

2nd Sunday of Easter April 28, 2019

Year C – the Gospel of Luke

Lutheran Living the ^ Lectionary

*A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday since May 4, 2014.
An opportunity to make Sunday worship more meaningful and to make the rhythms of the readings part of the rhythms of your life.*

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- ✦ **Thursdays at 10 AM:** Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH 44134
- ✦ **Fridays at 7 PM in a house church setting:** For details, contact Harold Weseloh at puritaspastor@hotmail.com
- ✦ **First Sunday of the month at 11 AM:** St. Philip Lutheran Church, 11315 Regalia Ave., Cleveland, OH 44104
- ✦ **Tuesdays at 1:00pm (8pm Kenya time)** via Zoom to the Lutheran School of Theology - Nyamira , Kenya
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<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/443323157042092705/?lp=true>

Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 470/471 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 208

“O sons and daughters of the King”

“John M. Neale ([PHH 342](#) Psalter Hymnal, Christian Reformed Church) translated the text into twelve stanzas, which were published in his *Medieval Hymns and Sequences* (1851). That translation appeared in an altered form in *Hymns Ancient and Modern* (1861) and in various other hymnals. Neale's stanzas 1, 3, 5-7, and 8-10 form the present text. Like 211, this hymn is a narrative Easter carol; it begins with the Easter gospel from Matthew 28:1-10 (st. 1-3) and concludes with the doubting Thomas story from John 20:19-29 (st. 4-8). This hymn and 394 (“[These things did Thomas count as real](#)”) are the two Easter hymns dealing with Thomas. Liturgical Use: Because the narrative covers two Easter season Sundays, the stanzas can be divided as follows: for Easter Sunday morning, stanzas 1-3, 5, and 8; for Easter evening, stanzas 1-4 and 8; for the Sunday after Easter (which usually includes the doubting Thomas story), Stanzas 1 and 4-8. Stanza 8 is appropriate at any time as a sung beatitude. --*Psalter Hymnal Handbook*, 1988...”

➤ https://hymnary.org/text/o_sons_and_daughters_let_us_sing

Read more about this hymn at <https://hymnary.org/hymn/PsH/342#textinfo>

➤

➤ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FYoMEMWUxEY> Based on LSB 471 – “Hymns for All Saints” © Concordia Publishing House 2011

➤ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tD-N73y5uDs> Based on LSB470/TLH 208, <https://www.patreon.com/AndrewRemillard>

➤ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X1_ejuX2zhU [Lutheran TV - Hymns from the LSB](#) Congregational singing with lyrics on screen.

Commentaries have been chosen because the author has written in a way that compliments the reading. Not all of the commentaries are from Lutheran sources. They have been edited for length and in some cases for additional content that is not in keeping with a Lutheran understanding of Scripture. Links are provided for those who wish to read the entire commentary.

The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by [Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.](#)

1st Reading – “And we are witnesses to these things”

Psalm – “Praise the LORD!”

Epistle – “who is and who was and who is to come”

Gospel – “these are written so that you may believe”

“Christ is Risen! He is risen, indeed! The lessons from Acts for the Sundays of Easter provide the preacher with a great opportunity to reflect with Luke on the present and living power of the resurrected Lord for new life in community. It will be helpful to keep at the ready the themes that inspire these Acts texts with the particular imaginative stamp of Luke's grand two-volume conception of the story of Jesus...”

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=560
James Boyce Emeritus Professor of New Testament and Greek, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN

Acts 5:12-20 (21-32); Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), Acts 5:27-32 (Next week: Acts 9:1-22; RCL, Acts 9:1-6, (7-20))

“The apostles were doing what they believed they were commissioned to do.

Unfortunately, this conflicted with what others believed and how others lived. In this particular instance the apostles’ witness conflicted with the ideas of the Jewish leadership in Jerusalem. Later in Acts 19 Paul’s witness will conflict with the town of Ephesus and the economy that revolved around worship of the goddess Artemis.

The earlier stage of the current episode finds the apostles in prison because of their witness (Acts 5:12-19). But why? They just wanted everyone to know Jesus loved them, didn’t they? After all, isn’t that the essence of the gospel message?...”

