



Links Players

The Apostle Thomas---Not Quite What You Think!

Then Thomas (also known as Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." (John 11:16, NIV)

Earlier this year, Golf.com reported that at the WGC-Mexico Championship, Bryson DeChambeau walked from the clubhouse down to the 18th green to watch Patrick Reed clinch his win over Bryson by one stroke.

When asked why he returned to the green to congratulate Reed, DeChambeau said: "Because he's a great player; there's been a lot of stuff said in the past years...I feel like, unfortunately sometimes, we get quite a bad rap."

Too often golf fans focus on the "bad boy" behavior and forget about the many positive attributes these two guys possess—such as their golfing ability. Who can forget Reed's thrilling and heroic Ryder Cup win over Rory at Hazeltine or Bryson's "bomb" off the tee?

We also easily forget their philanthropic endeavors. Both Patrick's and Bryson's foundations have distributed hundreds of thousands of dollars to their communities and favorite projects. That omission is the problem with getting a "bad rap"—the label sticks, and whatever other admirable traits you might possess are hidden in the shadows.

In the Bible, other individuals have gotten a bad rap as well. The Apostle Thomas readily comes to mind. Just say the name "Thomas," and the adjective that pops into our heads is "Doubting." But that title is a bit unfair.

Thomas was not alone among the apostles when it came to doubt. Mark recounts how Mary Magdalene, returned from the empty to the disciples to tell them the good news, but the disciples did not believe her. (Mark 16:10-11). The same was true for the two men on the road to Emmaus as recorded in Luke 24:13-35 and Mark 16:12-13. Matthew tells us that when the apostles met Jesus on the mountain in Galilee after the resurrection, they worshipped him, but some doubted. (Matt. 28:17). Why Thomas gets singled out from the other apostles with the bad rap of being the "doubter" is unclear.

In the only substantive description of Thomas in the New Testament, John depicts Thomas as a courageous, devoted, loyal, thoughtful, and committed apostle. When Jesus is considering returning to Bethany to see Mary and Martha about Lazarus' condition, the apostles express their fear that Jesus' life might be in danger if they travel there. But Thomas says: "Let us also go, that we may die with him." (John 11:7-16)

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We should remember Thomas as a man with healthy doubt. Instead of ignoring it, Thomas used his doubt to solidify his belief and commitment to Jesus, which led to far-reaching evangelistic efforts in India and elsewhere.

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Thomas is willing to die with Jesus rather than be separated from him. Later, he is willing to ask the question in the minds of the other apostles: “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?” (John 14:5). These two passages reveal characteristics that are polar opposites of the traditional notions of Thomas.

If you are like me, you have formed countless opinions someone without the full story. As a result, you may pin a bad rap on someone, just like those who pinned the tag of “doubter” on Thomas. Being more patient and less judgmental in forming quick opinions about people may be the antidote to handing out bad raps.

We should remember Thomas as a man with healthy doubt. Instead of ignoring it, Thomas used his doubt to solidify his belief and commitment to Jesus, which led to far-reaching evangelistic efforts in India and elsewhere.

We should also remember him as brave, courageous, loyal, fearless, and committed to his Master, who he loved so much. That larger picture, my friends, is not a “bad rap”—that’s a reputation I would like to have.

PRAYER - Heavenly Father, I pray that you would help me to be more patient and less judgmental in forming opinions of others.

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