



Message: ***Seeing the Wounds*** | April 12, 2026 | Speaker: **Pastor Eddie Eddy**

John 20:19-31 New International Version (NIV)

*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."*

*Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

Leader: *This is the Word of God for the people of God*

**People: *Thanks be to God***

Many of us are probably familiar with the story of Thomas. Affectionately known as: Doubting Thomas. Thomas, the one disciple who stubbornly refused to believe until he saw with his own eyes...the risen Christ. Silly Thomas. If only he had listened to the others, but no. He has to see for himself. After all, seeing is believing. He has to ask questions; he has to make sure.

But this morning...let's really look at Thomas' attitude. Is he really all that different from the other disciples? Let's think back to the Easter story. Mary went to the tomb, and it was empty, so she ran back and told Peter and John. Did they immediately believe her? Nope... they went to the tomb to see for themselves. It isn't until they go inside and see the cloth and the linens lying empty in the tomb that they believe.

But what is it that they believe? Did they immediately think that Jesus has risen? No...we are told in John 20:9, "They did not yet understand the scripture; that he must rise from the dead." So... when they left the tomb...the only thing that they knew for sure...was that the tomb was empty.

And if we look at Mary's experience, even when Jesus appears to her face to face, she doesn't recognize him at first. It's not until he calls her by name that she knows he's alive. And then...after she does recognize him, the first thing she does is go back and tell all the disciples...who are hidden away in the locked room, and we are never given any indication that they really do anything about it. In fact, in the other gospels, it tells us that they did not believe what she told them. As Luke puts it, "These words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them." (Luke 24:11)

Then we get to the passage for today and what happens? The disciples are still in their locked room when Jesus comes and stands among them. Do they immediately cry out in relief? Nope. And then Jesus says, "Peace be with you." Do they immediately proclaim his resurrection? Nope. Then "After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. **THEN** the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord." (John 20:20)

Is Thomas the only one of these really the faithful disciples that should be labeled as the skeptic? It sure doesn't sound like it. All the disciples needed proof to believe. All of them see Jesus...all of them hear Jesus...and all of them see the evidence of his bodily resurrection. And it's only **after** they see this proof that they rejoice.

But, of course, after they have been convinced and they share this news with Thomas, he's the one who gets labeled the doubter because he still wants proof for himself. I mean, sure, no one believed Mary Magdalene; but she's only one person...and in those days...because of her gender...her word was subject to scrutiny. But now Thomas has the word of ten people, all of them trusted disciples of Jesus. So why would he still doubt?

PAUSE

Let's think about Thomas for a moment. What else do we know about him? Has he always been such a lackluster disciple? There isn't much about him in the gospels. In fact, aside from his name appearing in the lists of disciples, there are only two other instances where Thomas is identified by name, both in the Gospel of John. One is when Jesus insists on going to Judea after the death of Lazarus.

The disciples know this is not the smartest move. The last time Jesus went to Judea, the Jews tried to stone him. But Jesus is determined to go. And Thomas says, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." (John 11:16) This doesn't sound like the Thomas we know, the one not too eager to jump on board right away. This Thomas sound pretty sure of himself.

Then Thomas appears again in John 14. This time he's more like the Thomas we know, the questioning one. Jesus is telling the disciples that he is going to prepare a place for them in his Father's house and that they already know the way. "Thomas says to him, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?' Then Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.'"

PAUSE

Did you hear that...Thomas has been told by Jesus himself that by seeing Jesus he has actually seen God. So, when the disciples tell him three days after the crucifixion that they have seen Jesus alive, I don't think that it is doubt that causes him to want to see for himself?

He knows what seeing Jesus means; seeing Jesus means seeing God. I know, you say, "yeah, but Thomas says he still won't believe just by seeing him, he also wants to put his finger in wounds." But here again, I believe that we see Thomas...actually being faithful to Jesus. Jesus has warned the disciples, "Beware that you are not led astray; for many will come in my name and say, 'I am he!' and 'The time is near!' Do not go after them." (Luke 21:8). Thomas will not be led astray. He needs proof and he's going to test it.

Now you may have caught on by now that I think Thomas gets the short end of the stick in most Christian traditions. You see, I identify with Thomas. I... in a way...AM Thomas. I'm not one for blind faith. I'm a question-asker...and I'm a doubter.

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I guess I like asking questions. I like to have all the information. Maybe that's how I feel I can have a little control over different situations. I'm not sure if I ask so many questions because I want to be proved right or because I want to be proved wrong. But without getting the right information I would never be able to stretch myself and grow deeper in my faith.

It's in my DNA. In fact, back when I was going through the Ministry Inquiry Process to become a pastor I had to do what is called "vocational discernment" (which is the seminarian's way of saying "What are you going to be when you grow up?"). One way that mentors suggest you understand what your gifts and graces for ministry are, is to pay attention to what people compliment you on. One of the things I found that people told me was, "You ask really good questions."

Really...That's it? That's my big gift for ministry? What the heck am I supposed to do with that? I sure didn't think that was the defining gift for someone who thought he was called to be a pastor, to stand up at the pulpit week after week and proclaim the gospel with certainty and conviction.

What does that mean for a questioner like me? What does it mean for a "doubter" like Thomas? What does that mean for the Thomas in all of us?

When we are asking questions...we are seeking understanding. When we gain understanding...our faith and trust in God will grow.

PAUSE

I mentioned that I just finished a class yesterday for my Course of Study requirements. This was probably one of the best classes I've taken so far. It was a class about self-care and about congregational care. You want to know what was most validating about this time we spent learning from each other?

We learned that to care for someone you must build trust. To build that trust...sometimes we must allow other to see our wounds. It's the wounds that have healed that give us the faith to trust Jesus.

The disciples had told Thomas that Jesus was alive. He needed to see the wounds for himself to believe. When it came down to it...Thomas didn't even touch Jesus. As soon as he was invited to place his finger in the holes...Thomas believed:" My Lord and my God!" The living Jesus became real to Thomas and it healed his disbelief.

Friends...many of us are here today because we bear scars too. And those scars are badges of victory. And that Victory has strengthened our faith.

We are living proof of the transformational work that Jesus has done in us...body, mind, and Spirit...through Jesus 'resurrection we have life beyond our pain. And if some doubters were seeing the wounds that have led us to believe...to trust and to have faith...would the world be seeing Jesus?

Thomas was seeking Jesus. He wanted to see the wounds so he could believe that Jesus was alive.

Let me close with a question. Because that is what I do.

As Christians today...as disciples of Jesus...as people called to care for our brothers and sisters...as people commanded to love our neighbor...would it make sense that by looking for and seeing the wounds in our neighbors, in our brothers and sisters...it's there that we encounter the living Christ?

blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

To God be the glory.

**Next Steps:**

- I will read John 20:19-31 this week
- I will watch for and help the wounded encounter Christ