

Easter 2 – 19th April 2020

Key: Scriptures: :

John 20:19-31 – Jesus appears to Thomas

26 A week later the disciples were together again. This time, Thomas was with them. Jesus came in while the doors were still locked and stood in the middle of the group. He greeted his disciples ²⁷ and said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and look at my hands! Put your hand into my side. Stop doubting and have faith!”

Key Themes:

- After His resurrection Jesus appeared to his friends.
- Thomas was not with them and doubted their story.
- Jesus appeared to Thomas, and he believed declaring: “My Lord and my God”

Call to Worship:

Come, embrace the risen Christ. Come, embrace the Prince of Peace. Come, embrace his pierced hands. Come, meet your Lord and your God.

Hymn: This joyful Eastertide

This joyful Eastertide,
What need is there for grieving?
Cast all your cares aside
And be not unbelieving:

Chorus:

Come, share our Easter joy
that death could not imprison,
Nor any power destroy
our Christ, who is arisen!

No work for him is vain,
No faith in him mistaken,
For Easter makes it plain
His Kingdom is not Shaken:
Chorus

Then put your trust in Christ,
In waking and in sleeping,
His grace on earth sufficed;
He'll never quit his keeping:
Chorus

BY [FRED PRATT GREEN](#) (1903-2000)

Prayers:

As the disciples in the locked room reached out and touched you, let us reach out and touch you today, living Lord Jesus. Although we are not all together in one room as they were allow us to reconnect with you in a new way today. Let us in our minds eye, feel your scarred hands and feet. Let us put our hands in your side. Let us be still and know that you are our Lord and our God.

Prince of peace, we are sorry that we choose not to forgive but to hold grudges. That we doubt you and do not trust. That we choose to rely on our own resources and not on you. That we believe only when we have proof. Help us to forgive more readily, and to trust more willingly. **Amen**

Psalm 16

16 Protect me, LORD God! I run to you for safety,

² and I have said, "Only you are my Lord! Every good thing I have is a gift from you."

³ Your people are wonderful, and they make me happy,^[a] but worshipers of other gods will have much sorrow.^[b] I refuse to offer sacrifices of blood to those gods or worship in their name.

⁵ You, LORD, are all I want! You are my choice, and you keep me safe.

⁶ You make my life pleasant, and my future is bright.

⁷ I praise you, LORD, for being my guide.

Even in the darkest night, your teachings fill my mind.

⁸ I will always look to you, as you stand beside me and protect me from fear.

⁹ With all my heart, I will celebrate, and I can safely rest.

¹⁰ I am your chosen one. You won't leave me in the grave or let my body decay.

¹¹ You have shown me the path to life, and you make me glad by being near to me.

Sitting at your right side,^[c] I will always be joyful.

Reflection:

- The Lord had done amazing things for us. Think about the amazing things God has done in your life?
- How might we respond to the amazing things God had done for us?

Reading: John 20:19-31 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

¹⁹ When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." ²² 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 retain the sins of any, they are retained." Jesus and Thomas

²⁴ But Thomas (who was called the Twin^[a]), one of the twelve, 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 the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

²⁶ A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, 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. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt 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 come to believe."

The Purpose of This Book

³⁰ Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. ³¹ But these are written so that you may come to believe^[b] that Jesus is the Messiah,^[c] the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

Reflection:

- The resurrection stories in John's Gospel often centre around a particular character, like Mary Magdalene, in in this week's case Thomas.
- I always feel that Thomas gets a bit of a bad press.
- He is often referred to as Thomas the doubter, but let's be honest if you had been told that your friend who you have seen bound and crucified and was now alive again, you might not be that quick to believe either.
- Well I certainly would find it hard.
- The disciples are all together in an upper room, huddled together for fear and grief.
- But Thomas is not with them at first.
- Jesus stands among his friends and first offers them peace.
- "Peace be with you" he says.
- Today, our church buildings are empty for another week.
- But last week we celebrated the Empty tomb.
- And this week, in or separation, Jesus stands among us and offers us his peace.
- We are offer to find his peace in our situation.
- And that might be very difficult.
- If we are alone.
- If we are in a family were everyone is under each other's feet and we are not sure where or how to find breathing space.
- Finding peace is not always easy.
- How might we find peace, God's peace that passes all understanding in this situation?
- Then Jesus breaths the Holy Spirit into them.
- In the same way as God breathed life into Adam in the creation story.
- Or God instructed Ezekiel to breathe life into the army of dry bones in the valley.
- Jesus breaths his Spirit into those first disciples.
- It is gentle and loving, hope filled and relational.
- It is the way his is reaching out and touching us today.
- Breathing throw us, gently and lovingly.
- Hold our hand in the middle of difficult and stress filled times.
- Offering us a hope that goes beyond, I hope this will all be over soon.
- But a deep and real hope that is centred on him.
- Later when Thomas is with the other disciples, Jesus comes again.
- Again he offers Peace.
- And he invites Thomas to put his finger in his side and touch the places in his hands and feet where the nail had once been.
- He invites Thomas to believe in the resurrection.
- Thomas sees and believes declaring "My Lord and my God"
- We too are invited to touch and see.
- To see and believe the true story of Easter.
- That our God loved His world so much, that he gave his only son, that all might know and believe in eternal life through him.
- What amazing God we have.
- One who is in all things, and particularly now at that time, joins us in of fear, our concern, our loneliness, our frustration, our anger, our isolation, pain and our grief.
- One who meets us were we are.
- In our believing and our unbelieving.

