

Day 1

November 5



Pray | Ask God to reveal himself in a new way to you today.

Faith is confidence and assurance without hard evidence.

Poor Thomas! As a result of one moment of questioning, he inherits a nickname that endures even today. This week we'll examine the story of "Doubting Thomas", and see the powerful message this story reveals about the importance of faith, and the hope we can all have despite our doubts.

Words like faith, hope, belief, trust, can all get jumbled up in our minds, so it's important that we start our examination of this passage with a clear definition of faith. Praise God for not leaving this definition open for our own interpretation. Hebrews 11:1 lays it out clearly, "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." Like each of us, Thomas had moments where his confidence and assurance failed him. It's important to remember that faith is not something you get all at once, it starts small and grows as it is exercised. We know that Thomas' faith grew from this encounter with Jesus, as he went on to be a great witness for Jesus in southern India. Doubting Thomas is Saint Thomas to Christians in India.



Read | [John 20:24-29](#); [Hebrews 11:1](#); [2 Corinthians 5:6-7](#)



Reflect | *Spend some time reflecting on one or more of the following:*

Take a few minutes to describe your own understanding of faith in Jesus Christ. If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, reflect on recent events or decisions in your life where your faith in Jesus Christ influenced the outcome. If you are not yet a follower of Jesus Christ, take a few minutes to reflect on where you draw your confidence and assurance from today. If God is stirring your heart to consider Jesus as your new source of confidence, take the next step, open your heart and mind to the possibility, and talk to a Christian friend or pastor about your thoughts.

Reflect on your life as a follower of Jesus Christ. Has your faith in Jesus Christ grown as you've exercised that faith? What evidence do you see of that growth?

Doubt is a natural part of being human. Having doubts about your faith in Jesus Christ is a good indicator that your faith is growing and stretching. When you have doubts, what resources do you draw on to address your questions and resolve your doubts? If you're looking for some inspiration and have an extra 10 minutes today, use that time to read all of the faith stories in Hebrews 11!

Day 2

November 6



Pray | Praise God for giving you his story in the Bible.

Faith sprouts from a credible message delivered by a credible source.

The story of Thomas is really the culmination of the gospel of John. The book of John begins by introducing Jesus as the Word become flesh (John 1:14), and culminates in Thomas' declaration of Jesus as Lord and God (John 20:28). Immediately following this story, John summarizes the reason for writing the gospel. In his explanation we see a key truth about the seed from which faith develops. John writes, "But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31). The seed of belief and faith exists in every human, but it doesn't grow spontaneously. Growth only begins when the truth of Jesus Christ is shared by a credible source. While the Bible is the ultimate story of truth about Jesus Christ, it's most often not the story that first prompts the seed of faith to grow. The story that prompts that initial growth is our stories – yours and mine. God has entrusted us with this great responsibility – to share our story of confidence in Jesus Christ, and through our story the seed of faith will grow in those around us.



Read | [John 20:28-31](#); [Romans 10:17](#); [Acts 1:8](#)



Reflect | *Spend some time reflecting on one or more of the following:*

If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, whose story/stories prompted your faith in him to grow? Take a few minutes to thank God for the confidence and courage of those who shared that story; and ask him for the confidence and courage to share your story in increasingly impactful ways. If you are not yet a follower of Jesus Christ, and God is prompting your heart and mind to learn more, please reach out to a Christian friend or pastor at a local church and ask them to tell you their story.

Take a few minutes to review your story of confidence and dependence on Jesus Christ. Remember, the more familiar you are with the story – the more likely you are to share it!

Acts 1:8 reminds us that we have the power of the Holy Spirit to draw on as we share our story of confidence and dependence in Jesus Christ. How does that reality impact your behaviors and confidence in your day-to-day life? If you're struggling to recognize that power, consider establishing a more discipline prayer routine, coming into God's presence and asking him to make this more real in your life.

Day 3

November 7



Pray | Give Jesus thanks for sacrificing himself so you can be saved .

The path of eternal life in heaven begins with faith in Jesus Christ.

When Thomas does finally encounter Jesus, Jesus lovingly engages him, allowing him to resolve his doubts, and then instructs him to “Stop doubting and believe” (John 20:27). If we did not know the character of Jesus, we might be tempted to imagine Jesus saying these words with a tone of exasperation or annoyance. But we do know the character of Jesus, and we know that love for humanity motivates everything he does. We can be confident that Jesus was speaking to Thomas in love, and that when we doubt, Jesus will lovingly draw us back to himself in the same manner.

