



**The Journey of Thomas:
From Courage to Worship
John 11:14–16; 14:5–8;
20:24–29; 21:1–2**

And for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him (John 11:15—ESV).

Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed (John 20:29—ESV).

When Jesus learned that Lazarus was ill, He could have healed Lazarus or raised Lazarus from the dead before he was buried without speaking a word, for when Jesus was in Cana of Galilee without needing to travel to Capernaum, He had healed an official’s sick son from a distance (John 4:46-54). Jesus knew that Lazarus would die, and He also knew that Lazarus’ illness would not lead to death; that is, to death as an eternal separation from God and all who love God. Before Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He had promised His disciples and all who will follow Him, “everyone who lives and believes in me will never die” (John 11:26).

Jesus was not glad that Lazarus died, for Jesus loved Lazarus, Mary, and Martha, and He knew the grief that Lazarus’ sisters (Mary and Martha) would suffer, though only for a brief time. Jesus was glad because He knew that He could and would raise Lazarus from the dead and return him to the family that loved him. Jesus loved Lazarus and his family, and He knew that when He raised Lazarus from the dead that the Father and He would be honored by those who had witnessed Lazarus coming forth from the tomb alive; then, many would be influenced to believe in Him as the resurrection and the life, the way and the truth. Jesus was glad when He thought of all the good that He would bring to many people after He proved He could raise the dead. Jesus was glad that His disciples would be with Him when He raised Lazarus from the tomb, for He knew that most of them with faith in Him would die as martyrs and live again with Him and all who love Him forever.

Sometimes we forget that before Thomas received the nickname “Doubting Thomas,” we could have called him “Courageous Thomas.” When Jesus told His disciples that they were going to visit Lazarus’ family in Bethany because Lazarus had died, Thomas immediately said, “To fellow disciples, ‘Let us also go, that we may die with him’” (John 11:16). Forgetting that all the disciples had doubted the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead until they saw Jesus with their own eyes, we have called him “Doubting Thomas,” because Thomas doubted the other disciples when they told him they had seen the Lord Jesus alive. Thomas loved Jesus, and Jesus meant so much to him that he declared his willingness to follow Jesus to the end, even to death.

Perhaps we would understand Thomas better if we remembered that he could be called “Questioning Thomas,” for when Jesus told His disciples that He was going away to prepare a place for them in His Father’s house and they knew the way, Thomas blurted out, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” And with patient love Jesus answered, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:5 & 6).

So, when Jesus died on the cross it broke Thomas’ heart. For when they buried Jesus in the tomb, they buried his hope that Jesus was the way and the life. No wonder we can almost hear his anguished cry, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.” These were the words of a “Grieving Thomas.” When Thomas saw Jesus the next Sunday, he well-earned the new name “Worshiping Thomas,” for He praised Jesus, declaring, “My Lord and my God.” Since then, after learning the truth about Jesus, many have come to believe and receive Jesus as the way, the truth, and the life. Remember Jesus’ words to Thomas, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” Blessed indeed!