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1616
Kyle Fever Director of Beyond Ministries, Ingham-Okoboji Lutheran Bible Camps, Lake Okoboji, Iowa

Many Signs and Wonders Done

¹² Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. ¹³ None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem. ¹⁴ And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, ¹⁵ so that they even carried out the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. ¹⁶ The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

The Apostles Arrested and Freed

¹⁷ But the high priest rose up, and all who were with him (that is, the party of the Sadducees), and filled with jealousy ¹⁸ they arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison. ¹⁹ But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, ²⁰ “Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life.” ²¹ *And when they heard this, they entered the temple at daybreak and began to teach.*

Now when the high priest came, and those who were with him, they called together the council, all the senate of the people of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. ²² But when the officers came, they did not find them in the prison, so they returned and reported, ²³ “We found the prison securely locked and the guards standing at the doors, but when we opened them we found no one inside.” ²⁴ Now when the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were greatly perplexed about them, wondering what this would come to. ²⁵ And someone came and told them, “Look! The men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people.” ²⁶ Then the captain with the

officers went and brought them, but not by force, for they were afraid of being stoned by the people.

²⁷ And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest questioned them, ²⁸ saying, "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us." ²⁹ But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. ³⁰ The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. ³¹ God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. ³² And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."

"These **signs and wonders** were in essence an answer to their prayer in Acts 4 - "And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your bond-servants may speak Your word with all confidence, while You extend Your hand to heal, and **signs and wonders** take place through the name of Your holy servant Jesus." ([Acts 4:29-30](#)). In fact as Paul later wrote the **signs and wonders** were in themselves "confirmatory signs" substantiating that these men were indeed **apostles** for Paul wrote "**The signs of a true apostle** were performed among you with all perseverance, by **signs and wonders and miracles**." ([2 Cor 12:12](#)) ...

What is important about this detail of **Solomon's portico**? Two things: (1) It was a big enough space for the entire church (numbering up to 10,000 or more) and (2) It was a perfect place for unbelievers to see the signs and wonders and most importantly to hear the message of the Gospel. Since this was still the Jewish Temple, many unbelieving Jews came through this area enter the inner sections of the Temple to pray and offer sacrifices...

Multitudes of men and women - Note that Luke no longer gives a specific number added but clearly this was a significant influx. Earlier Luke had given specific numbers of those saved as "about 3000 souls" ([Acts 2:41](#)) and "and the number of the men came to be about 5000." ([Acts 4:4](#))...

Note that Luke does not say specifically that they were healed by Peter's shadow, but the implication is that they were (cf [Acts 5:16](#) - **all being healed**). How they were healed is not stated by Luke the physician. If a touch of Jesus' clothing healed a woman ([Lk 8:44](#)), nothing prohibits God from using a **shadow** to heal. God can do whatever He pleases even when it defies human logic ([Jer 32:27](#)). The practice of placing the sick in Peter's may have been a superstition, because one source says "In the ancient world many people believed that a person's shadow could possess magical healing powers." (Nelson Study Bible)..."

- *These excerpts from Austin Precepts are only a small sample of a detailed study that can be found at: <https://www.preceptaustin.org/acts-5-commentary>*

Psalm 148; RCL, Psalm 118:14-29 or Psalm 150 (Psalm 30; RCL, the same reading)

"The song is one and indivisible. It seems almost impossible to expound it in detail, for a living poem is not to be dissected verse by verse. It is a song of nature and of grace. As a flash of lightning flames through space, and enwraps both heaven and earth in one vestment of glory, so doth the adoration of the Lord in this Psalm light up all the universe, and cause it to glow with a radiance of praise. The song begins in the heavens, sweeps downward to dragons and all

deeps, and then ascends again, till the people near unto Jehovah take up the strain. For its exposition the chief requisite is a heart on fire with reverent love to the Lord over all, who is to be blessed for ever...”

➤ <https://www.christianity.com/bible/commentary.php?com=spur&b=19&c=148> Charles H. Spurgeon’s “Treasury of David”

Praise the Name of the LORD

148 Praise the LORD!

Praise the LORD from the heavens;
praise him in the heights!

² Praise him, all his angels;
praise him, all his hosts!

³ Praise him, sun and moon,
praise him, all you shining stars!

⁴ Praise him, you highest heavens,
and you waters above the heavens!

⁵ Let them praise the name of the LORD!
For he commanded and they were created.

⁶ And he established them forever and ever;
he gave a decree, and it shall not pass away. ^[a]

⁷ Praise the LORD from the earth,
you great sea creatures and all deeps,

⁸ fire and hail, snow and mist,
stormy wind fulfilling his word!

⁹ Mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars!

¹⁰ Beasts and all livestock,
creeping things and flying birds!

¹¹ Kings of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the earth!

¹² Young men and maidens together,
old men and children!

¹³ Let them praise the name of the LORD,
for his name alone is exalted;
his majesty is above earth and heaven.

¹⁴ He has raised up a horn for his people,
praise for all his saints,
for the people of Israel who are near to him.

