



Week 1
24 - 30 April 2022

**SMALL GROUP WEEKLY
DEVOTIONAL MATERIAL**

EASTER to TRINITY SUNDAY

CONTENT:

Weekly Sunday Sermon Bible readings, worship song, reflection, small group questions and family time
Daily Bible readings, a memory verse and a prayer for individual contemplation

Easter to Trinity Sunday:

Week 1	Sunday 24 April	Jesus appears to His disciples
Week 2	Sunday 1 May	Jesus and the miracle catch of fish
Week 3	Sunday 8 May	Further conflict over Jesus's claims
Week 4	Sunday 15 May	Jesus predicts Peter's denial
Week 5	Sunday 22 May	Jesus promises the Holy Spirit
		26 May Ascension Day
Week 6	Sunday 29 May	Jesus prays for all believers
Week 7	Sunday 5 June	Jesus the way to the Father
Week 8	Sunday 12 June	Trinity Sunday

Week 1: 24 April

Easter Year C	First reading	Psalm	Second reading	Gospel
Second Sunday of Easter April 24, 2022	*Acts 5:27-32	Psalm 118:14-29	Revelation 1:4-8	John 20:19-31



Praise and Worship: Jesus we enthrone you. www.youtube.com/watch?v=u65bhOjrHYg



John 20:19-31

Jesus appears to his disciples

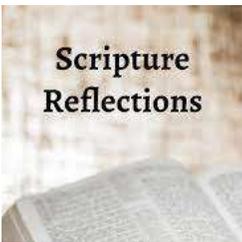
¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you!' ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.' ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.'

Jesus appears to Thomas

²⁴ Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord!' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.' ²⁶ A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you!' ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.' ²⁸ Thomas said to him, 'My Lord and my God!' ²⁹ Then Jesus told him, 'Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'

The purpose of John's gospel

³⁰ Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.



WRITTEN BY: REV GAVIN LANDERS

There is a faith picture offered through this reading. It is a picture of a divine love that breaks through the prison of death and destruction to become manifest again in a risen body. It is a picture of Jesus' love for those in this world being stronger than death.

It is with this love that Jesus reaches out to heart-suffering men and women from every age and from every place on this earth. Jesus lifts such people up to himself, not only up to his cross, but also into his resurrection. In so doing the people of the world are given - here and now, a place in God's kingdom where Jesus lives, with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ages unending. Even in the struggles we experience in this world, Jesus is with us and intercedes for us with the Father. In His heart we are forever hidden and present to God. His heart is our permanent home, our resting place, our refuge and our hope.

Jesus who drew all people to Himself as He was lifted up in His pain and in His glory, stays with us as the wounded and risen Lord. Whenever we touch Jesus' broken heart, we touch the hearts of Jesus' broken people, and whenever we touch the hearts of His broken people, we touch His heart because His broken heart and the broken heart of the world are one.

To Thomas who heard Jesus' voice, saw His wounds and touched His pierced side, he said, "*You believe because you can see me. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.*" There is the mystery of Jesus' love. We have not seen Jesus and yet we truly see Jesus every time we look at the broken bodies, minds, hearts and relationships of our fellow human beings. We have not heard Jesus, and yet we truly hear Jesus every time we hear the cries uttered by men, women and children in pain. We have not touched Jesus, and yet we truly touch Him every time we touch all those who come to us in their loneliness. In the midst of all the human brokenness and human pain, we see, hear and touch the heart of humanity, Jesus' humanity, the humanity of all the people embraced by His love.

And so let us thank Jesus for his love and for showing us His love. Let us thank him for letting us see while not seeing, hear while not hearing, touch while not touching. Let us thank him for letting us believe more every day, hope more every day and love more every day. Amen.

Small Group Questions:

1. How do you respond to the “faith picture” given by this Scripture that Jesus’ love for you and your loved ones is stronger than death?
2. The woundedness carried in Jesus resurrected body speaks of him being mindful of woundedness. Have you shared your woundedness with Jesus? What differences would such sharing realise?
3. Being in the presence of human brokenness and human pain causes us to be in the presence of the resurrected Jesus. To see, hear and touch the wounded heart of humanity, Jesus' humanity, the humanity of all the people embraced by His love, is to see, hear and touch Jesus. Discuss.



