

SALT CO 4/12/26

VIA LUCIS Station VIII- John 21:24-29

Jesus Strengthens the Faith of Thomas

“Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands... I will not believe.”
John 20:25

Welcome

Introductions

Table Talk I

A highlight from your Easter experience

SALT TALK

Introduce VIA LUCIS- Fourteen Stations of the Resurrection, instituted in 1988 by Father Sabino Palumbieri in Italy. The Fourteen Stations of the Cross, the priest reasoned, open the way to Fourteen Stations of the *Resurrection!!* He called Via Lucis, the way of light.

How many of you took the Journey? How many of helped with ushering? THANK YOU! We think about 840 took the Journey this year. We collected 197 prayer cards! I love that SALT CO helps to make this worship experience happen!

VIA LUCIS, the Way of Light took place not just in one day as on Good Friday, but over 40 days. Each Station is based on the witness of the Gospels, the book of Acts, and Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. We have copies of VIA LUCIS at the back table.

As with the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday, we are invited to stop to contemplate each Station of the Resurrection. To let what happened impact our minds, our hearts, our bodies, our relationships.

SALT CO is the first place to practice the Stations of the Resurrection at Calvary. Over the past three seasons we have done seven stations. You can go back and check out how we've gone about this by going to our webpage and click on "archive".

Station VIII is set in the same scene as In Station VII. In Station VII Jesus has “shown up” in the room with his followers. They are startled; no one saw him come through the door. He must say to them “**SHALOM ALECHEM Peace to you!**” He breathes on them saying, “**Receive the Holy Spirit!**” It’s like God breathing into the nostrils of the clay man ADAM made from the ADAMAH. Only now Jesus breathes heaven on earth life into these his followers. Last year we put pin wheels at everyone’s place to reflect on life and breath and spinning power! His Spirit (PNEUMA= wind, breath, spirit) in anyone who believes Him.

A powerful moment. Unforgettable. Literally “life changing”.

Station VII flows seamlessly into Station VIII with a problem: one of the disciples was missing. Where was Thomas?

I love this from Bible teacher Dale Bruner:

“This is, at first, surely the single most inopportune or perhaps even irresponsibly missed meeting in church history.”

Dale Bruner, in The Gospel of John, p. 1184

We’ll exercise our “faithful imaginations” to enter this scene using the reading for Station VIII from the Gospel of John 20:24-29.

1. Start by reading the scripture together so we can imagine the scene.
2. Then I’ll read the scripture a second time and this time imagine yourself IN the scene...feel free to jot some notes, or maybe even sketch the scene as you listen. We’ll have a few minutes after the second reading as well.
3. Then, we’ll put a rendering of the scene on the screens for you to gaze on for a few minutes. If you want a closer look at the image, the table guides will also share the printed a copy provided in an envelope for each table. Take that home with you.
4. After that... we’ll take time at your tables for those who would like to to share some of your thoughts and impressions.

5. Folks online at home our SALT CO team would love to hear your thoughts too-you can email them to me at seasonedadults@calvarywestlake.org.

Let's step into the Way of Light.

FIRST READING – The first reading the verse will be on the screens and I invite you to read it along with me.

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."

In this second reading think about taking a point of view: maybe you are one of the disciples, or Thomas, or Jesus. Notice what goes through your mind. And heart. What you are feeling and where you feel it in your body.

SECOND READING

Here is how one artist (Carl Bloch) imagined this scene:

[Doubting Thomas by Carl Bloch](#)

Take a few minutes now to jot down or sketch your impressions.

Table Talk II

1. How do you react to Thomas' insistence that he must see Jesus?
2. What do you imagine were some of the thoughts and feelings in the room when Jesus shows up once more?
3. What do you imagine is going on in Jesus' mind?
4. What do you imagine is going on in Thomas?
5. How can we see Jesus today?

Reflections:

I wonder, maybe you do too, where Thomas was the first time Jesus showed up in that Upper Room? We get the impression from two other places where he speaks up in John's Gospel (***"Let us also go that we may die with him"***- 11:16; ***"Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?"***- 14:5) that he is a bit dour, a dogged realist looking at the downsides. That's not a bad thing. I've learned that optimism has its downsides. And pessimism has its *upsides*!

Maybe he was so heartbroken that he just couldn't make it to the gathering. That would be understandable, right? We all get like this, don't we?

It happens to seasoned adults. As the years wear on everything gets harder. We lose people. We can begin to pull in. Why bother to try anymore? If that's someone watching online this morning, I'm very glad you are joining us. This Station of the Resurrection is for you!

His fellow followers all had told him what they had experienced, ***"We have seen the Lord!"*** But Thomas wasn't having any of it.

Thank God.

For his honesty.

God knows how we can get. How we can actually convince ourselves that this is all there is. That you're born, you live, you die. That's it. This is the perfect time for that old saying that goes, ***"Death and taxes"***. Or how about "seeing is believing"? Know anyone like this?

