

Easter 2 4/12/2026
John 20:19-31 A

“BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HAVE NOT SEEN AND YET HAVE BELIEVED”

On December 17, 1903, Wilbur and Orville Wright achieved the first successful airplane flight near Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. Everyone knows that, right?

But what you may not know is that American newspapers of the day were afraid to print an account of the Wright brothers' flight. After all, who was going to **believe** it? Had not all efforts at flight failed before? Was it not true that the best mathematical minds had proved that man could never fly? It was just one of those things you had to see to believe.

Which brings us to our Gospel reading this morning. Thomas, along with all the other disciples, had heard the angel's proclamation from the women that Jesus is risen from the dead. None of them believed it, at first. That night, however, Jesus appeared to the disciples. They were in a locked room in fear that those who crucified Jesus would soon come for them. Suddenly, Jesus was there in their midst. He declared peace to them and showed them His hands and His side. And, they believed.

But not Thomas. He wasn't there. Even when the others told him what had happened, he doubted, *"Unless I 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, I will never believe"* (v. 25). Maybe you can't blame Thomas. You have to see to believe, right?

After eight days, Jesus returned to the disciples and, this time, Thomas was with them. Jesus again declared peace to them and, then, speaks directly to Thomas: *"Put your finger here, and see My hands; and put out your hand, and place it in My side. Do not disbelieve, but believe"*

(v. 27). Thomas has seen. Thomas has heard the risen Lord. And, He believed, *"My Lord and My God!"*

So, maybe the question we should ask is: How hard should we be on "Doubting" Thomas? He wouldn't believe until he saw, and the Lord gave Him the luxury of seeing. When he doubted, he got to see Jesus. Maybe that's why we are so hard on Thomas. We doubt. And, all we have to go on is the Word of God. Faith is walking by your ears, because faith comes by hearing and learning the Word of God. So, My Friends in Christ, how hard it is to walk by your ears?

That's why we live our lives by the motto, "I'll believe it when I see it." It could be argued that motto isn't so bad after all. You don't buy property without seeing it first. You don't blindly believe the car salesman when he says to you, "Trust me." When you receive that email from the bank in Africa saying you have money coming and all they need is a bank account number to send the money, you don't give them your bank account information.

Why do we live by the motto, "Seeing is believing?" The answer is simple: People are sinful. Many of them are intentionally deceptive and dishonest and liars and cheats. Even those with good intentions will still fail to live up to their promises. We cannot take people at their word, because people don't live up to their word. They cheat you, swindle you, steal from you.

If people were honest and always kept their word, we wouldn't have to demand proof first. We could take them at their word. But people are sinful, so we doubt their word. So, we have to see to believe.

This is where we come back to Thomas and his sin of doubt. "I'll believe it when I see it" makes sense when it comes to people. But when

Thomas doubts, and **we doubt**, we are not questioning the honesty of another sinful human being like himself. We are questioning the honesty of God.

This is the real sin at work here. To demand proof of God's promises is to doubt God. It's the same thing as saying that the Lord is dishonest or untrustworthy or that He doesn't keep His promises.

That is why some still demand that God prove His existence and love by signs and miracles and wonders. "If He makes the blind see or the deaf hear or the lame leap today, then I will believe," say some. Or, more commonly is the panicked prayer, "Lord, if You show Your power by getting me out of this mess, then I will believe in You. When I see that, then I will believe."

When we are tempted to believe that we should trust in God because of what we see, or what we feel, or what we experience, it's really saying that God has not done enough to earn your trust, so He'd better do **more** spectacular stuff to impress you.

In this world, "seeing is believing" because people don't live up to what they say. However, the Lord always lives up to what He says. We do not need signs and wonders and proofs because we have the Word of God. He declares in that Word that He has delivered us from sin, death and the devil. His Word grants faith and forgiveness. You believe because you have heard the Word of Jesus, who was crucified for your sin and raised for your eternal justification. In the Christian faith and life, hearing is believing.

Instead of demanding to see signs, wonders, and miracles, we rejoice that we have God's Word, for *faith comes by hearing, hearing by the Word of God (Ro 10:17)*.

So hear this Word of the Lord: The Lord Jesus Christ has died for you and rose again the 3rd day for you, to share His eternal life with you.

In our Gospel lesson for this 2nd Sunday of Easter, the risen Jesus breathes on His disciples. This brings us back to creation. God formed Adam from the dust and breathed His life into it. Our life comes from God. In the fall into sin, we lost the life God gave to us. So now, on Easter, God – Christ in human form, risen and alive, – breathed His life into His disciples. And He continues to breath His eternal life into us as we hear and gladly learn God’s Word.

In that same way, Jesus is present in the Word and water of Holy Baptism to breath His life into you. Our Little Catechism teaches us this, “With the Word of God it is a Baptism, that is, a life-giving water, rich in grace, and a washing of new birth in the Holy Spirit.” [What joy is ours to see Christ breath His eternal life into Raelynn this very morning.](#)

Jesus also comes to us in, with, and under the bread and wine of Holy Communion to breath His life into us. In the eating of His Body and the drinking of His Blood, forgiveness of sin, life and salvation are given us.

As He came to the disciples huddled behind lock doors and declared, “Peace be with you,” to forgive their sins and give them faith, so, through these means of grace, He comes to you, to give His peace, forgiving you of your sin and giving you faith.

But, the serpent of old will not leave you alone. As he said to Eve, the father of all lies whispers to you, “Did God really say? Jesus can’t be trusted.” By what you see with your human eyes, the devil’s argument may seem to have merit. But, we walk by faith, not by sight. Where and when the devil whispers, “Jesus can’t be trusted,” you cry in faith, “This is the Word of the Lord,” for in the Christian faith and life, believing in not seeing.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.