touch the wounds.”*

Thomas meets a faithful Savior. Jesus is there. He doesn’t scold. He doesn’t shame. He says, *“Put your finger here... Do not disbelieve but believe.”*

The Greek word, *pisteuo*, does not just mean to accept a fact. It means to trust, to lean on, to place your weight upon.

And when Jesus appeared before him, offering his hands and side, Thomas fell to his knees, tears streaming down his face.

*“My Lord and my God.”*

*“Lord” kyrios is a title of authority. Thomas is saying Jesus is in charge. And “My God” means that Jesus is not just a teacher or miracle worker, but as God Himself.*

It was not doubt that defined him, but the **journey through doubt** into unshakable conviction, something he carried the rest of his life.

In one ancient writing we hear that Thomas eventually traveled east — driven by the same restless spirit he had as a child. He crossed deserts, sailed across seas, and carried the teachings of Jesus to distant lands.

He became known not as the doubter, but as the **Seeker**, the disciple who taught that faith is not the absence of questions but the courage to pursue truth despite them.

And in quiet moments, he would remember his mother’s words:

*“One day someone will answer you.”*

He had found that answer — not in certainty, but in a person.

## **THE GOD WHO DOES GREAT WORKS**

Psalm 111 celebrates the mighty works of God:

- “Great are the works of the Lord.”
- “Full of splendor and majesty.”
- “Faithful and just.”
- “He remembers His covenant forever.”

Thomas experienced all of this in one moment. The God of Psalm 111 – the God of mighty works – is the same God who stepped into a locked room to meet a doubting disciple.

Psalm 111 ends with: *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”*

Thomas moves from confusion to reverent awe. From doubt to devotion. From uncertainty to worship.

## ***APPLICATIONS***

**1. Honest Doubt Is Not the Enemy of Faith:** Thomas stayed with the disciples even when he struggled. He didn’t isolate. He didn’t pretend. He stayed in community – and Jesus met him there.

**Application:** Bring your doubts to Jesus. He welcomes your honesty.

**2. Jesus Comes Close to the Wounded:** Thomas didn’t go looking for Jesus. Jesus came looking for Thomas.

He walked through locked doors – just like He walks through our fear, our shame, our confusion.

**Application:** Pay attention to the ways Jesus shows up in your life. He is closer than you think.

**3. Faith Must Become Personal:** Thomas didn’t just say, “You are Lord.” He said, **“My Lord and my God.”**

Faith is not just believing facts about Jesus. Faith is surrendering to Jesus.

**Application:** Let your encounter with Christ lead to devotion, obedience, and worship.

In conclusion, at the end of the day, we may never escape the labels people hand us – *“the loud one,” “the quiet one,” or “the one who always forgets their keys”* – but thankfully, those names don’t define our entire identity.

Thomas proves that. He got branded “Doubting Thomas” for one moment, yet his story ends with bold belief and powerful testimony. If anything, he shows us that a single nickname can’t capture the depth of a person’s journey.

But Thomas’s story doesn’t end in hesitation. It ends in revelation. When he finally reached toward Jesus, he discovered that Jesus had already stepped toward him – through locked doors, through doubt, through fear.

Psalm 111 reminds us that God’s works are *“faithful and just,”* which means He never leaves us stranded in our uncertainty. The moment Thomas reached out, he found not rejection but compassion; not judgment but invitation; not distance but presence.

**So don’t let fear keep you silent or isolated. Reach out. Reach toward Christ.**

**Because on the other side of our trembling hand is the One who still says, *“Peace be with you,”* and who turns our honest doubts into declarations of faith. Amen.**