Praise the LORD!

- a. [Psalm 148:6](#) *Or it shall not be transgressed*

“Structure The psalm begins by calling for praise "from the heavens" (1-6), continues with a call for praise "from the earth" (7-12), and concludes by tying "earth" and "heaven" together with a final call for all to join in the praises (13-14). It follows the typical pattern of the hymn with imperatives calling for praise (1-5,7, 13-14), grounded by "for" clauses giving the reasons for praise (5b-6; 13b-14)..."

➤ https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=206 **James Limburg** Professor Emeritus of Old Testament, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.

“A lot of praising has been going on before we get to the 148th Psalm, and now we sense the Psalter rising to a climactic crescendo, pulling out all the stops.

The Psalm tantalizingly suggests that a lot of praising was going on, not merely before the 148th Psalm, but before there were Psalms, or songs, or words or even people. St. Augustine pointed out the heavens have always been praising, but the Psalmist wished “to add his own exhortation” to that -- as if you come upon people doing a good thing and enjoying it, you like what they are doing and you say “That’s the way! Keep on doing it!”

All of creation, simply by existing, is a chorus of praise to its Maker. The sun marks the days, the moon the nights, time and space the evidence of a noble, good Creator. Stars, creatures, running water, snow, wind, trees, hawks and caterpillars: “All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made” (John 1:3). Both things bound by gravity and the canopy above form an all-enveloping circle of praise -- what Hans-Joachim Kraus called a “double choir.”...

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1519 **James Howell** Senior Pastor, Myers Park United Methodist Church, Charlotte, N.C.

Revelation 1:4-18; RCL, Revelation 1:4-8 (Revelation 5:1-7) 8-14; RCL, Revelation 5:11-14)

“The God in Revelation is the same God who manifests self in the entire Sacred Christian Canon.

Through Jesus Christ, this God poured out the Holy Spirit upon John to be both the witness and instrument of God’s voice, signs and wonders. The book’s title is mentioned in the first verse and its main goal is to alert readers to what they will encounter as the narrative unfolds. In theological terms; Revelation refers to an “unveiling,” of a worldview previously hidden from ordinary eyes; especially from the eyes of the oppressed people of Asia Minor. It is not a secret that Revelation was written to an oppressed group of people who experienced a nightmare from Imperial rule. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus through John summons readers and hearers not to worship Caesar and not to hear imperial propaganda as the final word.

The opening of the letter, especially in Revelation 1:4-8 informs readers of the name of the sender, the recipients of the message who are the seven churches mentioned in chapters 2 and 3, and the greeting to the listeners...” (continued after the reading)

Greeting to the Seven Churches

⁴ John to the seven churches that are in Asia:

Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, ⁵ and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood ⁶ and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. ⁷ Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail^[a] on account of him. Even so. Amen.

⁸ “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

Vision of the Son of Man

⁹ I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. ¹⁰ I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet ¹¹ saying, “Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.”

¹² Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. ¹⁴ The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, ¹⁵ his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. ¹⁶ In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

¹⁷ When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, “Fear not, I am the first and the last, ¹⁸ and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.

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a. [Revelation 1:7](#) Or *mourn*

“...The readers of the 21st century might be perplexed by the number seven but from John’s perspective, everything is seen from the heavenly view and thus Revelation is embedded with symbolic divine language. Seven is signifier of completeness or perfection, suggesting that the Book of Revelation was not just written for the seven congregations in Asia Minor but rather, the book was written to the universal Church including other small communities of faith that were in and around Asia Minor. While the language of Revelation does not resonate with the postmodern language, the letter was written to all believing Christians.

In reading this letter, listeners must hear the voice of God speaking into their lives in ways that are comforting to their ears. The greeting of grace and peace informs Christians that their peace is not found in the language of the Empire but rather in the *Pax Dei* or the peace of God.

In the greeting, John uses a triad of ‘threes’, which again is a number of the divine and from this flows the three sources of grace, peace and life (Revelation 1:4-5). Embedded in the greeting are also the three titles of God of which John uses to characterize the narrative of the book...

Imagery and metaphor dominates in the book of Revelation and in particular, John uses the metaphor of sevens to signify or describe the nature of the Holy Spirit. In chapter Revelation 1:4, the seven spirits are a reference to the fullness of the Holy Spirit before God’s throne...

What readers may ask is the question about John’s role in trying to elucidate the purpose of Revelation... **First**, John is a pastor to all the congregations in Asia Minor and he sends this message for pastoral purposes. **Second**, John is “faithful witness,” which means he witnesses to all what God has done in Jesus Christ and John does this even with his entire life as a public testimony...

