

# Thomas

by T. Austin-Sparks

---

*The sermon emphasizes the need for resurrection to bring about a change in the person and of the ground upon which they live, and the importance of seeking the grace of adjustableness.*

**Scripture:** John 20:24

**Topics:** "Transformation", "Faith and Doubt"

---

## Description

T. Austin-Sparks explores the character of Thomas, emphasizing how the resurrection of Jesus posed a unique challenge for him, demanding a transformation in his understanding and approach to faith. He describes Thomas as a person marked by caution, meticulousness, and a tendency towards self-reliance, which can hinder spiritual growth and openness to God's work. Despite these traits, Sparks highlights that Thomas was chosen by the Lord, indicating that even those with such dispositions have a vital role in the Church when they are redeemed. The resurrection represents a crisis for Thomas, calling for a deeper surrender and a shift from a reliance on human reasoning to a faith that embraces the spiritual. Ultimately, Thomas's journey illustrates the need for believers to be adaptable and open to the transformative power of the resurrection.

---

## Transcript

Having instanced the changed position which the resurrection of the Lord Jesus effected in the cases of Mary Magdalene and the two disciples on the Emmaus Road, we proceed to consider the case of Thomas.

If among the group of associates of Jesus there was one to whom the resurrection was a greater problem, challenge, and demand for a new ground, that one was Thomas. As in each case being considered we are not embarking upon a biography, but only concentrating upon this difference that resurrection demands and makes; so, whatever we say of Thomas is with this object in view. We ask that this shall be kept in view, because it would be so easy to be taken up and occupied with the natural side. Whether it be Thomas, or any other, we only give a description in order to reach the general truth that, whatever the human category, a conquest is necessary. Not only a conquest, but a change in the person and of the ground upon which the person lives.

Thomas belongs to a category of human constitution which is easily recognizable. He is always near at hand. We will give a general delineation, and we are sure that he will be recognized.

This is the type which is marked by what is called (perhaps mis-named) commonsense - not so 'common' as to be superfluous. These are the people who are never gushing, never enthusiastic, and never flattering. They are slow to pay compliments, and would give the impression of being ungrateful for any kindness, and they seem to take such for granted or as a matter of course. They are heavy-going; more of the steam-roller or bulldozer than of the racing-car type.

They are deliberate, exact, and particular, and meticulous to a fault. They will not tolerate carelessness. If a good job is to be done, these are the people to do it, even if they take long over it. Public opinion and adverse criticism do not trouble them a great deal. Decision, fixity of mind, and stubbornness make them difficult to move. Frugality, economy, carefulness hold all their transactions in stern control. They are masters of detail, exact, pernickety, and free from anything approaching the slipshod. Perfection is their standard. They are conscientious to the point of burdensomeness. Caution clogs their wheels and makes for slow going. They do not know what it means to give way, and once they take a decision or a judgment they are unrelenting.

Much is missed by them, even opportunities for larger and greater valuable usefulness because they cannot adjust. Their ships can be locked to harbour because they miss the tide.

Too often people of this category are immovably convinced that a thing must be right because they themselves believe it to be so. It is next to impossible to them to believe that they may possibly be wrong. They believe so strongly in themselves that it is hard for them to believe others. Habit, routine, and rut are their prison chains. Self-concentration is their curse. They suffer from an exaggeration of individualism, therefore they separate themselves and tend to be independent. Narrow outlook and short views spoil the real values which they have in other directions. They frown much and sigh heavily, and may often carry about with them an impression of something akin to despair.

From what we can put together of the references to Thomas in the Gospels, it is not difficult to see how he fits into this category.

But having said all that, and we admit that it is not a very happy portrait, for Thomas - while having many attractive features - is not by nature a happy person, we must hasten to say some redeeming things about him. Firstly: Thomas was one of the 'Twelve'. Thomas was to be representative in part of the Church. The Lord saw, and was in need of the values of this type when they are redeemed from their complications and handicaps; from the limitations, frustrations, and self-assurance. Yes, release is the particular and crying need here.

So, in a peculiar way, resurrection was - and is - a clash and a crisis with Thomas and his class. Unless released he will miss much himself and rob the Church of much. This nearly happened with him because of his "Unless... I will not". The crisis is that of enlargement, and resurrection means that supremely.

The Lord called Thomas, and He calls us with full knowledge of our particular and peculiar makeup.

The Lord has a particular place and sphere, and function for each type.

The Lord calls - and only calls - with the knowledge of what He can do with the material in His hand, if He is allowed to do it. There is a vital place for an emancipated Thomas. Do not let us dismiss him with the cheap epithet - 'Doubting Thomas'. The Lord did not do that.

Some things are necessary on our part, and the thing to be mentioned first is particularly applicable to Thomas.

We must not take ourselves, as we are, so seriously as to measure and fix everything and everybody by ourselves. We must seek ever and always the grace of adjustableness.

We must remember that the last word to Thomas as the natural Thomas, was one of comparative rather than absolute blessedness, and who wants that? (John 20:29). There are levels and degrees of blessedness according to how much we are saved from ourselves, however devout! There is a higher level than that of having brought things to our own criterion of literal, technical, physical, evidence and proof. The spiritual is higher than the rational, i.e., human reason.

The resurrection has to be a soul-splitting, human-nature-rending experience; a crisis, not only of will, but of disposition. Every devout Christian will say with Thomas, "My Lord, and my God"; but with Thomas it was a capitulation, an evacuation of himself, a broken-hearted surrender of his own predisposition.

He was still Thomas, but different, so different!

---

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/t-austin-sparks/thomas/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**