

# Coffee to Go | Second Sunday of Easter

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Jesus, disciples, breath, Thomas, Easter, embodied, experience

## SPEAKERS

Blake Smith, Karin Peter

### **Karin Peter** 00:26

Welcome to Coffee to Go, where we center ourselves in the Scriptures, seasons, and holy days of the Christian tradition. I'm Karin Peter, and I'm here with Blake Smith. And we welcome you on the journey. So this week, we are in the second, we are experiencing the second Sunday of Easter. So we're in the season of Easter. Easter season begins on Easter Day, and it lasts 50 days from Easter to Pentecost, which is the day the hope we recognize the coming of the Holy Spirit. So the whole deal is that we celebrate the resurrection longer than we prepared in, you know, contemplation in the wilderness. And so we get to experience Easter for 50 days, while we had experienced lent for 40 days, and I don't know if that's the reason they made it 50, or if it's just the fact that Pentecost fell on a holiday that had 50 in the name of it, which is how we ended up calling it Pentecost. And so that's what we've done. I don't know if it was intended or just happened. So where are we with Jesus in this Easter season? Today, the second Sunday of Easter. We are still in John's gospel. So we're hearing John's account of what happened right after, what happened right after that empty tomb moment with the young man and white talking to the women who came to the tomb. What happened then? So we've got a group of disciples who are fearful, over what happened. There were some powerful religious leaders who were opposed to the ministry of Jesus and threatened by the ministry of Jesus. So we have a climate of fear. And it's into this our Scripture takes place. So Blake...

### **Blake Smith** 02:27

yeah, it's interesting that this passage, talks about the disciples and fear because if you listen to a lot of preachers these days, it's just he has risen, all is good, life goes on, and it's all bright and sunshine and lilies, right? That's not exactly what happened, according to the scripture anyway. And that scripture comes from the Gospel According to John, the 20th, Chapter, the 19th, through the 31st verse.

When it was evening, on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors were locked, where the disciples were 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 and the mark of the nails, and my hand and 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." And 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 that are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

So why does this matter? Well, we can sum it up in three words, Jesus...shows... up. That's not how we normally read this passage because we get caught in the Doubting Thomas phrase, and it's about so much more than that. So, Jesus shows up. The point here, Jesus comes into the places of fear and anxiety and doubt and insecurity and injustice, to provide what we need. And he doesn't do it with rebuke or chastisement. Jesus breathes life into those who are afraid. Jesus breathes life into those without power. Jesus breathes life into dead spaces. And let's be clear, the disciples are unsure what resurrection means. It's not just Thomas, I mean, let's remember that they are hiding behind closed doors, and they're hiding because they're afraid. Thomas's need is no different than that of the disciples. He just wants what they have received, the chance to see Jesus with his own eyes. But it's important to understand here also that Jesus didn't rebuke or chastise Thomas or the disciples for that matter, for their doubt. He took the opportunity to make a point, that the continuation of the message and ministry of Jesus depends on Christ-followers bearing witness. That would be us. Future believers won't have firsthand encounters with the resurrected Christ. Their experience of Christ's presence will come through us Christ's disciples, Joy Moore, who is Lutheran, actually a preaching pastor. And in her commentary on this passage, she writes, "the whole of this is neither about phantom appearance, nor even a doubting disciple. It is how to tell of a world when the divine shows up in disaster. It is how to tell of a world when forgiveness is forever possible. It is how to tell of a world when a woman's witness welcomes wonder. It is how to tell the world when life is to know that God whose mission is to forgive sins, and reconcile communities scattered by oppression." So just a completely different take on this passage, which leads us to ask some questions as we do every week. And the questions that we can ask ourselves this week our what are the places, events and circumstances in our lives, when we have needed an encounter with the living Christ to calm our fear and doubt? Another would be when has Jesus shown up when I was afraid, facing injustice, or facing a dead space or a dead end? And finally, when have I showed up as the embodied love of Christ for someone else when they were afraid, without power, oppressed or in a dead space and facing a dead end?

**Karin Peter 08:08**

Yeah, that changes how we are reading this whole passage, doesn't it Blake? We focus so much on the Thomas piece of that, the doubting piece of that, and we forget the main point. So I love that. And I love the quote that you offered, it was did you say it was Joy Moore? [Yes]. That's a wonderful quote. So when you were talking about this, one of the things that came to mind that it might be interesting for our listeners to hear is that when we say it's the whole idea of bearing witness so that others can believe, the reason we know that central to the story is because John's Gospel was written well after Jesus and the disciples were doing what they did. And so the whole point is, they're speaking to a group of early Christians who needed to know that Jesus shows up in these different ways, because

Jesus wasn't going to show up as an embodied being for them. [Right.] And we forget that too, that John is writing out of John's experience of needing Jesus to show up. And that's why John is so certain, and wants to make sure we know that Jesus shows up when we show up for others. Okay, so I think about experiencing it this week. I know I've talked about the three peaceful breaths before, but I'm going to talk about it here again, because it's the whole breathing in this life that Jesus offers into dead space. What does that feel and look like? So it's the whole thing that we have in our spiritual practices for kids on [allthingsarespiritual.org](http://allthingsarespiritual.org), where we take three peaceful centering breaths before we do something or as we're preparing for something, or even, there was a social media post recently from one of our ministers, whose kid had taken a quiz at school like a pop quiz kind of thing and was upset because they didn't have time to do the three, their three peaceful breaths before they had to take the quiz. It's become such a part of that young person's life. So practice that this week, take some peaceful breaths and breathe in that new life. Jesus is showing up for you. So breathe it in and see where that takes you. This week. Do we have a blessing?

**Blake Smith** 10:47

We do. I want to just make a quick comment about the breathing as I was listening to you say that I mean, for me, when I read this passage again, I was reminded, of course, that it is God who breathes life into the dust. And Jesus is now breathing life into the disciples to enliven the church, if you will, going forward. So I love that image of breath.

So our blessing is from John O'Donoghue, and it is called "In Praise of Air."

Let us bless the air benefactor of breath, keeper of the fragile bridge we breathe across. Air waiting outside the womb to funnel a first breath that lets us begin to be here. Each moment drawn from its invisible stop. Air, vast neighborhood of the invisible, where thought lives entering to arise in us as our own, enabling us to put faces on things that would otherwise stay strange, and leave us homeless here. Air, poem of memory where our vanished days secretly gather, receiving every glance, word and act that fall from presence, taking all our unfolding in so that nothing is lost or forgotten. Air, reservoir of the future out of which our days flow, ferrying their shadowed nights, the invisible generosity that brings us future friends, and sometimes stones of sorrow, on which our minds refine. Air, along whose unseen path present builds its quiet procession, sometimes in waves of sound, voices that can persuade every door of the heart, often in tides of music that absolve the cut of time. Air, source of breath that enables flowers to flourish and calls the dark rooted trees to ascend into blossom. May our souls stay in rhythm with eternal breath. Amen. [Amen.]

Thanks for joining us here today at coffee to go we invite you to join us at Coffee to Go for the next part of our journey through the liturgical seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition.