

Gospel and Sermon Transcript -2nd Sunday Easter - April 12, 2026

00:00

[Music]

00:22

The Holy Gospel according to St. John the 20th chapter.

00:31

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, the doors were locked where the disciples were for fear of the authorities.

00:40

Jesus came. Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."

00:50

After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side.

00:55

Then the disciples rejoiced because they saw the Lord.

00:59

And Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

01:08

And when he had said this, he breathed upon them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

01:14

If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them.

01:18

If you retain the sins of any, they are retained.

01:25

But Thomas, who was called the twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus was there.

01:31

So the other disciples told him, "We've seen the Lord."

01:36

And Thomas said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hand,

01:42

and put my finger in the mark of the nail and my hand in his side?

01:47

I will not believe.

01:53

A week later, the disciples were again in the house and Thomas was with them.

02:00

Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said,

02:07

"Peace be with you."

02:10

And then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands.

02:18

Reach out your hand and put it in my side.

02:22

Do not doubt, but believe."

02:26

Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God."

02:30

And Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me?

02:36

those who have not seen and yet have come to believe. Now Jesus did many other

02:45

signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book but

02:50

these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the

02:56

Messiah the Son of God and that through believing you may have life in his name.

03:04

the gospel of our Lord.

03:09

Won't you be seated.

The Sermon

03:18

Grace and peace to you from the one who was, who is, and who is to come.

03:27

So part of the property report at the council meeting coming up is going to

03:32

include that some yard lights have been ordered for the church and the

03:36

pyresnage and that padlocks have been ordered for the fence. And you think I'm

03:42

going to wrap on the disciples for locking a door because there might be

03:46

authorities coming to actually kill them? Let's readjust our expectations just a

03:53

little bit here, shall we?

04:00

I think the disciples had the right idea.

04:05

But I got to wondering, well, what would happen if the authorities had shown up?

04:12

Would they politely knock?

04:15

Oh, well, we'll be back next week.

04:16

Could we maybe just put something in the day planner?

04:19

No, no, no. That's not going to happen either.

04:23

But what if the disciples did have the authorities at the door

04:31

What I'm asking is, would have a door and locks been enough?

04:41

I kind of sound like that TV character Monk, don't I?

04:44

You know him?

04:45

He was afraid of everything and kind of paranoid and whatnot.

04:50

Hypervigilant, we say.

04:53

But the reality is, and I think it's reflected in our wisdom literature and scripture like

04:58

the book of Ecclesiastes, that there are some fears

05:02

that we try to keep at bay by accumulating,

05:05

whether it's possessions or wealth or knowledge

05:09

or experiences or even just a bit of happiness

05:15

from a moment, that eventually that's not enough

05:21

to totally and completely make us secure.

05:26

And I think the writer, the preacher as he's called,

05:30

would say that if we expect to enjoy these things in life

05:34

but to know that they have their limits,

05:37

we're the better for it.

05:42

And maybe for the disciples,

05:44

to know that the door just might keep the authorities away

05:48

is a good thing,

05:51

but to know that if it doesn't,

05:55

Maybe we're the better for it because we realize our vulnerability.

06:00

We realize our limitations.

06:08

And as long as I'm on the subject of doors and locks and such,

06:16

what if Jesus had gone to the door and knocked and asked to be admitted?

06:25

Who's going to be the first to pop up from the table and open the door?

06:31

Maybe Jesus would be vetted a little bit through the door.

06:36

Oh, Jesus. Oh, you mean the one who was killed, who's not here?

06:43

That Jesus?

06:46

Ah, good one.

06:51

When Jesus goes not only through a doorway but a door,

06:57

I doubt that he's showing off.

07:01

But he wants to be present with people

07:03

who are living with genuine fear, grief, anxiety

07:09

about the future.

07:12

And so when he does bypass that door, what he does next

07:18

is intriguing.

07:19

It's amazing and I think consistent with Jesus' character.

