

John 20:19-31

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.' After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' When he



had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 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.**'

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.' 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.**' Thomas answered him, '**My Lord and my God!**' 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.'

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

Seeds of Faith

It's snowing at my house while I record the sermon for this week. And yet, just today, I've pulled out these flower-pots and some vegetable seeds that I brought with me from Georgia. I'm going to start planting them here inside today, trying to get them started for when the sun comes out later this week.

It always seems a little ridiculous to me to bury seeds in the ground and think that they're going to turn into carrots and lettuce and marigolds. And I have to tell you, if I hadn't seen these same seeds come up last year and the year before, I don't think you'd see me digging around in the dirt for them. If you just **told me** that I could take these little seeds and put them underground and that they would turn into food and flowers, and I had never actually **seen** it before - well, I think I'd

give you a pretty funny look. Because when you think about it, that's really an outrageous idea.

But, we've all been shown that it can happen, so we believe that it is true.

And if I'm telling the truth, the story of Jesus' resurrection is pretty similar for me. If I were hearing it for the first time today. If you came up to me and told me that his disciples watched him die and put him in the tomb, and then three days later, he was back up, walking around again - well, I

would call that a pretty ridiculous story too. And I'm not so sure just how much faith I would have in it.

But, Jesus showed up for Doubting Thomas. He opened his eyes to see the truth. Though he had already shown himself to the other disciples, Jesus came back again to give Thomas the gift of faith as well.



And that's nothing new, because all throughout the Bible, Jesus showed up for those who couldn't see. Over and over again, he opens the eyes of the blind, and gives people the gift of faith.

I don't have some perfect blind faith, but, in his endless grace, Jesus keeps showing up to open my eyes too and he gives me reasons to believe anyway. Now, I haven't figured out the math problem that explains Jesus' resurrection, but Christ has given me faith as a gift, by coming into the world, over and over again, just when we need him most, to show us that he still lives.

- When I hear about the people who keep showing up at nursing homes to care for others - it's like I've seen the nails in Jesus' hands and touched his side. I find the gift of faith again.
- When mattress companies shift their resources to mask-making for hospitals - I see Jesus moving in the world, and my faith is renewed.
- When expensive restaurants turn into soup kitchens for people who have lost their jobs. I can see that Jesus lives.
- When neighborhoods show up for Drive-by Birthday parties for lonely little kids, my faith grows.
- When I see that whiskey distilleries are making hand sanitizer to keep police officers and firefighters safe - I see new life sprouting.
- Every time I see someone acting unselfishly, God is giving me faith once again.

How great is the love of God for us? Every time I fall into doubt in these difficult days, I hear another story about how Christ is bringing new life into our world. And every time that I despair, Christ comes again, to share the gift of faith.

And if we want to follow in Jesus' footsteps and live as true disciples, we should strive to do these same kinds of things - giving others reason to believe that the flowers will come up and that the resurrected Christ can still bring new life into our world.

So, I can't wait to see what you will do, to share the faith that God has given you.

Amen.

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