

SOTH Bible Study April 8, 2026

Opening question: Is seeing believing? How do we make room for questions of faith in our lives? How have questions of faith been treated in our faith development?

John 20:19-31

¹⁹ When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors were locked where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” ²² When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

²⁴ But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.”

²⁶ A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.” ²⁸ Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” ²⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

³⁰ Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. ³¹ But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

On this second Sunday of Easter, we continue with John’s Gospel following the first resurrection account. Here, at the end of chapter 20, John describes another appearance of Jesus, this time, to his disciples.

- What grabs your attention in this story? What questions does it raise for you?
- This second appearance after Jesus’ death begins again in the dark. Why do you think that might be? How do you see it connecting to last week’s story of Mary Magdalene in the dark? Is there significance to the scene beginning in darkness?
- Why do you think it matters that Jesus passes the peace with his disciples more than once? What does this indicate about his relationship with his disciples? What does it mean to you to pass the peace of Christ in worship?

- The story of Thomas is interesting... What have you been taught before about Thomas after Jesus' resurrection? Is he doubting? Is he curious? Is he brave?
- Luther Seminary's Dr. Karoline Lewis says of Thomas, "Thomas gets to say what we all want to say, the truth of what we do not want to admit, how difficult it is to believe in Jesus whom we have never encountered for ourselves," How might Thomas' seeking to know more of Jesus actually humanize these biblical figures? How might this interaction be comforting for people in the pews?

Acts 2:14a, 22-32

¹⁴ Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed [the crowd]: ²² "Fellow Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know ²³ this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. ²⁴ But God raised him up, having released him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. ²⁵ For David says concerning him,

'I saw the Lord always before me,

for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken;

²⁶ therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;
moreover, my flesh will live in hope.

²⁷ For you will not abandon my soul to Hades
or let your Holy One experience corruption.

²⁸ You have made known to me the ways of life;
you will make me full of gladness with your presence.'

²⁹ "Fellow Israelites, I may say to you confidently of our ancestor David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne. ³¹ Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying,

'He was not abandoned to Hades,

nor did his flesh experience corruption.'

³² "This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses."

- These John and Acts texts get at the question of belief. How does Acts 2 address what it means to believe?
- How does belief in God draw us toward intimacy and renewal of relationships?
- How does the resurrected Christ change how we go about relationships?