



# BREAKING OPEN

Scripture Study

## Easter 2A



Room to Wonder:  
No door can keep him out

**Dennis Webster**

A weekly reflection based on the teachings at St Peter's by the Lake, Paynesville, together with a study guide based on the readings, some liturgical resources RCL Lectionary, and a weekly devotion

## Revised Common Lectionary Related

Easter 2A  
Acts 2.14a, 22-32  
Psalm 16  
1 Peter 1.3-9  
John 20.19-end



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Book of Common Prayer (1662) Collects

**A**lmighty Father,  
who hast given thine only Son to die for  
our sins,  
and to rise again for our justification:  
Grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and  
wickedness,  
that we may always serve thee in pureness of  
living and truth;  
through the merits of the same thy Son Jesus  
Christ our Lord.

## INTRODUCTION

Easter isn't just something to believe in; it's a truth meant to be lived out.

The first disciples felt confused and afraid. The resurrection unsettled them and shattered their expectations, just as the cross had done. When Jesus appeared, he didn't speak with triumph. Instead, he offered them peace. He was simply present with them, not giving explanations or arguments.

“Don't be afraid.”

Resurrection begins by gently removing fear.

Jesus doesn't just show that he's alive; he invites the disciples into his life. He shows them his wounds, breathes on them, eats with them, and calls them by name. Resurrection is about relationship, not just something to watch. The disciples are invited to live in a new way, where death no longer has the last word.

Now, this invitation reaches out to us, too.

We can keep Easter at a distance, but the gospel comes close. The resurrection is happening in our world and in us right now.

To embrace the resurrection is to let it reshape our lives. Trust that life is growing even in places that seem lifeless.

- Let go of the quiet despair that says nothing will ever change.
- Remember that wounds are not the end. Like the empty tomb, which leaves space in the quiet, resurrection opens up something new.
- The grave clothes are left behind, and the body is gone. There isn't an instant explanation—just the start of seeing in a new way.

We're invited to live with openness, not needing everything to be settled. This means welcoming uncertainty, letting go of the need for all the answers, and trusting that God is still at work in our questions. It calls us to stay open to new possibilities and to notice the ways God's life might appear.

Live believing that forgiveness is stronger than failure, and love is stronger than fear. God is already working in our lives.

Easter doesn't take us out of the world. The disciples still had scars and faced challenges. They went about their ordinary days, but they had seen something new. They knew that life goes deeper than death.

The invitation is still here. It's just as gentle and surprising as it was in that first locked room. Step out. Breathe in the new air. Let the life that has already started shape how you live. As we do this, let's move forward together, encouraging and supporting each other. We're not alone in living out the resurrection. We're invited to share this new life as a community, helping each other and showing hope together.

**We do this not because everything is clear, but because Christ is alive.**

- Ask God to help us step fully into the life of resurrection this week.
- Pray for courage to move past fear and doubt just as the disciples did.
- Request assistance in recognising the already present work of Jesus around us.
- Seek to become a community that welcomes honest questions and exploring faith together.

As we walk lightly on sacred ground,  
teach us Lord to make known your kingdom,  
and let this reflect in all that we do and say.

### No door can keep him out

Standing at the edge of the lake is not the same as stepping into the water.

It is easy to stand on the jetty, watching the light drift across the water. You can notice the ripples. A deep breath, and you can take it all in. You might even think you understand.

Then, becoming bolder, you can step off the edge. Let your feet leave the wood. And then, you are in.

The water gathers around you. You feel it move through your toes and around your ankles. You are no longer just watching. Now you belong to it.

It is the same water. But everything has changed.

I wonder if Easter is something like this.

We can come close to Easter. Believe it. Celebrate it. And remain just outside, watching.

Resurrection is not something we stand beside. Not only something to look at. It calls us to step in. To live within it. Not just to observe.

The disciples, in today's Gospel, are not standing in an open space.

They're in a room.

