

Peace be with you

Second Sunday of Easter, April 12 2026

Psalm 16; John 20:19–31

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The umbrella test

A small village was facing a long drought. The crops were wilting, the wells were low, and the local minister called for a prayer meeting. “Let’s gather,” he said, “and ask God for rain.”

That evening, the church was packed. People came from every corner of the village, murmuring prayers and hopeful whispers. But as the minister stepped up to the pulpit, he paused, looked around, and said:

“I see many faces. I hear many prayers. But I see only one umbrella.”

A little girl in the front row beamed and held hers up proudly—bright yellow, with cartoon ducks.

“That,” said the minister, “is faith.”

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Today we meet the disciples in a locked room, hearts heavy with fear and confusion. Jesus has been crucified. The tomb is empty. And now, rumours swirl—some say He is risen. But what does that mean? What does resurrection look like when grief still lingers?

Into this moment of uncertainty, Jesus appears. Not with thunder or spectacle, but with gentleness. His first words are not rebuke or instruction. They are simply: “*Peace be with you.*”

Let’s pause there. Because that greeting—“Peace be with you”—is not just a pleasantry. It’s a gift. A balm. A declaration that even in locked rooms and anxious hearts, peace is possible.

And then Jesus shows them His wounds. Not hidden, not healed over—still visible. Resurrection does not erase suffering. It transforms it. The risen Christ still bears the marks of crucifixion, reminding us that God’s love does not bypass pain but walks through it with us.

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Now, Thomas wasn’t there that first evening.

The Gospel doesn’t tell us exactly why Thomas wasn’t in the room when Jesus first appeared to the disciples, but several thoughtful interpretations have emerged over time:

Possibly on an errand Some scholars suggest Thomas may have been out in the city—perhaps fetching food, checking on loved ones, or tending to practical needs. While the others were locked away in fear, Thomas might have been the one brave enough to step outside.

A theological setup Others see divine purpose in his absence. As Pope Gregory the Great once reflected, Thomas’s doubt—and its healing—was a gift to future generations. His need to see and touch the risen Christ became a bridge for all of us who believe without seeing.

A lesson in honesty Thomas’s absence sets the stage for one of the most honest moments in Scripture. His refusal to believe without evidence isn’t stubbornness—it’s vulnerability. And Jesus meets him there, not with scolding, but with invitation.

So whether Thomas was running errands or wrestling with grief, his absence reminds us that faith journeys aren’t always synchronized. Sometimes we miss the first moment—but grace always makes room for the second

And when he hears the others’ testimony, he’s honest: *“Unless I see... I won’t believe.”* We often call him “Doubting Thomas,” but perhaps we should call him “Courageous Thomas.” Because he speaks aloud what many of us feel. Faith is not always instant. Sometimes it wrestles. Sometimes it waits.

And Jesus meets Thomas in that place. He doesn’t shame him. He invites him: *“Put your finger here... Stop doubting and believe.”* It’s a moment of grace. A reminder that Jesus meets us not where we pretend to be, but where we truly are.

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So what does this passage offer us today?

- If you’re locked in fear—Jesus speaks peace.
- If you carry wounds—Jesus shows His own.
- If you wrestle with doubt—Jesus welcomes your honesty.

And to all of us, He says: *“Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”* That’s us. We are part of this story. Not because we have perfect faith, but because we are willing to keep showing up, keep asking, keep hoping.

Faith is rarely a straight line. It’s more like a foggy path with just enough light for the next step. We want certainty, clarity, control—but faith asks for trust, even when the map is missing.

Thomas wanted to see the wounds. And who can blame him? We too want proof before peace. But Jesus doesn’t scold him. He meets him. Because faith isn’t about having no doubts—it’s about bringing those doubts to the One who still shows up.

So if you find it hard to believe today, you’re in good company. Faith isn’t a badge for the brave—it’s a hand held out in the dark, trusting that grace will take hold.

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Thomas often gets labelled “the doubter,” but that’s far too small a word for him. He was a friend grieving a loss, a follower whose world had fallen apart, a human being trying to make sense of hope that felt too good to be true.

And honestly, that makes him feel very close to us. Because today, faith isn't always a steady flame. Sometimes it flickers. Sometimes it hides behind questions we're afraid to say out loud. Sometimes it feels like everyone else is celebrating resurrection while we're still standing in the rubble of Good Friday.

Thomas reminds us that this is not failure — it's honesty. What's beautiful is how Jesus responds. He doesn't scold Thomas or shame him. He doesn't say, "Come back when you've sorted yourself out." Instead, He steps right into the room where Thomas is, carrying peace in His voice and patience in His hands. It's a picture of a God who doesn't wait for us to have perfect faith, but meets us in the middle of our imperfect faith. For us today, that means:

- Faith can include questions. God isn't threatened by our uncertainty.
- Faith grows in relationship. Thomas's turning point wasn't an argument — it was encounter.
- Faith is allowed to be personal. Thomas needed something specific, and Jesus honoured that.
- Faith is a journey, not a test. Thomas's story ends not in doubt, but in one of the strongest declarations of trust in Scripture.

And maybe that's the invitation for us: to bring our whole selves — doubts, hopes, fears, longing — and trust that Christ meets us there, not with disappointment, but with compassion. Thomas shows us that faith isn't about pretending. It's about being honest enough to let God meet us where we really are.

So may we be a community that welcomes questions, holds space for healing, and speaks peace into the locked rooms of our world.

Amen. 20:19–31