

SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER - April 27, 2025
St, Timothy Lutheran Church, Portland, OR
THE LESSONS: Acts 5:27-32; Psalm 150; Rev. 1:4-8;
John 20:19-31

THE SERMON: “The Joke’s on Satan...!”

NARRATOR Okay, guys! This is the Second Sunday of Easter and **READER** told us the we have to put on another skit. Anyone have any ideas?
.....Maybe this could work. At one of the Coffee Hours, I heard my grandma and some of her friends talking about the “good old days” at St. Tim and they said that the Second Sunday of Easter used be “Joke Sunday.”

READER: Why did they call it “Joke Sunday”?

READER: Maybe it’s because of the Easter eggs?

READER: Easter Eggs?

READER: Yeah, you know... the yolks on you?

NARRATOR: That’s almost as bad as Pastor Yukio’s jokes. But, seriously, one of the old-timers said that the pastor back in the olden days at St. Tim’s said that in the Middle Ages they would tell jokes at Easter because God pulled a joke on Satan.

READER: What was God’s joke?

NARRATOR: The joke was that Satan thought he had the Son of God killed on Good Friday. But, God fooled the Devil and let him celebrate on Saturday; then, God pulled his joke on Satan. God raised Jesus from the dead. The joke was on Satan. Jesus didn’t stay dead.

READER: Well, I like the idea of telling jokes in church...here’s one.....
How about this one? What's the Easter bunny's favorite dance? (Pause)... The bunny hop.

READER: That's bad... How about this one? When does Valentine's Day come after Easter? (Pause)... In the dictionary.

READER: That's bad...

READER: Yeah, that's EGGS-asperating! Those are almost as bad as Pastor's lame jokes.

PASTOR: Hey! I resemble that! My jokes aren't lame, are they?

NARRATOR: Uh, I think we're getting a little off topic. Maybe we should read today's gospel lesson. Hopefully we can find something to talk about in this skit... I'll start. "Later on that day, the disciples had gathered together, but, fearful of the Jews, had locked all the doors in the house. Jesus entered, stood among them, and said, 'Peace to you.' Then he showed them his hands and side. The disciples, seeing the Master with their own eyes, were awestruck. Jesus repeated his greeting: 'Peace to you. Just as the Father sent me, I send you.' Then he took a deep breath and breathed into them. 'Receive the Holy Spirit,' he said. 'If you forgive someone's sins, they're gone for good. If you don't forgive sins, what happens with those sins?' "

READER: Now, That's **no joke!**

READER: Yeah, that's pretty serious. I can understand that, If you forgive someone's sins, they're gone; but, Jesus is asking what happens to sins when you don't forgive them.

READER: Well, when I don't forgive someone, I usually just get madder and madder. Sometimes, if I really let it get to me, I just quit being friends with them. But, usually, I just try to pretend I don't care and hope my angry feeling will just go away...

NARRATOR: I know what you mean. I'm the same way. But, before we get too sidetracked. Why do you think the disciples locked all the doors to the house?

READER: Well, the lesson says that it was later in the day... I suppose it was later in the day after Jesus was crucified. Because they were Jesus' closest friends, they were afraid that Roman soldiers and the soldiers from the Temple would be out looking for any followers of Jesus to prevent any riots or protests. Obviously, that's why they were scared.

NARRATOR: Good answer! READER, would you mind reading the next few verses?

READER: Sure! "But Thomas, sometimes called the Twin, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples told him, 'We saw the Master.' But he said, 'Unless I see the nail holes in his hands, put my finger in the nail holes, and stick my hand in his side, I won't believe it.'"

READER: I like Thomas! I think I also would have doubted.

READER: Yeah! I agree. Seeing is believing! Why should Thomas believe what the other disciples were telling him. I don't think I'd believe either. Who in their right mind would believe that someone would rise from the dead unless he/she was a zombie!

NARRATOR: That's why some Christians call Thomas "Doubting Thomas" because he questioned what the others were telling him. READER, would you read the rest of the lesson?

READER: Eight days later, his disciples were again in the room. This time Thomas was with them. Jesus came through the locked doors, stood among them, and said, "Peace to you." Then he focused his attention on Thomas. "Take your finger and examine my hands. Take your hand and stick it in my side. Don't be unbelieving. Believe." Thomas said, "My Master! My God!" Jesus said, "So, you believe because you've seen with your own eyes. Even better blessings are in store for those who believe without seeing."

NARRATOR: You can stop there... There's a lot packed in what you just read. Any comments?

READER: Yeah! Does this mean that a week later Jesus appeared again to the disciples? You mean that they were still afraid of being arrested? I can't imagine being so scared.

NARRATOR: I don't mean to get off track but there are people who live in that kind of fear even today. In places like Iran and Afghanistan girls and women live in that kind of fear if they don't cover their faces with veils according to the religious laws of those countries. In Russia and China and North Korea, people have been imprisoned if they speak out against the government and many places people are persecuted for being Christian.

READER: I heard on the news that here in America that there are people who've escaped from those kinds of countries and are being arrested and forced to go back to live in that fear and suffering that they were trying to escape.

NARRATOR: Well, as interesting as this is, we are hopping down the wrong Bunny trail... See how clever I am by sticking to the Easter theme... Get it? Bunny trail? Oh, well... back to Thomas and Jesus' second appearance...

READER: I'm not sure I get it. After Jesus told Thomas, "Take your finger and examine my hands. Take your hand and stick it in my side. Don't be unbelieving. Believe," Pastor, did Thomas touch the wounds in Jesus' hands and side? It doesn't seem to say so in the lesson.

PASTOR: You're right! Jesus told Thomas, "Don't be unbelieving. Believe." The Bible doesn't really tell us that Thomas touched Jesus hands and side. But, I think the storyteller, John, is emphasizing the importance of believing. Whether Thomas touched Jesus' scars or not isn't as important as Thomas believing that Jesus came back to the disciples after they knew Jesus had died and was buried. It seems pretty obvious that Thomas believed when he cried out, "My Master! My God!"

READER: So, when Jesus tells Thomas, "So, you believe because you've seen the scars on my hands and side with your own eyes. Even better blessings are in store for those who believe without seeing." In a way, it seems like our lesson is speaking to us today because we don't have the risen Jesus standing in front of us so we can touch his hands and side. We're the ones who believe without seeing.

PASTOR: Exactly! I couldn't have said it better. But, we know there are a lot of "Doubting Thomases" in the world today who are saying that they would believe if they could see Jesus.

READER: But we know that Jesus left this world and returned to be with our Heavenly Father when he said goodbye to his disciples on that mountain and told them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the Gospel to the whole creation."

READER: So, we can't see Jesus in person?

PASTOR: That's right. The only way people can see Jesus today is by faith; so, the "Doubting Thomases" of today won't see Jesus as the disciples saw him over two thousand years ago. The Bible tells us that faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it's the evidence of things we cannot see.

READER: What does that mean?

READER: I think it means that there are some things in life that we haven't seen yet but actually exist.

READER: Yeah, like aliens and UFO's.

PASTOR: Maybe... but I think it's about something like peace. Maybe you can tell me what you think peace is.

READER: Doesn't it mean that there's no war?

READER: Yeah, but it must be more because my Mom always says "Just give me some peace and quiet..."

NARRATOR: Pastor, you're a sneaky one... You're talking about the peace that Jesus mentions in the gospel lesson... Remember, it said, "Later on that day, the disciples had gathered together, but... had locked all the doors in the house. Jesus entered, stood among them, and said, 'Peace to you. Then he showed them his hands and side... Jesus repeated his greeting: 'Peace to you. Just as the Father sent me, I send you.'" And, then, our lesson says, "Eight days later, his disciples were again in the room. This time Thomas was with them. Jesus came

through the locked doors, stood among them, and said, 'Peace to you.' ” This seems like a different kind of peace.

READER: Yeah, it seems like this kind of peace is not being afraid or worried or stressed about anything.

NARRATOR: I could sure use that kind of peace!

READER: Me, too!

READER: Me, three!

READER: Me, four! But, Pastor, how can we find that kind of peace?

PASTOR: That's what Jesus was trying to show the people over 2000 years ago. He tried to tell the people that God wanted to be friends and to love them and be loved by them. If they could just know that, then they wouldn't have to be afraid or worried or stressed.

READER: But, don't we have to be good to have God love us?

NARRATOR: Don't you remember that in our last skit, we don't have to be good enough for God. God loves us just as we are! That's why we sang "Amazing Grace" in our last skit a couple of months ago.

READER: So, since God loves us like that, we don't have to worry about being good.

READER: But, that doesn't mean we can just take God's love for granted. Because we are so thankful that God loves us so freely, we will want to love God back. So, we'll do our best to show our love for God by loving Him and loving others.

NARRATOR: So, that's what Jesus was telling the disciples in that locked room. They thought that, because they ran away at the cross, Jesus would be mad at them but, instead, Jesus loved them anyway. That's why he said, "Peace be with you" three times. And because they knew Jesus loved them, they didn't have to

be afraid or guilty or worried. They had a peace that no one can really understand.

PASTOR: That's right! When you have a peace like that, when you aren't stressed or worried about anything, you're just happy. That's why the Bible tells us that Paul told the persecuted Christians in Rome, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope." And, when the Philippian church was going through some really bad times, Paul encouraged them not to feel sorry for themselves and commanded, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice."

READER: There are times that I need that kind of encouragement when I feel discouraged or picked on or just plain sad. So, Paul is saying that, when we trust in God, the Holy Spirit will help us know that we are never alone.

READER: You know what? I'm feeling good just hearing that. That makes me feel happy.

READER: Me, too!

NARRATOR: Me, three! In fact, I'm so happy that I feel like dancing...

CAST

Daniel Ropar

Fawn Gordon

Bridgett DeClercq

Xavier DeClercq

Jayce Gurganus

Marilyn Hamada

Pastor Hamada

THE LORD OF THE DANCE



JAYCE - Musical Offering

SOLO

I danced in the morning when the world was begun
and I danced in the moon and the stars and the sun.
I came down from heaven and I danced on the earth;
At Bethlehem I had my birth.

CHORUS (The Youth sing)

Dance, dance, wherever you may be,
I am the Lord of the Dance, said He,
And I'll lead you all wherever you may be,
And I'll lead you all in the dance, said He.

CONGREGATION (Come sing and dance with Jesus)

I danced for the scribe and the Pharisee
But they would not dance and they wouldn't follow me.
I danced for the fishermen, for James and John;
They came with me and the dance went on.

CHORUS

Women I danced on the Sabbath and I cured the lame;
The holy people said it was a shame.
They whipped and they stripped and they hung me high
And left me there on a Cross to die.

CHORUS

Men I danced on a Friday when the sky turned black—
It's hard to dance with the world on your back.
They buried my body and they thought I'd gone,
But I am the dance and I still go on.

CHORUS