07:25

Not a, "I told you so to be heard."

07:30

Not a, "Oh you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

07:33

Oh, come on, just suck it up.

07:37

No.

07:40

He breathes peace on those occupants of the room.

07:45

In the middle of their fear,

07:47

Jesus walks right into the middle of it. He doesn't give a motivational speech. He gives

07:54

himself breathing peace, bestowing the spirit and reminding the disciples that

08:02

yes, they have a purpose. That God has this end game that is still in process

08:09

and that they are part of it.

08:12

received the Holy Spirit.

08:21

And for those in the room, that was enough.

08:25

But for Thomas to hear the story, that wasn't enough. So now you're saying, "Oh

08:32

good, a good old-fashioned sermon about Thomas and all his problems and why he

08:37

doesn't believe stuff. Sorry, gonna have to readjust those expectations again

08:43

because I'm with Thomas.

08:50

Most of us know that after death that's it for the body. And the kind of death

08:57

Jesus died, you just don't come back from that.

09:04

Except, well, according to the theoretical physicist John Polkingharn,

09:12

occasionally there are singularities that happen in the universe. That's why

09:17

we're here.

09:20

And evidently, the resurrection is one of those singularities. One of those

09:26

interruptions in the way the world and the universe usually work.

09:33

And again, what does Jesus do for Thomas? He offers him his vulnerability. It's not

09:42

a proof. It's an offering of his very self.

09:51

People who study closely the text of John's gospel have debated about whether

09:55

Thomas actually did take Jesus up on the offer of touching the wounds.

10:02

We do know though that something in Thomas shifts from that sense of weariness and skepticism and doubt to something else.

10:18

to a full-throated confession, one that is unique actually in the gospel. "My Lord

10:26

and my God," Thomas says.

10:32

It's a good time to talk about the gospel and Jesus' appearance to these in

10:38

the room.

10:41

Essentially a stand-in for the faith community.

10:46

And so I think we can ponder things like how does Jesus sneak through our locked

10:54

doors? And what happens once the risen Christ is in our midst? And how are we

11:04

directed to carry on the work of Jesus in the world?

11:15

Some of us yearn for those experiences that Thomas yearn for, the tangible, the

11:21

things you can really hang on to and at last. We have some. We have the witnesses

11:28

of our ancestors. We have the water of baptism and we have the bread and wine

11:34

of communion where we teach that that's how Jesus shows up in a real and

11:40

and present way. And we literally take that in.

11:52

Something interesting about that though, that even in the absorption of that

11:58

presence, some of us find it difficult to not have our heads get in the way and

12:06

and to question and to doubt.

12:13

And I think that because we have this witness of the interaction between Thomas and Jesus,

12:19

it would be egregious malpractice to say that doubt is bad.

12:27

Let me quote Frederick Beecher who actually says, "Doubt? That's the ants in the pants of faith."

12:34

That's the stuff that gets you thinking, that gets you conversing, that gets you

12:40

dialoguing, searching Scripture, and actually kind of just watching the world

12:45

to see where how God is going to show up.

12:52

Often those doubts are maybe a lady. And so it brings us to this notion that

13:00

that faith is really not a one and done thing,

13:05

or as Martin Luther would say,

13:07

a nice little possession that you can tuck away

13:10

into your handbag or your pocket.

13:13

It is this way of living

13:16

where you keep wading through the realities of the day,

13:22

and you keep running up against the same question.

13:28

Where will God be for me?

13:31

Where will God be for the church

13:35

if the locked door does fail?

13:43

And so blessed are we,

13:46

as we learn to trust as church and as individuals

13:52

that yes, one way or the other,

13:57

God's love will find its way.

14:02

And one way or another is that love finds its way.

14:08

Spirit will be among us and within us

14:13

that we will be re-energized, re-animated,

14:19

and given a bit of courage for the living of these days.

14:28

Whichever rooms we find ourselves, may the love of God sneak in and find its way.

14:39

Amen.