

**Welcome to the
Common Ground Café!**



Sunday, April 7, 2024

**THE RECOGNITION OF JESUS
A Study of John 20:24-29**

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Have you ever missed an event or TV show that all your friends or work colleagues couldn't stop talking about? If so, what was it and how did you feel?

On the day we call Easter Sunday, the risen Christ appeared to the Apostles (John 20:19-23). Thomas wasn't with the Apostles, and he doubted their claim to have met Jesus alive. But then the one who expressed the *deepest doubts* about Jesus ended up declaring the *highest claims* about Jesus than anyone else in the Gospel of John.

Deepest Doubts

Thomas appears in three places in the Gospel of John.

His first appearance is in John 11:1-16. Read those verses.

Was Thomas's reaction a sign of bravery or resignation? Explain your answer.

The second place Thomas appears is John 14:1-7. Read those verses.

Thomas's reaction is like the reaction of a student who can't understand his homework: "I give up! I'll *never* be able to solve this!" Did you ever say this about a problem, or have your children? How do parents and teachers help overcome this frustrated resignation?

The third place Thomas appears is John 20:24-25. Read those verses.

Answer the following questions:

- When we're discouraged and ready to quit, we tend to withdraw from the very people we need—our church family. Why is that?
- Based on what we've seen of Thomas's personality in John 11 and John 14, do you think that's why Thomas may have been absent from all the other apostles in John 20:24?

In verse 25, when Thomas declared the level of proof he wanted, he was saying (choose one option and explain your answer):

- "You guys are nuts"
- "I want to believe, but..."
- "Don't break my heart a second time"
- "I need proof, because seeing is believing"
- Other: _____

Highest Claims

Read John 20:26-28. With John 20:28, the Gospel of John starts to come to a close the way it opened. Read John 1:1 and 1:14. How does John 20:28 come “full circle” back to that first claim about Jesus?

Thomas expressed the *deepest doubts* of anyone else in the Gospel of John, and yet he ended up expressing the *highest claim* about Jesus of anyone else in the Gospel. How does that give you hope for your own doubting? How does that give you hope for the doubters you know and love?

Conclusion

Read John 20:29-31.

The *last* “character” who needs to come to belief in John 20 is not Thomas (verses 24-28). According to verses 29-31, who is the last “character” who needs to come to believe?

In John 20:31, John tells us that “by believing you may have life in his name.” What does “life” mean here: eternal life in eternity, or a full and rich life now, or both? Explain.

Close with praise reports and prayer requests