Daily Bible Reading, Memory Verse and Prayer:

MONDAY, April 25, 2022: [Psalm 122](#); [Esther 7:1-10](#); [Revelation 1:9-20](#)

MEMORY VERSE: *“Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! (Rev 1:17-18)*

PRAYER: Father when invited into your presence, may I be found entering gladly. **Amen**

TUESDAY, April 26, 2022: [Psalm 122](#); [Esther 8:1-17](#); [Revelation 2:8-11](#)

MEMORY VERSE: *“Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor’s crown.” (Rev 2:10)*

PRAYER: Father, may Your peace allow us to stand secure in this restless world. **Amen**

WEDNESDAY, April 27, 2022: [Psalm 122](#); [Esther 9:1-5, 18-23](#); [Luke 12:4-12](#)

MEMORY VERSE: *“I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more.” (Luke 12:4)*

PRAYER: Father we pray for peace and security amongst your people for the blessing of this world. **Amen**

THURSDAY, April 28, 2022: [Psalm 30](#); [Isaiah 5:11-17](#); [Revelation 3:14-22](#)

MEMORY VERSE: *“I will exalt you, Lord, for you lifted me out of the depths and did not let my enemies gloat over me.” (Psalm 30:1)*

PRAYER: Father, you wait patiently for us to return home to you. May we be found feasting in your presence sooner rather than later. **Amen**

FRIDAY, April 29, 2022: [Psalm 30](#); [Isaiah 6:1-4](#); [Revelation 4:1-11](#)

MEMORY VERSE: *“You, Lord, brought me up from the realm of the dead; you spared me from going down to the pit.” (Psalm 30:3)*

PRAYER: Father, thank you for filling the earth with Your glory so that even in death we sense Your presence. **Amen**

SATURDAY, April 30, 2022: [Psalm 30](#); [Genesis 18:1-8](#); [Luke 14:12-14](#)

MEMORY VERSE: *“Sing the praises of the Lord, you his faithful people; praise his holy name. For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.” (Psalm 30:4-5)*

PRAYER: Father, remind me to bring all of myself to you – even those parts of me that are poor, crippled, lame and blind. **Amen**



It is important for parents to take time to lead the conversations of family time and to be honest with their children in these conversations.

BY JENNY BLAKE – CHILDREN’S PASTOR

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Sunday 24th April

Pray daily: Set up family time for prayer and devotions and stick to this arrangement. All devotions should always begin by with a prayer. Ask a family member to pray or one of the children.

Scripture Reading: [John 20:19-31](#)

Activity/Family Moment: To Play Secret Identity

Have everyone secretly write down the name of a person on a small piece of paper or a "post-it" note. It has to be a person that everyone in the room would know about - a famous historical figure, an actor or sports celebrity, a politician, etc. Then have them tape the name on the back of the person on their left. Everyone goes around and asks people yes or no questions about who is on their back. They can only ask each person one question. The person who can do it in the least number of questions wins.

Questions:

What is meant by a doubting Thomas?

(It is someone who doubts something until given proof)

What is the meaning of faith?

(It is what we believe without seeing. Faith is trusting God to explain the things you don't understand yet.)

Do you think you would have believed if you were in Thomas' position? Do you find that you are sometimes a Doubting Thomas?

Sometimes we may doubt our faith - it's not always easy to believe, especially when so many others around us do not believe the good news. Was Jesus angry with Thomas for doubting?

(No. He told Thomas to touch His hands and sides to prove to himself that Jesus really was alive. Thomas was not with the other disciples when Jesus first appeared to them and so it is also, important to note that Jesus cared enough for Thomas to appear again to the disciples, this time when Thomas was there – Thomas needed to touch Jesus' hands and sides before he could believe.)

Is it bad to sometimes doubt our faith?

(No - Some people need to doubt before they believe. If doubt leads to questions and questions lead to answers, then doubt can lead to a deepening of faith.)

Which verse in the passage we read today shows us that God understands if we have difficulty believing all Jesus told us, especially without seeing for ourselves. [\(John 20:29\)](#)

Again, referring to the passage read today, how does the Bible help to strengthen our faith?

(John 20:30 - The Bible says that Jesus went on to perform many miraculous signs in the presence of His disciples that are written in the Bible that you may believe.)

What else can you do to deepen your faith?

(Persevere in your walk with God and faith by reading the Bible, praying, going to church and spending time with other Christians, asking questions, attending workshops, reading books about issues that concern you, so that you will start to walk closer with God, and the truth will slowly be revealed to you.)