



1616 W. Mequon Road, Mequon WI 53092  
(262)241-3121 [www.stjohnsmequon.org](http://www.stjohnsmequon.org)  
Email: [office@stjohnsmequon.org](mailto:office@stjohnsmequon.org)  
**Pastor James Tiefel**  
**(262) 853-9723 (cell#)**  
Email: [pastortiefel@gmail.com](mailto:pastortiefel@gmail.com)

---

## The Second Sunday of Easter

April 7, 2024

### The Risen Savior Provides Peace

We all live with the ugly consequences of sin: guilt we feel, punishment we fear, death we dread, hell we deserve. We try to ignore them, but they haunt us. Jesus lived and died to take them all away and his resurrection assures us that they need not return. The risen Savior provides peace, peace for our conscience, peace in our fears, peace through his promises, and peace that will last in Paradise.

Sermon

John 20:19-31

**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." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."**

**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."**

### Proof of Peace

"And may this peace which passes understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." You'll often hear this at the end of sermons because, having just heard the peace of the gospel, as soon as you go out from here into the world, whether you realize it or not, your inclination is going to be to seek a peace that matches your understanding rather than passes your understanding. For example, that Easter peace maybe sounded nice to your ears a week ago, but now that you're back in the real world, you want a kind of peace that doesn't just sound nice to your ears, but one that looks nice to your eyes—one you can see and sink your teeth into, that you can actually count on and lean on. That's not a unique post-Easter reaction; in fact, it's *the first* post-Easter reaction. It's the reaction in our text today.

Every year after Easter we meditate on the text of... and everyone's gonna say, "*Doubting Thomas*," right? Even though the text begins with all the disciples doubting and Thomas is just late to the game, we immortalize an insult on his name. But notice how the same thing really happens for all of them: They heard of Christ's resurrection, and yet they're locked in a room "out of fear of the Jews," it says. Does that look like a portrait of Easter peace to you? Why do you suppose they're doing that—locking themselves in a room? Are they not trying to manufacture their own peace?

That kind of peace makes sense, right? Angry Jews + Unlocked Door = No Peace—meanwhile—Angry Jews + Locked Door = Plenty of Peace, right? That makes sense to me! And it made sense to them. They sought a peace that matches understanding, and then they operated their lives according to that understanding—locking the doors and hiding motivated by doubt and fear.

You know the Hebrews 11 definition of faith: “Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we *do not see*.” It’s not a life of faith to demand visible proofs for our eyes at every turn and every fork in the road, and if I don’t have them, to resort to making my decisions out of fear and doubt to manufacture my own kind of peace! So, our question to ponder this morning is: Where are you locking doors in your life? Where are fear and doubt motivating your decisions? Where are you manufacturing your own peace that matches (rather than passes) understanding?

Now, my life of faith *should* look like this:

1. It should be that what I see is that I go to work, push through the daily grind of menial tasks, rude and sometimes unbearable customers and coworkers; and yet my faith says, “*My labor is holy, divine, and joyful service, for I am the tool God uses to care for others and shine light in the dark.*”
2. It should be that what I see is that I fail once again, giving into my flesh; and yet my faith says, “*I am forgiven. I am redeemed. I am loved.*”
3. It should be that what I see is that I get sick, lose weight, hurt, and cry; but although I wonder how long I may last, my faith still says, “*I am a blessed child of God, well-pleasing to him, and I will live forever in Christ.*”

But that’s not what happens often, is it...?

1. We despise our work, despise our customers and coworkers, and end up leaving a dark place just as dark as we found it, refusing to show a love that’s uniquely Jesus-like in any way, and wasting an opportunity God gave us. Self-service + Self-comfort = Peace, right?
2. We diminish Christ’s work by failing then saying, “*I’m forsaken! God hates me! But maybe my failures + my works will = Peace, right?*”
3. And then we despair, thinking, “*Surely after my flesh has been destroyed, I’ll just die in the depths. The end.*”

Look at the faulty peace we find when we seek a peace that matches understanding. Look at the faulty peace we find when we lock ourselves up in a world where Jesus is risen. Repent for manufacturing your own peace. Repent for constantly craving proofs of peace that, “*Unless I see*” this and that I can’t believe like this or live like that. Because that’s not faith, and that’s not peace. That’s just doubt and fear.

