

John 20:24-31

“Jesus: Our Lord and Our God”

Scripture: John 20:24-31

Memory Verse: John 20:28 *“And Thomas answered and said to Him (Jesus), “My Lord and my God!”*”

Lesson Focus: We will look at the resurrection through the eyes of Thomas and study his transformation from doubter to believer. This is the climactic moment of this entire book! We will exhort and challenge the kids to follow Thomas’s example to believe in Jesus as their Lord and their God.

Activities and Crafts: Coloring Picture of Thomas Believing and “See My Hands” Craft for 1st & 2nd grades, Word Search of different terms from lesson, Special Coloring Picture of Jesus’s Hand, Bring It Home Discussion for 3rd – 5th.

Starter Activity: Nicknames

First have some discussion about nicknames and what they are.

Q: Why might someone give you a nickname?

A: Because they love you and they are in a personal relationship with you!

Then ask the kids what some of their nicknames are and ask them why they were given those nicknames!

Share some of YOUR nicknames that you have either received or have given and some stories behind them. *

Here’s a quick quiz that you can share with your kids. Provide the nickname and see if they can answer who the actual person is (consider bringing your own!). Notice the last one which you can use to transition into the lesson:

- 1) King James -> LeBron James (famous basketball player)
- 2) Sleeping Beauty -> Princess Aurora (Disney)
- 3) Son of Encouragement -> Barnabus from the book of Acts!
- 4) Doubting Thomas -> Thomas from the Gospels (who we will study today!)

Poor Thomas has been given this nickname for 2000 years!

Q: What does it mean to doubt?

A: Doubt means to lack conviction/confidence in something or someone. Doubt is the opposite of faith and trust. Let’s have a look at where this nickname came from.

Bible Study:

John 20:24-25: Thomas doubts what the other disciples are telling him about Jesus. We need to recap what has happened first before we go any further!

Let's review what Thomas has experienced. Put yourself in his shoes for a moment.

After following Jesus for three years and seeing Jesus do amazing things, suddenly Jesus is betrayed by Judas, one of his closest friends, Jesus is forsaken by Peter (who denied Him three times), He is publicly beaten, ridiculed, and finally sentenced to the most shameful and painful of deaths: crucifixion. *

To be sure Jesus was dead, the Roman soldiers pierced his side (**John 19:34**) and then Jesus' dead body was placed in a tomb.

Q: If Thomas was aware of all of this, can you really blame him for being suspicious when the disciples said "We have seen Jesus!" *

Q: But had they seen Jesus? Yes! How? He had risen!

Teachers: At this point consider transitioning into the skit that we provided you that is a basic integration of all of the gospel accounts of the resurrection. If not, use it to give a brief overview of the resurrection so the kids understand why Thomas was doubting.

Now we are back to our text. All of the disciples had seen Jesus except poor Thomas.

John 20:26a: Eight days later! I've wondered what those eight days must have been like! Can you imagine seeing Jesus alive and well after all that He went through, only to have Him disappear again for eight days? Thomas probably has a very serious case of the "I told ya so's" right now! *

John 20:26b: Wow! Locked doors and Jesus just appears! *

Put yourself in Thomas's shoes again. He has doubted the testimony of his closest friends for eight days now about Jesus being risen and he is probably more convinced than ever that is not true. And then suddenly Jesus appears!

Q: How would you feel if you were Thomas at this point?

John 20:27: Jesus talks directly to Thomas.

How gracious Jesus is to stoop down and meet Thomas right where He was at! * Jesus KNEW what Thomas's doubts were and He kindly offers to give Him the evidence that He desired.

John 20:28: Do you think he doubted anymore after this? Notice that Thomas doesn't actually take Jesus's offer to touch Him. He just believes! *

John 20:29: The focus of the text now shifts off of Thomas and onto you and me!

Jesus was gracious enough to meet Thomas face-to-face, but we all can't expect Jesus to just show up in our room in the same way! *

Jesus says, "*Blessed are those who have not seen and believed!*" What the heck does this mean? Some people think that this teaches we should just have a blind faith in Jesus. We should just believe without any evidence. But is that what it means? Continue on to the next two verses.

John 20:30-31: These verses show us that our belief is not blind, but based on what is written. Our belief is based on the testimony of many, many people.

John wrote what he wrote SO THAT we would READ and believe! Yes, Thomas and the other disciples had the privilege to SEE and believe. But ever since, Christians have had the record of Jesus's life, death, and resurrection so that we can READ and believe. *

Q: What are some of the things that we have read in this gospel? Ask the kids to recall some of the things that we have read and studied. Ten highlights below:

- 1) He is declared as the Creator of all things (**John 1:3**)
- 2) He turned the water into wine (**John 2:11**)
- 3) He said He was the Son of God sent by the Father to save the world (**John 3:16**)
- 4) He fed the 5000 and walked on the water (**John 6**)
- 5) He claimed to be the great I AM, equal to the Father (**John 8:58**)
- 6) He healed a man born blind (**John 9:7**)
- 7) He raised Lazarus from the dead (**John 11:43-44**)
- 8) He washed His disciples' feet as an example of His agape love (**John 13**)
- 9) He said that He was the only Way, the Truth, and the Life (**John 14:6**)
- 10) He willingly died for the sins of the world and proved all that He said was true by being raised from the dead! (**John 19-20**)

We have not only the gospel of John, but the rest of the Bible that testifies that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that BELIEVING we would have life in His name.

