

Easter 2      4/12/15  
John 20:19-31 B

THESE ARE WRITTEN SO THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD, AND THAT BY BELIEVING YOU MAY HAVE LIFE IN HIS NAME

Today is the 2nd Sunday of Easter. You know what that means, right? The 2nd Sunday of Easter is reserved for our good friend St. Thomas. You know Thomas, the guy who wasn't there when Jesus showed up. The one also known as "The Twin". Perhaps, better known as "Doubting Thomas." "Doubting Thomas." That is an awfully generous description because he doesn't believe Jesus is risen from the dead. He doesn't believe it all. When his buddies, the other apostles, tell him Christ is risen from the dead and they have seen the Lord, Thomas he says, "Unless I see in his hands the marks of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe." There is no doubt about it -- Thomas doesn't believe Jesus is risen from the dead.

You know what? He's not alone. Our world today is filled with "Doubting Thomas's," people who do not believe Jesus is risen from the dead. Chief among them are the so-called Bible scholars. They have studied the evidence and conclude, no, Jesus did not rise from the dead. These wise men have come up with what they say might have happened: yes, Jesus was crucified on the cross, died, and buried in the tomb. Sometime before Sunday morning, someone -- most likely grave robbers -- came and stole the body of Jesus and where it is, we have no idea. Others say the disciples of Jesus came and stole His body. They point out there is even Biblical evidence for this in pointing out the Jews said that his disciples came at night and stole His body. Others say what happened is

that they did indeed find an empty tomb, but they got the location wrong. It was not Jesus' grave they found, it was an empty grave in which no have ever been buried. No, others say, what really happened is this: when Jesus was upon the cross, He went into a deep, deep coma and He appeared to be dead, so he was buried in the tomb. Sometime before Sunday morning, he was able to roll the stone away, walked away from the tomb, and went about His merry way. Still others say this: there is no physical resurrection of the dead. What we have in Jesus is a spiritual resurrection. So, the soul of Jesus lives on and on in our hearts.

That's what these "doubting Thomases" of our day say and teach. Now, before we are outraged, or we laugh or even believe any of these lies of the devil -- and I want to clearly state these are lies of the devil, consider this -- in and of yourself, you don't believe Jesus is risen, either. In fact, in and of yourself, you don't even believe in Jesus. You don't believe He was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary. You don't believe that He suffered under Pontius Pilate. In and of yourself, you don't believe that He was crucified died, was buried, and rose again the 3rd day, bringing life and immortality to light.

The reason why you don't believe that is because, by your own reason and strength, you **can't** believe any of that. You were born into sin. You are powerless to free yourself or raise yourself from the death of sin. The words of Paul are true of you, "The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him" (1 Cor 2)." So, when someone says, "Christ is risen," you by your reason and senses say, "No! It didn't happen. Its an old wive's tale, some crazy myth, and I am not foolish enough to believe it." What really makes sense to your reason are the words of Thomas, "if I could see in His hands the mark of the nails, and

place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into His side, then I will believe.” That’s what you say and that’s what you believe because that’s what being dead in sin does to a person. You say that with Thomas, because you want to have that kind of experience in order to believe.

Well, consider this: eight days after Thomas had given his “unles speech, Thomas was with the other disciples and in walks Jesus. And when Jesus appeared to them, He called Thomas out, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.” In faith, Thomas cried, “My Lord and my God!” Thomas went from unbelieving, doubting, to believing. It happened because he saw and he heard the words of Jesus. Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen Me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

When Jesus said that, He’s talking about you. You come to church and celebrate Jesus’ resurrection. By your own reason and strength, you don’t believe it. Yet, you do believe it. So, what happened? What took place to allow you to believe in Jesus Christ? Its not that you have seen Jesus with your physical eyes. Nor have you seen the marks of the nails, placed your finger into the mark of the nails, or placed your hand into His side.

Its this: “But these [things] are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name”. “These things.” What things? The things Jesus did -- turning water into wine, making the blind see, the lame walk, raising of the dead. But chiefly among these things are these things -- “They took Jesus, and He went out, bearing His own cross, to the place called the

place of a skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. There they crucified Him” (19:16b-18a) ... “Jesus knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill Scripture), ‘I thirst.’ A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, ‘It is finished,’ and He bowed His head and gave up His spirit” (19:28-30) ... “On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ When He said this, He showed them His hands and His side.” “These things” written are the things Jesus did for you. How He went to Golgotha for you. How upon the cross, bearing your sins, He gave His life as the sacrifice for your sins, to free you from your sin, to free you from death, to free you from the devil, to free you from hell.

In the words of Jesus in His dying breath, “It is finished.” Your sin is finished, death is finished, the devil is finished, your hell is finished because Jesus gave His life for you. You can be sure and certain because three 3 days later, He rose from the dead and says, “Peace be with you.” That is the peace of having sins forgiven, the sting of death and the grave removed, the lies of the devil silenced and hell destroyed.

Jesus gives all this to you and He gives it to you by means of “these things,” meaning by means of the Word of God. Jesus takes His Word and joins it with the water of your baptism and bathes you in it. Jesus takes His word and joins it with bread and wine of Holy Communion and feeds you with it. He wraps it in His Word that you hear from the pulpit, in Bible class, in your own private devotions, and delivers it into your ears and your heart.

Faith is God’s work in you. God the Holy Spirit uses that Word of God to come to you to work faith in your heart, so that you believe in the

resurrection of Christ from the dead and cry out with Thomas, “My Lord and my God.”

Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia.