

Doubting Thomas

Children's Chapel, St. Mark's Palo Alto | April 11, 2021
Supplemental materials for <https://youtu.be/PjZ6Xd0wDg0>

Lectionary Reading:

John 20:19-31 When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the authorities, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 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."

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." 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." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" 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."

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. 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.

Theological Background

Many faith traditions tell a variation of this story: A man once approached his Rabbi (or priest, or other spiritual teacher) and said "Rabbi, Rabbi, every day I fall to my knees and pray to God, asking for God's presence in my life, and yet nothing happens! Where is God?"

The Rabbi responded: "What do you think that prayer is? It is God within you who is the source of that desire. The act of praying for God's presence is, itself, the presence of God. When we seek God, God is there in the seeking."

Today's video aims to encourage our children to seek God's presence in whatever way is best for them. The moment of desiring God is itself a holy moment. All we can do is cultivate a fertile ground for these holy moments and trust God to show up in them.

Go Deeper!

Here are some discussion questions to spark conversation after watching today's video:

Thomas was clear about what he wanted from his relationship with Jesus - he said, "I want to see and touch the wounds Jesus's body." Do you know what you want from your relationship with God? Are you looking for peace? Love? Answers to questions? Connection with community?

If you don't know how you as a unique person can best connect with God, that's okay! We try lots of different things at church and at home. What are some things we do at home and at church to invite God into our lives? (*Labyrinth walking, candle lighting, prayer, music, silence - what else can you think of?*)

Is there anything you would like to try? How can you, like Thomas, invite God into your life?

If listening to music is your young one's preferred way to connect with the Divine, try listening to this song together: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2zEiiZi2DKk>

If a short, meditative quiet time would work well for your young one, try following along with this video together: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YFdZXwE6fRE>