This is a crucial concept: Our God is a God who hides himself from eyes so he can reveal himself by faith. What the dogmatists call “*Deus Obsconditus*,” the “*hiddenness of God*,” is a constant struggle for Christians tempted to believe by sight and not by faith. But is this Christian struggle not exactly why John recorded these words for us? Gregory the Great said: “*More does the doubt of Thomas help us to believe than the faith of the disciples who believed.*” Is this struggle not why “*Doubting Thomas*” is actually such a comfort for our *doubting selves*?

As the risen Jesus appears in the room—(one of my favorite scenes to picture in all of Scripture. Picture it. The shrieks of shock clash with maybe pottery crashing to the ground in dumbfound astonishment...)—As the risen Jesus appears in the room, he does not appear reaching out his hands to slap Thomas in his little, doubting face. No, he reaches them out in patient love—the same patient love that led them to be pierced in the first place. He reaches out his hands and speaks some words—not words that Thomas is forsaken and hated for his doubt, and that his physical death will therefore be his eternal death. No, he says, “*Peace be with you,*” and then backs it up with proof of that peace—proof that he is risen, and because he lives they too would live no matter what might come their way.

As you distance in doubt, Jesus does not match you in going equidistant the other direction. He pursues you *relentlessly* in a way that not even locked doors can keep him away. Like a shepherd traversing through hills and valleys to a wayward sheep, he pursues you *relentlessly*! He reaches out speaking sweet words of peace in his Word which “*is written so that you may believe that He is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*” He graciously gifts you his very own Spirit to be with you wherever you go, at every turn and every fork in the road. And then with eyes of faith that only he can provide, you gaze upon his proofs of peace that comfort like none other in this world possibly can.

When the *hidden* God becomes the *revealed* God in the risen Jesus, eyes of faith soon spot him everywhere: Beneath the seemingly random movements of history. In a coworker’s smile. In a home where a spouse doesn’t hold sins against me and children who throw their arms around my neck. Even in a death that serves as a portal to glory. In a cross that won salvation. And in a dusty, old church presenting simple water, bread, and wine with the Word.

All masks of God concealing himself to eyes to reveal himself by faith. All masks of God seeing to it that I am loved. All proofs that give peace that passes understanding. Doubt questions, “*Where is He?*” Faith exclaims, “*My Lord and my God! How did I ever miss him?*”

This is not just a text about *doubt*—it’s an *evangelism* text. As Jesus brought peace to their hearts, do they all stay locked in their room, just now with hearts that weren’t as heavy anymore? No! Faith is living and active! And so Jesus commissions them: “*As the Father has sent me, I am sending you!*” As the hidden God reveals himself to you through masks of this world, he now commissions you to be his masks to reveal himself to the world! God has forgiven the world and you get to be the one to proclaim that objective reality! I get to do it as your representative in here, but that is not solely my job or pastor’s job or a vacancy pastor’s job—it’s actually *your privilege*, and it’s our job to equip you to do so!

So, I ask you, fellow fearing disciples and doubting Thomases, where are you locking your doors? You live in a world where Jesus is risen and sin, death, and devil are defeated! Let’s get out of here into that big wide world with a confident peace. It can look like big things, but also relatively small things: Love coworkers and customers despite dark situations. Live guilt-free as a redeemed child of God. Smile in the face of death. In faith, you have a life to live that is truly life; and even in death, because he lives, you also will live.

Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! And Amen!

*The Sermon was preaching by Vicar Micah Otto.*