

The Second Sunday of Easter
Year of the Lord 2019
John

**“Holy Spirit, Light Divine, shine upon this heart of mine;
Chase the shades of night away; turn the darkness into day!”
“Let me see my Savior’s face; let me all HIS beauties trace!
Show those glorious truths to me which are only known to
Thee!”**

John 20:19–31 19On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” 20When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. 21Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” 22And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. 23If you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven; if you withhold forgiveness from anyone, it is withheld.”

24Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. 25So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, **“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.”**

26Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” 27Then he said 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.” 28Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” 29Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

30Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31but 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.

In the Name of Jesus:

‘Do not be a disbelieving fellow, but a believing fellow!’ Jesus gives the Word; He speaks as the Christ of our BELIEVING! The One Who laid down His Life for His friends, and then picked It up again: THAT ONE rules over us, whether WE get on board with His ruling or not!

From HIS SIDE, my dear ones, this ‘believing’ is called forth with the sheer confidence of the Gospel, NOT the Law: The Law came

through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ! So, He can choose to show Himself to Thomas. He WILL, He says, show Himself, even to you and me! Oh, praise God! HE is not RULED by OUR tiny, clenched fists and furrowed brows and protestations: Unless THIS happens, I WILL NOT BELIEVE that such a Man, such a God is King!

Hallelujah and Praise the Lord! From OUR SIDE, this 'believing-ness' about us is ALWAYS open-ended, contingent, born FROM His Spirit, FROM His Word, FROM Heaven. But, Oh, my friends! The Blessed Holy Trinity knows His business well enough NOT to come crushing, crashing down on us to find out, 'Who in the WORLD can BEAR with getting on board with GOD?!' That is NOT the Gospel!

That is NOT how God has loved the world, attached Himself to us. And so, God will never be elected President, or Speaker of the House, or Chief Justice of these United States! For the Real God, the God of Life, the God of the Gospel, does not base His rule on carrots and sticks, threats and bribes. Not even MOSES did THAT! For MOSES, life and death HINGE on a man's alignment with the rule and will of God! Not parts; not percentages; not good intentions; but WORK! So, unlike THIS world, THIS kingdom, THIS phony-rule-of-law nonsense, the threat of death hangs MOST over those who aspire to God, to power, to the way things actually are!

AND...it is hard for me to think of a more comforting declaration, that from the King without any followers: 'The work is complete! It is finished!'

Empathy is most fitting today, dear children of God; a warm acceptance of the whole package that is Thomas, with a heart that goes out to him as most kindred of souls. From earliest times, Christians have smiled at the name Thomas, in Greek Didymus: 'The Twin!' Like looking in a mirror, this Thomas, nicht wahr?!

For we wait also, for some proof, some sign from heaven, some vision, I suppose: before we will rejoice at the good flowing from other children of God; AND before we will rejoice ALL THE MORE when the next man shows that HE is not at all unique!

Like you, like me, the next man is best served—Heaven says!—by the human touch, the human voice, even the human face, which blesses him and keeps him, shines up him, is gracious to him, and makes him whole—NOT when HE starts aligning with us, with heaven, with whatever! But because WE rule now with Christ, the Son of God, David come again! And as HE holds the Keys of Death and the Grave, then so do we.

‘You need no further proof of God, dear friend! You need no further GOD! Other than MY presence with you—ESPECIALLY where and when YOU need most from God the word: your chains have been released! Look no farther than me, right here!’

The TEN tried that with Thomas. Again—praise Jesus!—the Word, the Pardon, Life LIVES...WITHOUT waiting for Thomas, or you, or me!

My dear brother pastor speaks of ‘looking down to see heaven!’ I pray you are there after my words this morning! If I ever have vertigo, it feels like THIS!

Right where and when WE are most faithless, most relying on OUR commitments, waiting on the proofs and commitments of the NEXT MAN—FAITHLESS!—

God’s Rule is most at home! And as He showed Himself to the Ten, then to Thomas; He will surely show Himself to us too, my dear ones! Just make an honest review of YOU after these words: Do not be faithless, but secure in My Love, trusting, filled with the Gospel and My Spirit!

Yes, blessed are we who have NOT seen and yet believe. From HIS SIDE, all is well. And yet, He will show Himself to us, for our Peace.

Are Those Wounds still visible on Him? You speak for you; I say for ME: based on MY faithlessness versus believing, I am BANKING on the Christ, the Son of God, showing me His hands and His side. THAT will be a Day of Joy; when God rules over us

while NO competing voices disturb the That Day, in the Name of Jesus.