

## Jon's Sermon from April 11, 2021. "Holy Humor Sunday"

**Did you know that the second Sunday of Easter is known as Holy Humor Sunday? It was** started by the Greeks in the early centuries of Christianity. Churches in 15th century Bavaria used to celebrate the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter as ('God's Joke' or 'the Easter laugh'). Pastors would deliberately include amusing stories and jokes in their sermons to make the faithful laugh. After the service, churchgoers and pastors played practical jokes on each other, drenched each other with water, told jokes, sang, and danced. It was their way of celebrating the resurrection of Christ – the supreme joke God played on Satan by raising Jesus from the dead.

Unintentionally more people started coming to church the Sunday after Easter because it was fun.

So in the Spirit of Holy Humor Sunday, I found some Doubting Thomas Jokes for you.

In a cartoon, Thomas was fed up with being called "doubting Thomas." He threw his arms up in the air saying, "All I am saying is, we don't call Peter Denying Peter, or Mark "Run away Naked Mark." Why should I be saddled with this title? The disciples respond, "I see your point, Thomas, but really, it's time to move on."

Then there is one this cartoon with Thomas shaking down Jesus after Jesus returned for him. Thomas already touched his hands and side, and Jesus says while giving Thomas some sort of his card out of his wallet, "Ok Thomas, this is the last form of ID I have."

Finally my personal favorite... People were looking at the roster of an early Christian Football team. The remaining 11 disciples (Judas already left the team) were playing a game against the 12 Tribes of Israel. However, the disciples might have to play the game with only 10 players... because Thomas was doubtful.

I am thankful for "Doubting" Thomas in John's Gospel. He represents many of us who have had our own doubts about God or our faith. Thomas was a tactile learner... not just an auditory learner. He

wanted to see and touch the wounds of Jesus for himself in order to believe the news of Jesus' resurrection. Earlier in the Gospel in John 14 after Jesus said he was going to prepare place for the disciples, Thomas asked Jesus "we don't know where you are going, how can we know the way to the way?" Jesus then said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

But Thomas is in good company. Mary Magdalene came back and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, but they didn't believe this good news. They locked themselves in a room out of fear.

But what I really curious about is... where was Thomas when Jesus appeared to the other disciples on Easter evening?

John says disciples were in a locked room out of fear of the Jews... a fear that the same thing could happen to them that happened to Jesus on Good Friday when Jesus showed up.

But Thomas was nowhere to be found. Where was he? Was he out getting supplies for them? Was he finding out what people were saying about Jesus? Was he looking in on others to see if they were OK? Was he just plain old tired of the anxiety of his friends and just wanted to get out of the room?

You have to hand it to Thomas. Fear didn't seem to keep him in a locked room.

What are you fearing lately? Is it keeping you locked inside your homes? Or locked in your own head? The good news in this story is that the resurrected Jesus enters locked rooms or closed doors. Jesus shows up and offers the words Peace to those living in fear. "Peace be with you." But even after Jesus appeared to the disciples, and breathed the Holy Spirit into them, they were still in a locked room. Sometimes it's hard to hear words of hope when you are anxious.

But Jesus shows up where we need him. He appeared a third time in the Gospel of John, this time specifically for Thomas to see and touch for himself that Jesus was alive. Thomas proclaimed his faith, "My Lord and My God."

This statement of faith is significant. Not only did Thomas need to see the divine side of the Resurrected Jesus, but the human side as well. Thomas and the others went through a lot of trauma the week before. Thomas needed to know this was the same Jesus who suffered great pain before he could even go there.

Siblings in Christ, Jesus cannot be stopped by our locked doors: our fears, our doubts, our anxieties. The Jesus who is the door blesses our faith, bears our doubts, and uses people like us to make a difference in this world God loves so much. “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.” That’s us. We have come to believe through the witness of the scriptures and the Holy Spirit.

Thank you God for all the people who taught us the faith and for the community of faith that encourages us in our walk.

Amen