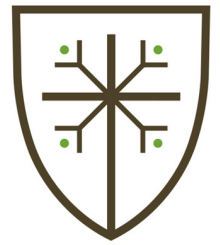


Eastertide

April 9 - May 28

SERMON NOTES



April 16, 2023

SERMON INFO

TITLE

Doubting Thomas?

PREACHER

Rev. Craig Chapman

TEXTS

Acts 2:14, 22-24

1 Peter 1:3-7

John 20:19-20, 24-29

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you go to God's Word with your doubts? Where do we often go instead?
2. In what ways might we have "locked Jesus out of our lives" just as we see him locked out of the room where the disciples were gathered?

SERMON IN SUMMARY

Every year right after Easter Sunday, the traditional schedule of readings of the church (the lectionary) takes us to the story of Thomas. Thomas represents all of us. And Thomas also shows us how to see, believe, and be inspired by the living, resurrected Christ. We learn three things from Thomas in this week's gospel reading: the character of Jesus, the characteristics of belief, and the call on our life.

Character of Jesus

Eight days before Jesus shows himself to Thomas, he comes to the rest of the disciples. But Jesus does not come to Thomas in anger or frustration. He doesn't say to Thomas, "well, you weren't there the first time." Jesus comes to his disciples, to Thomas, and to each of us with patient persistence. He seeks out Thomas and comes to him despite locked doors. And after he finds him, he responds to Thomas's doubt with his wounds and with words of confirmation and transformation. God permits doubt. He can handle our whys and why nots. But he does not respond with a why or a why not. He responds to us just as Jesus responded to Thomas – with a person, a person who entered into our doubts and our wounds and swallowed up sorrow and suffering so that those wounds are, even now, a part of his glorified body.

Characteristics of Belief

Thomas also shows us how to respond to the character of Jesus in belief. Belief is, first of all, marked by humility, a willingness to say, "I don't know." Secondly, Thomas's belief after Jesus appears to him is more than just an acknowledgement of who Jesus is. He doesn't just say "Lord and God." He says "MY Lord and MY God." He shows a personal trust in Jesus. His personal identity is seen in the light of the risen Lord. Thomas's belief displays a living hope. Despite the suffering and persecution inherent with following Jesus, he is willing to go to the very ends of the earth to share the hope of the resurrection.

Call on our Lives

As believers, we are called to live lives of hope and sacrificial service; lives marked by forgiveness, compassion, mercy, and grace. And finally, we are a missional people, gathered and sent out in the world to live distinctly Christian lives in order that our sacrificial service and even our suffering may inspire faith in others.