

EASTER: LOVE WINS

April 24, 2022

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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 Jews, 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.

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REFLECT & DISCUSS

1. Read the passage slowly.
Then take a deep breath and read it again. What word, phrase or image stands out to you?
2. Why do you think Jesus “breathed on them”? Do you have any memories of people accidentally (or intentionally) breathing on you?

Read Genesis 2:8. How does this scripture re-shape what this moment means?

3. What do you think it might mean for the church (collectively) to be about “forgiving sins”?
4. What place do you think doubt has in Christian faith? In what ways have doubts impacted your faith (positively or negatively)?
5. Why do you think Jesus lifts up those “who have not seen but come to believe”? Who do you think Jesus has in mind here?
6. What does “life in his name” look like or mean to you?