Doors shut. Locked. Fear hangs in the air.

They've heard the news, but nothing feels settled. Nothing feels certain.

They are together. But they are not yet changed.

And Thomas—Thomas isn't even there at first.

And when he hears what's happened, he says what many of us would probably say:

"Unless I see... unless I touch... I'm not going to believe."

And maybe that's not failure.

It could be that's honesty. And, from our standpoint, it also validates that Jesus is indeed risen. He bears the marks of the crucifixion. He eats fish. Not only that, but he breathes on them. He allows them to touch him.

Possibly, this is what we mean by *Room to Wonder*. There is always a space for honest questions. A place to wrestle with doubt. To explore faith together. No pressure to have it all figured out.

A space where no one has to pretend.

Where questions are welcome.

Where doubt does not need to hide.

Let's look more closely at what happens next.

The doors are locked.

They have done all they can to keep the outside away.

Fear, danger, uncertainty.

And yet, as George Herbert once wrote,

"The Church with psalms must shout;

No door can keep them out." (Antiphon)

And suddenly, Jesus is there.

Not waiting to be invited.

Not standing outside knocking.

Standing among them.

"Peace be with you."

Before they've figured it out.

Before they've resolved their doubts.

Before they have become anything like a community with a mission.

Jesus has already crossed the threshold.

Notice that a week later, they're still in the same room.

The doors are still shut.

But this time, Thomas is there.

And again, Jesus comes.

Again, he speaks peace.

Then he turns to Thomas. Not with criticism. Not with distance. With an invitation.

"Come closer.

See.

Touch."

This is the moment when everything shifts.

Because this is not just about proving something.

This is not Jesus saying, "Here is the evidence."

The wounds are still there. Visible. Real. But now they are not barriers.

They are the place of encounter.

And Thomas moves. He lets go of holding back. He steps out from the shadows to something much deeper:

*"My Lord and my God."*

He does not just understand something.

He enters fully into the presence of the resurrected Jesus.

This is why the image matters now.

Resurrection isn't just a doorway to look at.

It is not only about moving from outside to inside.

It is more like stepping off the jetty.

At first, you are ankle-deep. Testing the water. But the invitation is not to stay

there.  
The invitation is to be surrounded.  
To feel the movement of it.  
It is living inside a new reality. One that surrounds you. This is something that has already come toward us.

“No door can keep them out,” becomes easily, “No door can keep him out.”

The resurrection is not a life we unlock.  
It is a life that has already broken in.  
Which is why Jesus doesn’t stop at “Peace be with you.”

He says:  
“As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” Because once you begin to live inside resurrection —  
you begin to see differently.  
This is what it means to walk into the light.

Light is not just something you look at.  
It becomes the place you live in.

A new way of seeing.  
A new way of being.  
A new way of relating to the world.

Peter calls it a living hope. Not just an idea. Not only a promise for the future, but also alive in us now.

And when that happens, not just in a person but in a community,  
it becomes visible.

That’s what we see in Acts.

- They gather.
- They share meals.
- They pray.
- They hold their possessions loosely.
- They live with glad and generous hearts.

And it’s not because they’ve been told to behave this way.

It is because they live as if resurrection is true.  
As if scarcity is no longer the final word.  
As if isolation has been broken.  
As if life really has begun again.

They don’t just believe in the resurrection.

They organise their lives around it.

And people are drawn in. Not because of a programme. Not because of persuasion.

But because something real is happening among them.

So practically, what does this mean for us?

It means we begin where the disciples began:

*In the room.*

*Some of us are still wondering.*

*Some of us are still unsure.*

*Some of us are still standing back a little.*

And that’s okay.

Because this story reminds us:

Jesus is not waiting for perfect faith.

He comes anyway.

No door can keep him out.

Not fear.

Not doubt.

Not uncertainty.

I started this reflection standing by the lake.