What then are the lessons of Revelation 1:4-8 and what are readers called to do in terms of appropriation of the message? The first lesson is in verses Revelation 1:5-6 where Jesus is praised for three roles: “Loving, freeing, and made us.” These are not just words but they refer to God’s disclosure of love expressed in the life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus. Revelation is about God’s love to all humanity and its entire creation.

The other lesson is that Christ followers are on a journey and along this journey; they will encounter other Neros (the dragon and beast in the form of cancer, death, hunger, wars, terrorism, and HIV/AIDS) and will be tested with idolatry imageries... Above all, God is in absolute control of all things and this same God has the first and final word in creation....”

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2825 **Israel Kamudzandu** Associate Professor of New Testament Studies, Saint Paul School of Theology, Kansas City, Mo.

John 20:19-31; RCL, the same reading (John 21:1-14 (15-19); RCL, John 21:1-19)

“...Remember when we first met Thomas back in 11:16? Jesus was planning to head to Judea to raise Lazarus, and the disciples were trying to talk him out of it, since it was dangerous territory for Jesus. When I hear Thomas, I imagine the voice of Eeyore: committed, but in a resigned, underwhelmed, less-than-hopeful tone...Thomas makes his first appearance in the Gospel when he says in his forthright, resigned, if brave statement: “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

Thomas next appears in 14:1, when Jesus is talking about his impending death and ascension to heaven. It’s unlikely that the other disciples have a clue about what Jesus is saying (suggested by his interaction with Philip in verse 9), but they remain silent. Not Thomas. He speaks up and says, “Well, actually, I have no idea what you’re talking about” (verse 5, my translation). Thomas is a straight shooter, a practical guy. He may not have much imagination or sense of mystery, but he does have an enquiring mind. Thomas asks the tough questions that others may be scared or embarrassed to ask. Thomas is a no-nonsense guy, and I can appreciate that. So maybe we shouldn’t be so surprised at what happens in John 20-- Thomas stays in character...”

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=3222 **Jaime Clark-Soles** Professor of New Testament, Altshuler Distinguished Teaching Professor, Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas

“The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 20th Chapter”

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

¹⁹ On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, ^[a] Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, **“Peace be with you.”** ²⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

²¹ Jesus said to them again, **“Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”** ²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, **“Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.”**

Jesus and Thomas

²⁴ Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, ^[b] was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.”

²⁶ Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, **“Peace be with you.”** ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, **“Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.”** ²⁸ Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” ²⁹ Jesus said to him, **“Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”**

The Purpose of This Book

³⁰ Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

- a. [John 20:19](#) Greek *loudaioi* probably refers here to Jewish religious leaders, and others under their influence, in that time
- b. [John 20:24](#) Greek *Didymus*

“This is the Gospel of the Lord” “Praise to You, O Christ”

“Why didn’t they go looking for him?”

Today we pick up right where we left off last week on Easter here in John 20. When last we saw the disciples, Mary Magdalene had just burst in with the excited and exciting news, “I have seen the Lord!” Earlier that day, when Mary told these same disciples that the stone had been rolled away, Peter and John bolted out of their chairs and sprinted to the tomb. But near as we can tell, once Mary tells them the far better news that Jesus the Lord is once again up and about and quite undeniably alive, it looks as though no one moved.

Why didn’t they go looking for him?...

It’s difficult to answer this question, but I think John gives us a major clue when he tells us that on the evening of that Easter day, the disciples were behind a locked door.

The door was locked.

The door was locked because they were afraid...

Afraid. They were afraid of the Jews, John said. But as Craig Barnes has said, that doesn’t seem a terribly credible fear. There was no evidence that anyone was planning to hunt down Jesus’ erstwhile followers. And anyway, earlier that same day, any lingering fears of arrest the disciples may have had didn’t prevent at least a couple of them from running straight toward Jesus’ tomb. If ever there were a location where they very well could have run into some Roman soldiers or Jewish leaders, the tomb was it. But still they went. Fear didn’t stop them when they thought a grave robbery had happened. So why did fear lock them up in a room when resurrection was in the air? Of whom or what were the disciples really afraid? Whom were really afraid of running into in case they went out?

Could it have been that they were afraid of running into . . . *Jesus himself?*...

John is honest throughout his gospel about how clueless the disciples often were. Earlier in this very chapter, in verse 9, John admits that they did not understand that Jesus had to be raised from the dead. But if they did not understand *that* Jesus was to be raised, it's a cinch they also didn't understand *why* he had to be raised, either. After all, they had abandoned their Lord in his most dire hour of need. And it's not as though the end-result of that abandonment had been something minor like Jesus getting booked on a misdemeanor charge, fined \$500, and sentenced to 90 days in the hoosegow. The penalty Jesus got was on the stiff side. They had watched the crucifixion from afar, and to a man they knew they were somehow complicit in what happened.

