

## April 16, 2023: Second Sunday of Easter

### Main Idea: Jesus' wounds are what make him a powerful healer.

Most of us are used to talking about scars in the context of trying to cover them up or make them disappear. We use creams and ointments and sometimes even tattoos to try to conceal the signs that we've been hurt.—to try to make something we think is ugly, more beautiful. This week, we see Jesus doing the exact opposite—using his scars to speak to healing; using his scars to spread beauty.

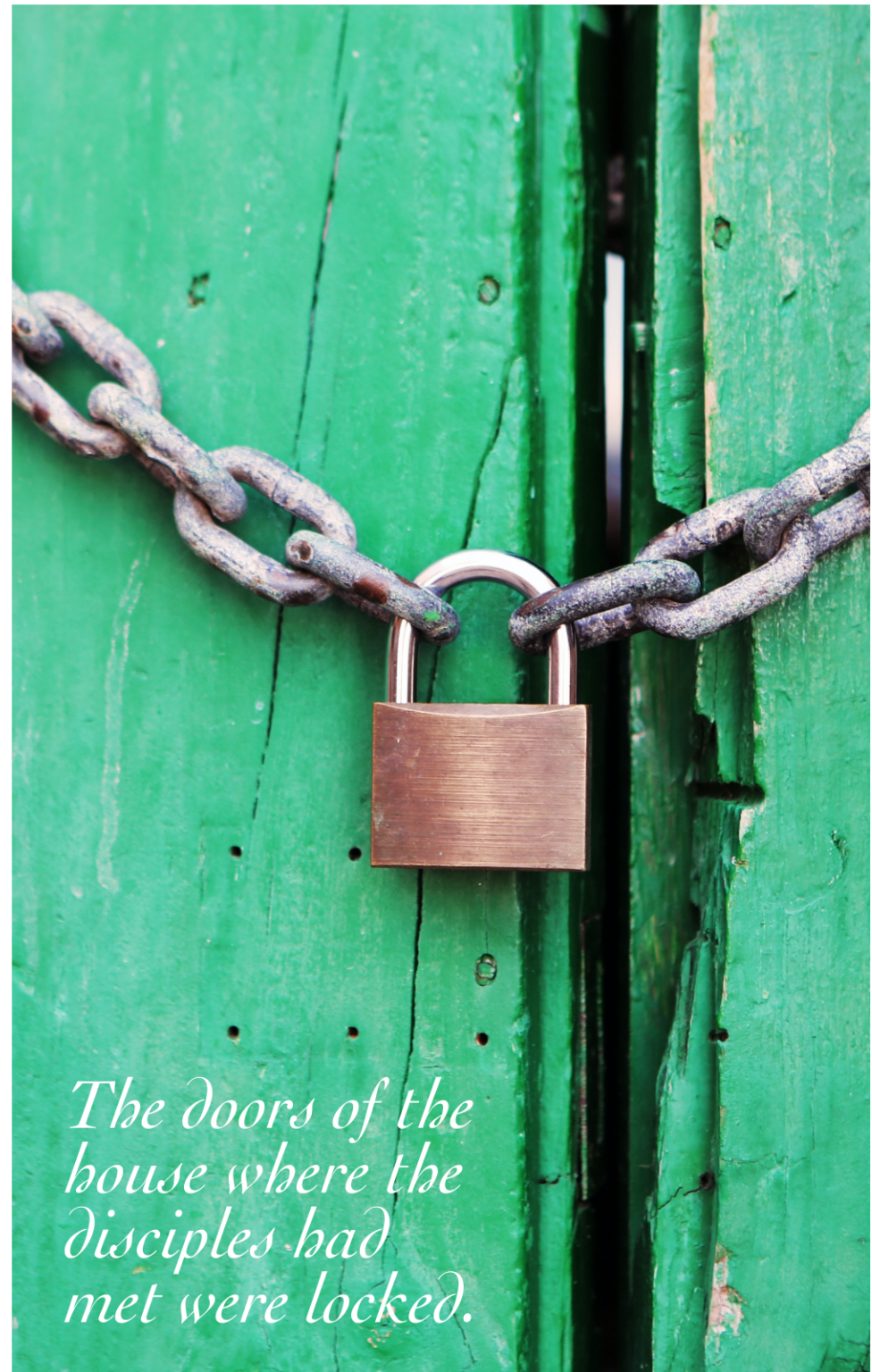
This story opens on the disciples, self-isolating and terrified for their lives. Jesus has been crucified, and his tomb is empty. What do the disciples have left to believe? Their collective hope is gone, their collective anxiety is running high, and many are falling victim to doubt. Thomas is always the one who draws criticism here. But in the first portion of this story, he's not even there.

Jesus comes and stands among them. He says to them, "Peace be with you." The disciples can see him again! You would think that they would surround him and ask him all of their questions, gasp in shock or, at the very least, let out a giant sigh of relief. But the disciples don't do any of that. In fact, they don't even recognize this man with whom they have spent the last three years. So Jesus shows them the wounds on his hands and in his side. In his fullest glory—in the midst of his triumphant victory over death itself—Jesus retains his wounds. And those wounds are the only things that his disciples can make sense of—the only things they can use to identify him. After they finally begin to catch on, they all rejoice, and he says to them again, "Peace be with you."

Jesus does not wish these people peace *in spite* of the fact that they doubted him—he wishes them peace in and through and because of the fact that they doubted him. (The same goes for Thomas a week later when Jesus proved the disciples' testimony correct.) Jesus does not appear to the disciples to shame them, or to prove how right he has been all along in the midst of their disbelief. He appears solely to love and to comfort them—to remind them that he is always present, sharing their pain and bearing wounds with them.

### Scripture Summary

Jesus is risen, yet most of the disciples have not yet seen him. Is Thomas really the only one who needs the proof his eyes give him?



# GOD'S WORD for Today

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## First Reading: Acts 2:14a, 22-32

<sup>14</sup>But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them,  
<sup>22</sup>“You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know—<sup>23</sup>this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. <sup>24</sup>But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. <sup>25</sup>For David says concerning him, ‘I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken; <sup>26</sup>therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover my flesh will live in hope. <sup>27</sup>For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One experience corruption. <sup>28</sup>You have made known to me the ways of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’ <sup>29</sup>“Fellow Israelites, I may say to you confidently of our ancestor David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. <sup>30</sup>Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne. <sup>31</sup>Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying, ‘He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh experience corruption.’ <sup>32</sup>This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses.

## Psalm: Psalm 16

## Second Reading: 1 Peter 1:3-9

<sup>3</sup>Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup>and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled,

and unfading, kept in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup>who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. <sup>6</sup>In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, <sup>7</sup>so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. <sup>8</sup>Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, <sup>9</sup>for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

## Gospel: John 20:19-31

<sup>19</sup>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.” <sup>20</sup>After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. <sup>21</sup>Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” <sup>22</sup>When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup>If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” <sup>24</sup>But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup>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.”

<sup>26</sup>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.” <sup>27</sup>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.” <sup>28</sup>Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” <sup>29</sup>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.” <sup>30</sup>Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. <sup>31</sup>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.