Because of that great love for us Jesus gave his life to wipe away our sins, make it possible for us to be right with God, and to live life eternally in God’s presence. That gift is for all people regardless of their doubts and bad behavior. But the gift must be acknowledged and received. Ultimately that is what Jesus is calling Thomas (and us) to do – stop doubting and believe, receive this great gift I’m offering, and live with me in eternity.



Read | [John 20:24-27; Ephesians 2:8; Hebrews 11:6](#)



Reflect | *Spend some time reflecting on one or more of the following:*

Hebrews 11:6 says, “Without faith it is impossible to please God...” What does “please God” mean to you? If you need a hint, check out the verse Micah 6:8 in the Bible. How do you seek to please God in your life?

Ephesians 2:8 says, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is a gift from God.” In your own words describe the “gift”, and how “grace” and “faith” play a role in you receiving this gift.

Do you currently have doubts about Jesus Christ, the Bible, the Church of Jesus Christ? Know that doubting is part of the human experience, and God loves you. Don’t bury or suppress your doubts. Bring them to the Lord in prayer and/or talk to a Christian friend or your pastor about your thoughts.

Day 4
November 8



Pray | *Confess your sins to God and ask for strength to change.*

A faith decision alone is not enough – a response is required.

Over the past few days we've established the importance of having a growing faith in Jesus Christ. On the surface, faith may seem like a passive mental exercise. It's true that faith does begin with a decision to make Jesus Christ Lord of your life, but in order to have a healthy and growing faith that decision must result in action, a visible change in how you live your life. For Thomas, his immediate response was a statement, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28), followed by a life of telling the people of India about Jesus, and ultimately giving his life telling that story. We too are called to put our faith into action. God created each of us for a specific purpose, and our primary focus for life on this earth must be seeking to courageously live out that purpose. But it's not easy. You can't just google "What's God's purpose for me?" This is why staying connected to God through spiritual disciplines is so important. Studying God's word, speaking and listening in prayer, and actively participating with a community of believers, are the keys to discovering your God-given purpose.



Read | John 20:28; Acts 20:21; James 2:14-17



Spend some time reflecting on one or more of the following:

Acts 20:21 indicates repentance, or confessing our sins, is one necessary response to a decision to make Jesus Christ your Lord. It's not a one-time action, it needs to be a regular part of our lives as we seek to live our lives in alignment with God's purpose. Take a few minutes to reflect on your practices for confessing sin to God, and repenting for those sins. Are there any lingering pride or self-centered issues preventing you from practicing this discipline?

As we read in the James 2 passage today, faith without deeds or actions is dead. Take some time to reflect on your life and priorities. Is your faith alive and productive?

Thomas' five word response to Jesus is a powerful one, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28). In those five words he names Jesus as the Lord of his life, and also confirms that Jesus is truly the Son of God. If you've made Jesus Lord of your life, go to God in prayer and confess the same. If you have not yet made Jesus the Lord of your life, and God is working on your heart and mind to explore this further, please don't ignore it. Have an open and honest conversation with God about this – he is always willing and ready to listen and respond.

Day 5

November 9



Pray | Ask God to give you the faith to move mountains for him.

The blessings of faith are both immediate and eternal.

After touching the wounds in Jesus' body, Thomas believed Jesus had risen from the dead and confessed that Jesus was Lord and the Son of God. But his need for physical proof revealed the reality of the struggle between faith and our human nature. In his final words to Thomas, knowing that he will soon return to heaven, Jesus encourages and blesses all future followers who will need to believe in him without seeing him. Praise God that blessing applies to each of us who have accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior! But how does that blessing manifest itself? We don't know the full extent, but certainly it includes the gift of eternal life, and the gift of the Holy Spirit during our time here on earth – empowering, encouraging and interceding for us with God the Father. Through faith we also have access to God's infinite resources. As Jesus instructed his disciples, even faith the size of a tiny mustard seed can move mountains. Our challenge is to use the lessons from the story of Thomas to spur us to new and greater faith, bring greater glory to our Lord today, and live with him in eternity tomorrow!



Read | [John 20:29; Matthew 17:14-20; Acts 1:8](#)



Reflect | *Spend some time reflecting on one or more of the following:*

As a follower of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit living inside you is a precious companion who is ready and willing to help you exercise and grow your faith. How do you tap into the power that the Holy Spirit makes available to you?

The greatest blessing and hope for a follower of Jesus Christ is the promise of eternal life in perfect union with God our Creator in his perfectly restored creation. How does this reality motivate your day-to-day actions and priorities?

If you are not yet a follower of Jesus Christ, these promises and resources are for you, too. If this lesson and the story of Thomas has watered the seed of faith that God planted in your heart, and you are interested in learning more and/or taking the next step, reach out to a Christian friend or pastor and share your thoughts and hopes.

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