And so Mary says Jesus is alive, but what if he is bearing a grudge? Suppose his first order of post-resurrection business was settling some old scores? Have you ever said some really nasty things about someone behind his or her back, only to discover a short time later that so-and-so had gotten wind of what you had said? Are you real eager to run into that person again?...

Why didn't they go looking for him? Because they were just possibly afraid to *find* him. And so on that first Easter—a day John 20 makes clear began with weeping and lamenting—the day ends with locked doors and great fear...

John records for us no reaction of the disciples, not initially at least. But he does make clear that Jesus leaves no quarter for fear because he no sooner pops in on them and he says, "Peace to you!" He says it immediately the way he always does. He says "Peace." He says "Shalom." He says it's all right. He speaks a word that is the opposite of fear and so squelches shame, puts away and banishes any thoughts the disciples may have had about Jesus' bearing a grudge. He was not out to settle any old scores but to create a whole new situation. In what some call John's mini-Pentecost, Jesus breathes on them the sweetness of the Holy Spirit. And like that first breath of life that the Almighty Creator God breathed into Adam's nostrils at the dawn of creation, so this was a life-giving breath that made all things new.

Jesus never says a word about their past actions, their betrayals and denials. He does not even overtly say, "Forget about it" or "I forgive you." Instead he gives them a Spirit that tells them, in a way more compelling than words alone, that of *course* all is forgiven. He even sends *them* out into the world with a mission of forgiveness. Did you catch that, by the way? By telling them they now had a mission to announce the forgiveness of sins, Jesus was as much as telling them to unlock that door and get out of there. The cause of the Lord cannot go forward so long as any of his people insist on staying behind locked doors..."

➤ https://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/easter-2c/?type=the_lectionary_gospel Scott Hoezee

The story of Thomas has always been one of my favorites. Of course, it's not just a story about Thomas. It's also a story about frightened disciples. So scared, in fact, that, they hid behind locked doors. And who can blame them? ... Little wonder they were afraid, assuming that the next step would be to round up Jesus' followers. But when Jesus comes on the scene, their fear falls away and is replaced by joy.

This, I think, is the way we assume faith should work. Yes, perhaps you've got doubts and questions and fears, but then God arrives and those all fall away, replaced by joy and wonder and, of course, unshakeable faith.

But that's not the way it works with Thomas. He doubts. He questions. He disbelieves. He's not satisfied with second-hand reports and wants to see for himself. And again I would say, who can blame him? He was, after all, one of those who saw his Lord and friend mistreated, beaten, and then crucified

and has probably spent the last few days pulling the broken pieces of his life back together and trying to figure out what to do next. In fact, he might have already started getting on with his life – why else, I wonder, is he out and about when the rest of the disciples are hiding behind locked doors.

So here's what I'm wondering a day or two after a joyous Easter service: do we make room for the Thomases in our world? Because I suspect that their number is legion, even among those who worshipped with us on Sunday and certainly among those with little or no familiarity with our congregation or faith.

Thomas does come to believe. He sees Jesus for himself. And after that experience he not only assents or consents to the witness of his comrades but makes the most profound confession of faith about Jesus contained in the New Testament, calling Jesus "my Lord and my God," bookending the confession in John 1 where the eternal word that becomes flesh is not only with God but is God...

To tell you the truth, I have no idea what the other disciples thought of Thomas' initial skepticism. Maybe they were scandalized. Or maybe they sympathized. Further, I suspect that John's whole point in including this story in his Gospel is to affirm the faith of his community, a group of people who "had not seen yet believed."...

Thomas comes to faith because he first has the chance to voice his doubt and questions and then experiences Jesus for himself...

➤ <http://www.davidlose.net/2016/03/easter-2-c-blessed-doubt/> David Lose



➤ *Agnus Day appears with the permission of* <https://www.agnusday.org/>

“...In these few verses (from Acts 5) are the whole of the apostolic witness packed in a nutshell. This lesson provides an occasion to hear and announce that Easter message once again, now coupled with the bold witness and confident life in community that it evidently inspires. We, too, join these apostolic witnesses in the sure and certain truth that God has raised Jesus from the dead, that God has exalted him to be our leader and Savior, and has done so in order that we may receive God's gift of repentance and forgiveness that is ours in the present and living power of the Spirit.

Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed!”

➤ https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=560
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