



Easter 2

4/12/2026

John 20:19-31

The Way Things Are Supposed to Be

When I was a kid, my mom had a small white vase that she would put out every year around Easter. Carved all over the sides of the vase were words from a bunch of words from different languages that all meant the same thing – Peace. One of the words that always stuck with me was the Hebrew word that was included on the vase. Shalom. In English, peace usually means tranquility, or freedom from conflict. The Hebrew word can mean that too, but it can also be understood in another way. Shalom can also mean, “nothing missing or broken.” It’s “the way things are supposed to be.”

So let me ask you, does that word describe you? Do you have shalom? Or are there a lot of things that are missing or broken in your life right now?

If I had to guess, you’re probably leaning towards the second one. Maybe for you, it’s might not anything catastrophic, just a boat load of **inconveniences**. After all the Easter excitement, your family all got sick and now you’re still exhausted even a week later. There was some sort of ridiculous argument at the family get together that you’re still annoyed and hurt by. Or maybe at your family dinner, grandma accidentally put cumin in her cinnamon rolls instead of, you know, cinnamon. If that one sounds weirdly specific, it’s because it actually happened!

So at least with the inconveniences, you can find some humor in them here and there. But that’s not true for all of our problems. There’s the diagnosis that ruined all of your family’s plans, and took away the stability you thought you had. There’s the failing relationship – with a spouse or a child or a friend – and you’re at a total loss on how to fix it. Or maybe there’s a temptation that hasn’t bothered you for a while that all of a sudden came roaring back, and you’re left wondering how strong your faith is when you feel so disappointed in yourself.

The list could go on and on, but I know that all of us can think of something. And I also know that Jesus’ disciple named Thomas could relate.

A quick recap on what we know about Thomas up until this point. He was one of the twelve disciples, meaning he had seen many of the miracles, was very familiar with all of the Savior’s teachings. It also meant he had the same misunderstandings as the rest of the disciples. He thought that Jesus had come to be an earthly King and restore the former glory of the kingdom of Israel. He thought Jesus was going to drive out the Romans and bring all sorts of prosperity for the Jewish people.

But the last week and a half or so had turned all of those expectations upside down. When Jesus was arrested, he didn’t even resist. He did nothing to stand against the false accusations that were hurled against him. He was executed by crucifixion, a horrible death that the Roman government reserved for the worst criminals and enemies of the state.

Everything Thomas had hoped for was dashed to pieces. What was the point of the last three years? What were he and the rest of the disciples going to do now? Did it even matter? Thomas is completely overwhelmed and almost completely despondent. I’ve often wondered if that’s why he wasn’t present with the rest of the disciples in that room the first time Jesus appeared to them. He just couldn’t take it.

With all that in mind, listen again to the brief conversation he has with the rest of the disciples. READ. The English says they “told him”, but the original Greek says “they were saying to him.” It implies the men told him what they saw repeatedly... and that Thomas rejects it each time. In Thomas’ response, there certainly is doubt, but there is also a heavy dose of frustration. It’s almost like he’s saying, Why are you getting my hopes up? You guys aren’t living in the real world. **I won’t believe until I see it.**

Now let’s be fair to Thomas for a second. “I’ll believe it when I see it” are usually pretty good words to live by. You don’t buy a property unless you see it first. When you make an agreement with someone, you don’t just shake their hand and call it a day. You get it in writing and sign a contract. If you believed every TV commercial and online ad, pretty soon you’d be broke and have a house full of junk. We **demand proof because we doubt the honesty** of other people, and rightfully so.

But when you demand proof of God’s promises, it means that you doubt *God’s* honesty. You’re saying that he **doesn’t always come through**, that he **isn’t totally trustworthy**. But if that’s true, how could God possibly be holy, and righteous, and perfect?

Whether he fully understood it or not, that’s what Thomas did when he demanded proof. What about you? Have you ever demanded a sign? Have you ever attached conditions to your faithfulness with God? “Lord, if you don’t heal my family member, I just don’t know if you’re worth following.” “Lord, I’ve been in church every Sunday this month. I think it’s about time you fixed all those marriage problems I’ve been praying to you about.” You could think of a million more examples, but they all go back to the same thing. *The lack of outward peace in your life is leading you to believe that God doesn’t actually keep his promises. You’re not totally convinced that God really is who he says he is.*

That's a dangerous place to be. It's where Thomas was. Maybe you've been there too.

To break out of that dreadful place of uncertainty and doubt, we need to join Thomas and the rest of the disciples in that room 8 (?) days after Easter.

Despite all the resistance and frustration, Thomas had joined the rest of his brothers. I would suspect it was a little awkward in there. Technically speaking, Jesus had not made an appointment with these men, and it doesn't seem like they knew for sure he would appear. Despite the Resurrection appearances, they are still in a room together with the doors locked. These men were still not profiles of courage.

But Jesus shows up.

He doesn't knock. He doesn't wait for an invitation. He just appears. And he has good news to share.

"Peace be with you." I wonder if Jesus was looking right at Thomas as he spoke those words again.

And those weren't the only words that the Savior wanted to share. READ.

I think it's safe to say Christ gave Thomas more than he bargained for. He didn't deserve to get the proof he asked for, but Jesus gives it to him anyway. But Jesus doesn't just give Thomas proof that he is alive. He gives him proof of salvation. It's as though he says, "**Look at my wounds.** I really did this for you. And because I am alive, speaking to you right now, it means my Father accepted my sacrifice on the cross. Your sins are forgiven. Things are exactly the way they are supposed to be."

And the good news keeps getting better, because it's not just for Thomas. It's for you too.

I'm sure all of us can think of things in our lives that are frustrating and disappointing, things that might make us grumble in our hearts, "It's not supposed to be this way!" When those things come, as sinful human beings it's easy to look for solutions in the wrong places. We complain endlessly. We distract ourselves. We try to work extra hard to make up for our mistakes. All of those are short term, self-centered solutions. Worse than that, you know what it really shows? You don't think victory is certain. You don't think the war is over. You're still trying to earn something for yourself.

But you know what happens? Jesus shows up anyway. He doesn't knock. He doesn't wait for an invitation. He just speaks to you in his Word.

He says, "Peace be with you." Not just once, but a thousand times over. It's what the Savior said to you on the day of your baptism. It's what he said to you earlier today, in the absolution when you heard the words "your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

And he points to his wounds. The nail marked hands and feet. The place in his side where he was pierced by a spear. He shows you those wounds as you read the eyewitness accounts of the NT, accounts more historically verified than any other ancient document in existence. He shows you those wounds as you eat his body and drink his blood at holy communion, and hear the words, "For you... for the forgiveness of sins."

Yes, you have peace. Because your God died for you. He rose for you. He guides you through his Word, and chases after you with his grace when you wander or stray. You have peace because Jesus is alive. And he is here, with you right now. **Jesus gives you the life you had been missing**, but didn't know you needed. He gives you the love you've been after all your life that you could never find anywhere else. He turns the day of your death into a homecoming celebration.

This is peace that never goes away.

This is peace that cannot be contained or kept to ourselves.

This is the peace of God that refuses to leave sinners, or the world, unchanged.

In Christ, things *are* the way they are supposed to be. So what do you say, brothers and sisters? Let's share that peace. And rejoice to live in it together. Amen.