**Thomas the Witness**

Nicknames can be fun. They often are terms of endearment shared by close friends. But sometimes nicknames can be problematic. If we try to distill the essence of a complex person down to one event in his life, we create a distorted view of who they really are.

“Doubting Thomas” is not a Scriptural expression. It is a nickname men coined to highlight one event in the life of one of Christ’s disciples. John 20 recounts one Sunday after Jesus’ resurrection when He appeared to the disciples in Thomas’ absence. Thomas later refused to believe until he saw the evidence for himself. But of course, no one talks of “Doubting Peter” even though he and the other apostles refused to believe those who found Jesus’ empty grave. Peter had to run to the grave to see for himself (Luke 24:11-12).

I would like to suggest a few other nicknames for Thomas that reflect other important dimensions of his character. See what you think.

**Totally Committed Thomas.** In John 11, Jesus announced to the group that it was time to go back to Judea. There was only one problem. The Jewish leadership in Jerusalem wanted Him dead and the apostles knew it. But when Jesus explained why the journey was important, it was Thomas who told the others, “Let us also go, so that we may die with Him.” This was not hyperbole. Thomas was willing to lay down his life for his Master teacher.

**Sometimes Confused Thomas.** When Jesus promised to prepare a place for us and return to take us there (John 14:2-3), He concluded with, “And you know the way where I am going.” It was Thomas who replied, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?” (v.5). Of course, Thomas wasn’t alone. All the disciples tended to take Jesus’ statements literally when He was speaking of spiritual things. They all thought Jesus was talking about literal bread when He warned them of the “leaven of the Pharisees” (Matthew 16:11-12).

**Skeptical Witness Thomas.** Hundreds witnessed the risen Christ (1 Corinthians 15:4-8). Some unbelievers maintain that all those who “saw” Jesus after His resurrection were caught up in mass hysteria, but that simply isn’t true. Peter wrote, “For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty” (2 Peter 1:16). Peter could say, “We ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead” (Acts 10:41).

Thomas wasn’t caught up in an emotional frenzy. He was skeptical until he saw for himself the holes in Jesus’ hands from the crucifixion nails; the wound in His side from the soldier’s spear. For the rest of their lives, these men endured great hardship bearing witness to the risen Savior. Most ultimately suffered violent deaths because of their testimony. Those of us who have not seen Jesus with our own eyes can have confidence in His resurrection because of the testimony of those who did (John 20:29).

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