- One who gentle utters those words to us “Peace be with you” and then lovingly breathe his Spirit into to us so that we might be able to shine out light in Christ for others.
- This morning let us once again receive God’s peace and his breath of the Spirit filling us again and making us new in him.
- Amen

I was sent this poem on FaceBook and wanted to share it with you all:

By Kristi Bothur - With a nod to Dr. Seuss 😊

Twas late in ‘19 when the virus began
Bringing chaos and fear to all people, each land.

People were sick, hospitals full,
Doctors overwhelmed, no one in school.

As winter gave way to the promise of spring,
The virus raged on, touching peasant and king.

People hid in their homes from the enemy unseen.
They YouTubed and Zoomed, social-distanced, and cleaned.

April approached and churches were closed.
“There won’t be an Easter,” the world supposed.

“There won’t be church services, and egg hunts are out.
No reason for new dresses when we can’t go about.”

Holy Week started, as bleak as the rest.
The world was focused on masks and on tests.

“Easter can’t happen this year,” it proclaimed.
“Online and at home, it just won’t be the same.”

Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, the days came and went.
The virus pressed on; it just would not relent.

The world woke Sunday and nothing had changed.
The virus still menaced, the people, estranged.

“Pooh pooh to the saints,” the world was grumbling.
“They’re finding out now that no Easter is coming.

“They’re just waking up! We know just what they’ll do!
Their mouths will hang open a minute or two,
And then all the saints will all cry boo-hoo.

“That noise,” said the world, “will be something to hear.”
So it paused and the world put a hand to its ear.

And it did hear a sound coming through all the skies.
It started down low, then it started to rise.

But the sound wasn’t depressed.

Why, this sound was triumphant!
It couldn't be so!
But it grew with abundance!

The world stared around, popping its eyes.
Then it shook! What it saw was a shocking surprise!

Every saint in every nation, the tall and the small,
Was celebrating Jesus in spite of it all!

It hadn't stopped Easter from coming! It came!
Somehow or other, it came just the same!

And the world with its life quite stuck in quarantine
Stood puzzling and puzzling.
"Just how can it be?"

"It came without bonnets, it came without bunnies,
It came without egg hunts, cantatas, or money."

Then the world thought of something it hadn't before.
"Maybe Easter," it thought, "doesn't come from a store.
Maybe Easter, perhaps, means a little bit more."

And what happened then?
Well....the story's not done.
What will YOU do?
Will you share with that one
Or two or more people needing hope in this night?
Will you share the source of your life in this fight?

The churches are empty - but so is the tomb,
And Jesus is victor over death, doom, and gloom.

So this year at Easter, let this be our prayer,
As the virus still rages all around, everywhere.

May the world see hope when it looks at God's people.
May the world see the church is not a building or steeple.
May the world find Faith in Jesus' death and resurrection,
May the world find Joy in a time of dejection.
May 2020 be known as the year of survival,
But not only that -
Let it start a revival.

Prayers:

Heavenly Father, we pray for all the places in the world that your peace:
Places where wars continue to threaten the stability of the nations;
And the lack of peace has caused so much destruction; places where people have to flee
their homes, their families destroyed, lives lost.

Lord, bring your peace which passes all understanding.

Give wisdom to world leaders;
To presidents, prime ministers, politicians of all governments, that they may strive for lasting
peace and true justice, not putting personal ambitions before the needs of their people.

Lord, bring your peace which passes all understanding.

We pray for those who need peace of mind:

Those weighed down by the stresses and strains of everyday life, or who suffer with anxiety, or are oppressed by worry and fear; for those who find it hard to let go of things and simply trust.

Lord, bring your peace which passes all understanding.

Amen

The disciples met in a locked room, Lord, and you came and stood among them, and you said:

Peace be with you.

They were filled with joy and rejoiced.

Peace be with you.

You breathed on them and they received the Holy Spirit

Peace be with you.

Thomas doubted, as he wasn't there.

Peace be with you.

A week later you appeared again, and again you side.

Peace be with you.

Thomas touched your hands and felt your side.

Peace be with you.

Thomas exclaimed, "My Lord and my God"

Peace be with you.

You are our Lord and our God.

Peace be with you.

Amen

Hymn – Spirit of God – Tune – Sky Boat Song

Refrain

Spirit of God, unseen as the wind,

Gentle as is the dove;

Touch us with love and teach us to sing

Joy to you Lord above.

Your voice the sound, heard in the wind,

O'er fields and hills you sing;

Now I can hear the joy, my Lord,

the peace your song will bring.

Refrain

Love in our hearts, praise in our prayers,

We follow on your way;

Lord of the sky, Lord of the Earth,

Answer us when we pray.

Refrain