

**Bible reading John 20:19-31**

**Unlocking the Easter story**

THIS WEEK WE EXPLORE WHAT HAPPENS NEXT.

The risen Jesus appears among his disciples when Thomas is absent. Jesus breathes on them and says, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.' A week later, Jesus appears again and speaks to Thomas directly. Thomas cries out, 'My Lord and my God!'



**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.

**First impressions**

- What might this fingerprint be about to unlock?
- What parts of the Easter story need unlocking for you?
- Jesus said many will believe without having seen; what is your part in making this a reality?



Find a prize to share that will motivate those in your household and lock it away using a padlock, key, safe or bike lock. Create a series of clues and puzzles to solve for your family to discover the lock combination or hiding place. As you share the prize, talk together about how the different characters in the Bible story unlocked some amazing truths.

**EXPLORE**

Cut out a large question mark from paper that you can write on. Think about questions that you would like to ask God/Jesus, and questions you have about faith or living a Christian life and write these down. Exploring our questions can help us to grow in our faith. See if you can share one or two of your questions with neighbours this week. Perhaps you might find some answers together, too.

**A sending out prayer**

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.

**REFLECT**

What helps you to be comfortable with faith conversations and open to new ideas/experiences? What methods of outreach do you find less comfortable? These insights could help you find a way to unlock the Easter story for others.

**LISTEN**



Play the track 'Peace Be Still', The Belonging Co. feat. Lauren Daigle on *All the Earth*, as you reflect on Thomas' story and your own journey in faith.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VBzg4B3\\_yS8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VBzg4B3_yS8)