Jesus said to Thomas in v. 27: ***Do not be unbelieving, but believing!***

Jesus says the same thing to you and me: ***Do not be unbelieving, but believing!***

Q: What is belief?

A: It is not just knowing the facts about Jesus. Belief unites knowing the facts about Jesus (head) with actually trusting IN Jesus (heart).

We first read and know Who Jesus is and what He has done. Then we respond by putting our trust and faith in Him. That has been John's goal of this whole book! BELIEF!

Key Point: John wrote this book so that we would imitate Thomas and also make Jesus Christ our Lord and our God!

Read 2 Corinthians 5:15. Once you make Jesus your Lord and your God, you will be changed. As this verse says, you realize Who He is and that He died and rose again FOR YOU! Your life now belongs to Jesus. You are the sheep, He is the Shepherd!

Is Jesus really your Lord and your God?

If so, praise God! Go and show it every day by living in “JOY”!

- **J**esus #1
- **O**thers #2
- **Y**ourself #3

If you aren't sure or if you have questions or doubts, come and let's talk!

If not, and you want Jesus to be your Lord and your God, then come. Let's pray.

ABCs of salvation:

- **A**dmit that you are a sinner and have broken God's law (1 John 1:8)
- **B**elieve that Jesus Christ took your sins upon Himself when he died on the cross and that He has taken your punishment upon Himself (John 3:16, Romans 5:8)
- **C**onfess your sin and that Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior (Romans 10:9-10)

Teachers: If any of your kids respond to this gospel call, please be sure to pray with them and talk about it with their parents afterwards. We also have little new believer packets in the drawers of your class that you can give to your kids for follow-up.

Bring It Home

(Devotional for the Family)

Lesson Theme: “Jesus: Our Lord and Our God”

Scripture: John 20:24-31

Memory Verse: John 20:28 *“And Thomas answered and said to Him (Jesus), “My Lord and my God!”*”

Teachers/Parents: Thomas has been known for hundreds of years as “doubting Thomas”. This is an unfortunate nickname because it reflects only who he was before he fully encountered the resurrected Jesus. But as we look at Thomas, we may be challenged to consider our own doubts or the doubts of those we know and love. What are some reasons why someone might have doubts about the resurrection of Jesus Christ today?

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Doubts can be a good thing if they cause us to more deeply consider WHAT we believe and WHY we believe it. **Read Matthew 11:2-3** which is about John the Baptist. Why might he be expressing doubt?
- 2) Now **read Matthew 11:4-5**. Jesus responds to John’s doubt NOT by telling him to ignore it and just “blindly believe”. Nor does He scold John for doubting. Rather, Jesus says to look at what I have done and consider the evidence! How should Jesus’s response to John encourage us when we doubt?
- 3) Doubts will come. **Read Mark 9:24** for another healthy response to doubt. When we raise our doubts we should be willing to search for answers to “help our unbelief”. There are a lot of good and trustworthy resources out there. Take a doubt someone may have raised and go to a place like www.gotquestions.org and discuss the suggested answers together.
- 4) Read **John 20:28** which is Thomas’s powerful cry of belief and trust after he encounters the risen Jesus. Notice that Thomas calls Jesus his God. Why is this significant? (Hint: **Read Exodus 20:3**, the 1st commandment)
- 5) **Read 2 Corinthians 5:15**. What does this verse teach will happen to those who make Jesus their Lord and their God?
- 6) **Read John 20:31**. This captures John’s goal for writing this whole book: that we would BELIEVE. But what does he mean? Do you think this is a believing THAT Jesus is the Son of God or a believing IN Jesus as the Son of God? What is the difference and what kind of belief do you have?

The Empty Tomb Skit

Characters: Jesus, women, Angel, Peter, John, other disciples, and Thomas

Begin by having the women sadly approaching the tomb where the angel sits. Peter/John, the other disciples, and Thomas are off hiding separately.

Angel (to women): Don't be afraid! Jesus is risen! Go and tell His disciples!

The women overjoyed and frightened then run to find Peter and John

Women (to Peter/John): You won't believe this! Jesus's body is gone! This strange angel dude told us He is risen!

Peter and John then run to the tomb

Peter (to John): John, I can't believe it! Where is Jesus? How can He be risen?

John (to Peter): I don't know how, but it is Jesus we are talking about! He can do anything. He must be risen!

Peter (to John): This is crazy! Let's go tell the others.

Peter and John then run to where the "other disciples" are hiding (not Thomas)

John (to them all): You won't believe what we just saw! Jesus....

Jesus then interrupts and makes His appearance and shows up

Jesus (to them all): Peace be with you! Why are your hearts filled with doubt? Look at my hands and feet. You can see that it is really me! But hey, I gotta go!

Jesus then leaves as quickly as He appeared

Peter (to them all): Where is Thomas? We've got to go tell Thomas!

All of the disciples run to where Thomas is

All of the disciples: We have seen the Lord!

Thomas: Is this a joke? No one could have survived that crucifixion. I won't believe unless I see the nail wounds in his hands, put my fingers into them and place my hand into the wound in his side.