

Worship Material
Unlocking the Easter Story
Materials from Roots Bible Study
Sunday 16th April

Begin with an opening prayer

The disciples told Thomas, 'We have seen the Lord!' But that wasn't enough for Thomas; he'd already missed out once, and he needed to see for himself. We gather today, determined not to miss out on anything you have in store for us; our doors and hearts are open to you, O Lord. Risen Jesus, meet us here today. We need to meet you for ourselves. Come, Lord Jesus.
Amen.

Read John 20.19-31

Bible notes

Jesus' disciples had locked the doors to protect themselves from the Jewish authorities, who were eager to round up Jesus' supporters and dispose of any threat they might pose to the peace of Jerusalem. Their experience reflected the hostility endured by the Gospel readers from their local synagogue (John 9.22,34; 16.2), as well as the regular rhythm of weekly meeting for worship and fellowship. Jesus' appearance behind locked doors was enough to breathe new life and hope into his frightened followers. Thomas' absence and subsequent reaction revealed the natural, questioning spirit he displays elsewhere in this Gospel (e.g. 14.5). Perhaps his actions also showed that he was seeking emotional safety behind his locked inner doors.

Thomas' Easter story was unlocked a week later, not by his companions' attempting to argue him into belief, but by the repetition of the previous week's evening events. Thomas had made demands (v.25) that turned out to be unnecessary. The sight of the risen Jesus and the sound of his greeting were enough to validate the witness that went back to Mary Magdalene (20.18). Now Thomas could make the full Johannine confession of faith in the descending and ascending 'Lord and God'. The sequence of appearances and testimony that started with Mary Magdalene and culminated in Thomas laid the foundation on which this Gospel's Easter faith was built.

A prayer of thanksgiving

Jesus showed Thomas his hands and side; the man was overjoyed at his presence. We too are filled with joy to meet with you.
Thank you that you send us forth in your name,

to do your will, and to be your presence in the world.
Thank you that you are always with us.
In you there is a world of joys and excitement still to be unlocked.
We praise you, Lord.
Amen.

A prayer to conclude

Lord Jesus,
walk with us through this week,
support us when we try to see the truth in things that puzzle us.
Give us courage to search for answers,
and hold us in your unfailing and all-encompassing love,
each and every day.
Amen.