But remember, we are not meant to stay on the jetty.  
Some of us are still standing there. Watching. Curious.  
Some of us have stepped in. But only just.  
Careful. Cautious.

Yet, the invitation of Easter is not just to observe.

The call of Easter is simple: step in fully.

To be surrounded.

To live inside this new reality.

And as we do,

Together, we become a community that makes room for wonder. We walk into the light. We live so resurrection can be seen. Each person matters. Each question matters. We belong to one another as we journey. We bring our real selves and honest searching. This is how we help each other see what is possible.

Not because we carry Jesus into the world—

But because we begin to recognise that he is already there.

Already present.

Already at work.

Because no door can keep him out.

So the question is not whether resurrection is real.

Will we stay at the edge, or will we fully accept the invitation to step into the life that has already come to meet us?

We don’t just believe in the resurrection.

We are invited to live inside it. Together. For the sake of the world.

Together.

For the sake of the world.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The emphasis this week is that there is 'room to wonder' - space for honest questions and doubt. Why is this important for a healthy faith community?

- The sermon describes 'Room to Wonder' as a space where 'no one has to pretend,' where 'questions are welcome,' and where 'doubt does not need to hide.' Thomas's honest doubt is presented as validation rather than failure.
- What honest questions or doubts have you been afraid to share with others? How could your small group or church community better create 'room to wonder'?

The early church in Acts didn't just believe in resurrection - they organised their entire lives around it. What specific behaviours and attitudes showed they were living 'inside' resurrection?

- When the early believers gathered, shared meals, prayed, held possessions loosely, and lived with glad and generous hearts, not because they were told to behave this way, but because they lived as if resurrection was true.
- If someone observed your daily life, what evidence would they see that you believe in resurrection? What would need to change for you to 'organise your life' around resurrection hope?

Imagine standing on a jetty versus stepping into water to describe our relationship with Easter. What's the difference between 'watching' resurrection and 'living inside' it?

- The sermon contrasts observing Easter from a distance with fully entering into the reality of resurrection. We can believe and celebrate Easter while remaining 'just outside, watching' versus stepping in to 'live within it.'
- In your own life, are you currently standing on the 'jetty' watching God from a distance, or have you stepped into the 'water' of living faith? What would it look like for you to step deeper?

When Jesus appeared to the disciples, they were in a locked room filled with fear and uncertainty. How does Jesus respond to their doubt and fear in this story?

- The sermon describes how the disciples had locked doors, were filled with fear, and Thomas specifically doubted unless he could see and touch Jesus. Yet Jesus came anyway, offering peace and inviting Thomas to touch his wounds.
- What 'locked doors' of fear, doubt, or uncertainty are you dealing with right now? How might Jesus be trying to meet you in those closed-off places?

This five-day devotional seeks to provide Room to Wonder about the nature of Resurrection and to explore the themes of accepting, questioning, resolving and entering into its fullness.



### Day 1

#### John 20:19-29

The first day of our devotional looks at the story of Thomas, who was skeptical of Jesus' resurrection until he saw and touched Jesus. This event teaches us that questions and doubts are natural steps in our faith journey. Jesus' invitation for Thomas to draw near shows us that our uncertainties do not alienate us from His presence.

In our lives, we are often in rooms with locked doors, closed off with fear and uncertainty. Nevertheless, no barrier is too great for Jesus. Like Thomas, we are called to step out from the shadows of doubt and into a fuller understanding of the Living Christ.

- What barriers have you put up in your life out of fear or doubt?
- How does the story of Thomas encourage you in your faith journey?
- In what ways can you step out of your comfort zone to experience the fullness of resurrection?
  
- Pray for the courage to confront your doubts and questions.
- Ask for the presence of Jesus to be revealed to you in moments of uncertainty.

### Day 2

#### Romans 6:4

Today's reflection is centred on the concept of new life through resurrection. Just as we are buried with Christ through baptism into death, we too may walk in newness of life through His resurrection. This passage challenges us to leave behind our old ways and fully embrace the transforming power of resurrection in our daily lives.

