

Easter Sunday

The Locked Room

John 20:19–29

Jesus transcends all our barriers, even the ones we make ourselves

THE PASSAGE

John 20:19–21 *On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”*

John 20:24–29 *Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.” A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.” Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!” Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”*

The Locked Room

The disciples are not just grieving. They are barricaded. Fear has become the architecture of the room.

Thomas is not there. John never tells us why.

Questions to sit with:

- What kind of room are you in right now?
- What locked the door?

See also: Psalm 22:1–2, 24 — Lament that holds on • Isaiah 53:3–5 — The wounded servant • Luke 24:13–21 — Emmaus: “we had hoped”

The First Turn

Jesus is simply there. No dramatic entrance. No announcement.

The first word he speaks is peace — not “I told you so,” not an explanation. Peace, before anything else.

He shows them the wounds. The resurrection does not erase the crucifixion. The body remembers.

He breathes on them — the same word used in Genesis 2 when God breathed life into the first human. New creation begins in a locked room, with frightened people, exactly as they are.

See also: Genesis 2:7 — The breath of life • Isaiah 61:1–3 — Sent to bind up the brokenhearted • Ezekiel 37:9–10 — Breath into dry bones

Eight Days

Thomas returns to a room full of people who have been changed — and he hasn't.

He sets conditions. Hard ones. Understandable ones.

Eight days is a long time to be the one still waiting while everyone else has turned the corner.

Have you ever been Thomas?

Your eight days looks like:

See also: *Habakkuk 1:2 — “How long, Lord?” • Psalm 13 — The whole arc of waiting and trust • Romans 8:24–25 — Hope for what we do not yet see*

The Second Appearance

Jesus comes back. Not for the group — for Thomas.

Same peace. Same wounds offered. He gives Thomas exactly what Thomas said he needed.

Thomas's response is the highest point of the entire gospel of John: My Lord and my God.

The one who doubted furthest lands furthest forward.

See also: *Romans 5:8 — While we were still sinners • Luke 15:4–7 — The one lost sheep • John 1:1, 14 — The Word was God, the Word became flesh*

The Beatitude for Us

John 20:29b *“Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”*

Jesus looks past Thomas. He is speaking directly to every person who comes after — including the room you're sitting in right now.

You are the Thomas who wasn't in the room. So is the person next to you.

The second appearance is still happening.

See also: *Hebrews 11:1 — Faith as substance of things hoped for • 1 Peter 1:8–9 — Joy inexpressible • Revelation 1:3 — Blessed are those who hear*

KEY WORDS

εἰρήνη	<i>Eirene</i>	Peace — wholeness, nothing broken, nothing missing. Hebrew: shalom. Spoken three times. The first thing Jesus says.
θύρα	<i>Thyra</i>	Door / Gate. Locked dia ton phobon — because of the fear. Fear is the architecture.
ἄπιστος	<i>Apistos</i>	Unbelieving — a posture of the whole person, not just intellectual doubt.
πιστός	<i>Pistos</i>	Believing / Faithful — the same root as faith throughout the New Testament.
Κύριός μου	<i>Kyrios mou</i>	My Lord — Roman world title for Caesar. Thomas gives it to Jesus.

ο Θεός	<i>Ho Theos</i>	The God — with the definite article. Full deity affirmed. The apex of John's gospel.
μακάριοι	<i>Makarioi</i>	Blessed — beatitude language. The same form as the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus is addressing us.

REFLECTION & RESPONSE

Take a moment with these questions. You can write, pray, or just sit.

1. Where are you in this story? In the locked room? In the eight days? Outside the door like Thomas?

2. What would it mean for Jesus to walk through the door of the room you're in right now?

3. Is there someone in your life still in their eight days? What does it look like to stay with them?

No one is too late for the second appearance.

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