So thank God that Thomas was in this mix, being who he was, honest with his question- THE question.

Bob Rosso and I were remembering at JTC a preacher down in Texas who began his Easter sermon with THE question,

SLIDE

WHAT IF THIS IS TRUE?

Then we have to re-think... everything.

Several years ago I came across historian and New Testament scholar N.T. Wright's big book on The Resurrection of the Son of God.

[N.T. Wright's big book on The Resurrection of the Son of God](#)

After hundreds of pages his conclusion is, "that what the New Testament describes as having happened is what the New Testament describes as having happened."

We have to re-think everything. This on p. 731 of Wright's tome is a good example:

SLIDE

"The resurrection constitutes Jesus as the world's true sovereign, the 'son of god' who claims absolute allegiance from everyone and everything within creation. He is the start of the creator's new world: it's pilot project, indeed its pilot."

Resurrection of the Son of God, p. 731

Christianity is not a "religion". It's a movement. Movements launch of something having happened. What has happened?

. John gives hints throughout his Gospel. He writes "**A week later**" actually reads in the original Greek, "**after eight days**". Seven days later counting the day you're in makes eight. He's signalling back to creation itself in Genesis 1. God created and rested in seven days.

So what does eighth day signify?

The beginning of new creation.

Jesus rose on the first day of the new week, Sunday= the eighth day. He showed Himself to the disciples on the eighth day, except for Thomas. And now here, the second Sunday, eight days later, He shows up again in their midst, this time for Thomas.

And for every Thomas on all the Sundays to follow through years, decades, centuries and millennia, to this day, today.

For the followers of Jesus every Sunday is Easter Sunday.

With Jesus' rising new creation has begun.

Let's unpack this. With Jesus we see God in heaven come on earth, to take on earthly flesh, our humanity, in all our earthiness- we are after all made from the dust and clay (the word play in Genesis 2:7), ADAM from ADAMAH). See what this means? God in Jesus takes on not only humankind, but the whole of His creation! He takes us all, the groaning creation too onto himself to die to sin, death and the powers of darkness that wreak chaos. And then to rise on the eighth day to birth His new creation and His people along with it.

I love it that when Mary first encounters the Risen Jesus, she mistakes Him for the Gardener!

All things will be made new. Including you and me!

Just think, for the rest of "eternity" Jesus is known and seen in His body- scars and all. In Him literally heaven and earth come together.

[Here is the deep joy, plan, desire and will of our Father God, maker of heaven and earth. To make ***all things new!*** (Revelation 21:5; Matthew 19:28)]

The apostle Paul would put it like this:

"[the Father] has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fulness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth in Christ..."

Ephesians 1:10

Jesus got right to it.

“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.’”

John 20:27

Believe is to trust. All good relationships depend on trust. Not just an intellectual thing. A matter of the heart, right? “Belief” comes out of the German “be-lieben” or “beloved”. It’s seeing someone even when they’re not right in front of you. ***“Trust Me Thomas. It’s Me!”***

Seeing is believing. But is also the case when it comes to our relationships, belonging, having meaning, hope and purpose, the things that matter most- that believing is seeing.

Did Thomas put his finger in Jesus’ hands? Did he reach his hand into Jesus’ side? Did he need to? What do you think? What if it were you? Would you need to? The art work we have today leaves this question open.

We’re not told what Thomas did. Only what he said.

“My Lord and my God!”

Irony of ironies, here is the climax of the Gospel! “Doubting” Thomas is the *first one* to confess. Here is the only time in four Gospels that Jesus is addressed as God. Thomas sees with his own two eyes that the Word has become flesh and will remain so forever.

“Lord”= Israel’s true anointed King. **“My Lord”**, makes this personal to Thomas, I am under Him. I surrender my personal kingdom and set it under Him. He is my Master and Commander. Here is the “spiritual Copernican Revolution” that must take place in every human heart.

“God”= ***“In the beginning was the word (LOGOS), and the word was with God and the word was God...”*** In whom all things were made, in whom all things hold together. **“My God”**, who holds me together, my joy, my hope, my life, my courage, my rest, my peace, my friend, my strength, my healing, in whom I shall not lack.

Thomas speaks- confesses!- for the rest of the disciples there that day.

He speaks for all of us, two thousand years of us who at different times wonder if it is really true. Can it be? At such times we have this gift, this Eighth Station (appropriately enough!) of our Lord loving Thomas, and all of us.

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.”***

Thank God for Thomas.

Believing is seeing that He is with us always, to the end of the age...

Here's the point. Let's read this together from John's conclusion:

“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.”

John 20:30-31

How can we see Jesus today? There are many ways to answer this. How about when we come to His Table to take His body, and drink His cup? Or when we help those who suffer, Jesus said, ***“You did it to me...”***

He is with us in every step we take.

Doxology

Blessing