Experiencing this transformation is akin to stepping off the jetty into the water, as described in the sermon. We are invited not just to dip our toes but to immerse ourselves completely in this renewed existence where we see the world through the lens of eternity.

- What old habits or thoughts do you need to let go of to embrace new life?

- How can living in the resurrection change your daily interactions and decisions?
- Reflect on a moment of personal transformation. How did it impact your faith?
- Seek guidance in identifying areas of your life that need renewal.
- Pray for the ability to live with a resurrected mindset.

## Day 3

### 1 Peter 1:3

Peter speaks of a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. This hope is not a passive wish but an active and vibrant reality that influences our lives currently. Resurrection reshapes our vision of what is possible and invites us into a hopeful and abundant life. This hope becomes infectious in a community where the resurrection is not only believed but lived out. As illustrated in the Acts of the Apostles, living hope fosters generous hearts and connectedness. We are to be communities where resurrection is not only proclaimed but also visibly practiced in unity and love.

- How does the concept of living hope inspire you today?
- In what ways can your community reflect resurrection hope more vividly?
- What steps can you take to contribute to a culture of hope and generosity?
- Pray for your community to be a beacon of living hope.
- Ask for strength to live out the values of the resurrected Christ.

## Day 4

### Acts 2:42-47

This scripture passage gives us a glimpse of the early Church living in the reality of the resurrection. Their lives were characterised by shared meals, prayer, generosity, and glad hearts. These actions weren't driven by compulsion but by the genuine transformation brought by the resurrection. What we can learn from this is that living in resurrection power means reorienting our lives towards community and generosity. It calls us to hold our possessions lightly and invest in relationships deeply, drawing others into the visible reality of God's kingdom among us.

- Reflect on your relationship with material possessions. How does resurrection change your perspective?
- How might you engage more fully in communal life and

- support?
- What is one practical way you can show generosity in your community this week?
- Pray for the ability to share openly and generously with others.
- Ask God to deepen your commitment to community and shared life.

## Day 5

### John 1:5

The closing day of our devotional brings us back to the theme of light. The light shines in the darkness, symbolising the illumination and revelation that comes through Christ's resurrection. We are not merely observers of this light; we are invited to live within it, letting it transform our vision and actions. To walk into the light is to acknowledge that no door can keep Jesus out—not fear, doubt, or even darkness. Living in the light means continuously stepping into the new life we've been offered and allowing it to shape our being for the sake of the world. Together, we are the carriers of this light, called to shine brightly in all circumstances.

- How can you let Christ's light shine more in your life and circumstances?
- Where are the dark places in your life that need to experience His light?
- Reflect on how you can share the light of resurrection with those around you.
- Pray for courage to step fully into the light of His presence.
- Seek opportunities to spread Christ's light in your community and beyond.



# End notes and further reading

## End notes and further reading

Harrington, Daniel J Sacra Pagina: The Gospel of Matthew

Moloney, Francis J, SBD, Sacra Pagina: The Gospel of John

Johnson, Luke Timothy: Sacra Pagina: The Gospel on Luke

Collins, Raymond F., Sacra Pagina: First Corinthians

Andrew McGowan [substack.com/@abmcg](mailto:substack.com/@abmcg)

N.T. Wright, Twelve months of Sundays Year A

Andrew Pratt, pastor and hymn writer ([theworshipcloud.com](http://theworshipcloud.com))

Paula Gooder: Paula Gooder, The Risen Existence: The Spirit of Easter (Fortress Press, 2015)

Let your faith and relationships  
be shaped by love and patience  
for God's love is  
revealed in lives, not letters.

## Brabarlung Totem

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Prepared by Rev'd Dennis Webster, Rector of the Anglican Parish of Paynesville,  
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Acknowledgement of use appreciated

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Published every weekend, usually on Saturday, AEST.

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