

RESURRECTION POWER!**#3 THE POWER TO FORTIFY FAITH**

Intro: Author Lee Strobel writes, “We could divide Christians into three groups. The first would consist of those who have doubted. The second would be those who haven’t doubted yet but who will. The third group would be those who are brain-dead.” Thomas, one of the Lord’s 12 disciples, had his own wrestling match with doubt, but something transformed this doubter back into a devoted disciple. The same resurrection power that changed Thomas can fortify your faith as well.

I. Facts About the Real Thomas

Let’s meet the real Thomas:

- **Thomas – the Name:** Thomas is an English transliteration of the Greek Θωμας, which was a transliteration of the Hebrew/Aramic word for “Twin.” Also, “Twin” is translated in the Greek to Didymus. Was this his proper name or a nickname? If a nickname, who was the other twin? One of the other disciples? The age old question. “Who was Thomas’ twin?”
- **“The great courage and commitment to _____” Thomas** – When Jesus went to Lazarus, the disciples were afraid the Pharisees would kill Jesus and them (John 11:8). Thomas: “Let us also go that we may die with Him.” (John 11:16) The disciples went!
- **“The _____ inquisitive” Thomas** – “We don’t know when You are going, so how can we know the way?” (John 14:5) – Jesus’ response: “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.” (John 14:6)
- **“The _____ AWOL” Thomas** – Thomas was not with the disciples when Jesus came (John 20:24). Why? Maybe in his confusion, depression and grief, he withdrew from the others. He chose alone-ness rather than togetherness, and missed the peace and joy that came with the risen Jesus.
- **“The stubborn, _____” Thomas** – (John 20:25) “Unless...I will not believe it.”

So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But Thomas 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 it.”
John 20:25

II. Face the Problem of Doubt

- **Doubt** – We struggle to believe when there are overwhelming problems and questions, but open to God’s answers. Great people of the Bible doubted, such as Job, David and John the Baptist.
- **Unbelief** – We refuse to believe when there are overwhelming problems and questions, and demand that God prove Himself on our terms.
- **Doubt is natural, occasional, and expected.** Unbelief is unspiritual, dangerous, and to be avoided. Doubt is not the opposite of belief; unbelief is.
- **Doubt is forgivable by God** – God forgives us of our doubts, if we _____. He doesn’t hold it against us if we don’t continue a life of doubt.
- **Doubt can lead to greater faith** – If we practice “positive doubting”; temporarily struggling with questions and a lack of trust, but _____ to God revealing Himself and growing beyond our “issues”, and understanding of God.

Doubt → **Continual Doubting** → **Unbelief**

Then Jesus 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!” John 20:27-28

III. Focus on the Reality of Christ's Resurrection

Have doubts about Christ and His resurrection? Look at these facts.

- **Historically**, non-Christian Jewish historian Josephus _____ Jesus and His resurrection in his official Roman history of the Jewish people.
- **Physically** Jesus was dead before His burial. The Romans checked it and soldiers guarded the grave to stop _____. (John 19:33-34)
- **Factually**, Jesus appeared to over _____ witnesses according to the Bible. (I Corinthians 15:3-8)
- **Spiritually**, the disciples were transformed from defeated and dispirited, to _____ and determined to fulfill the great commission. (Luke 24: 36-52)
- **Logically**, the disciples wouldn't die for a lie. But, they did die, so they believed the resurrection a fact. Most died a painful martyr's death.
- **Victoriously**, God's kingdom and His church still exist, advance, and have supernatural global _____, even after 2,000 years! (Mathew 16:9)
- **Thomas' Response: "My Lord and my God!"**

IV. Fortify Your Personal Faith

- **Find the root of your doubt** – What's the issue(s) in your _____?
- **Start a search for spiritual answers** – What do the _____ and the accumulated life experiences of Christianity tell us (wisdom)? (James 1:6-8)
- **Ask God and others for help** – Don't be AWOL and do it alone. Ask for God's guidance in prayer and the positive support and _____ of other Christians. (James 1:6-8)
- **Avoid negative, cynical, faithless people** – Even _____ Christians. They only will bring you down. (Psalm 1:1)
- **Accept that there will always be mysteries** – God is often _____ to us in this life and doesn't give us explanations to our questions. (Hebrews 11:1)
- **The Thomas response to Jesus' resurrection power** – "The Proclaimer of Fortified Faith" Thomas: "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28) Thomas the Beautiful.

Who was Thomas' twin? We Are!

We are a Thomas twin...

When we show great courage and commitment to Jesus in the face of persecution and danger.

When we are bold and inquisitive in our spiritual growth.

When we are unbelieving in the face of overwhelming problems and questions.

When we are AWOL from the family of God, thus missing out on peace and joy.

When we boldly proclaim by our words and actions that Jesus is our Lord and God!

Answers: I. Jesus; bold; solitary; unbelieving. II. Ask; open. III. Recorded; robbery; 500; energized; impact. III. Doubt; Bible; encouragement; negative; mysterious.