Reflections - [27 April – 3 May 2025](https://www.rootsontheweb.com/lectionary/2025/136-march-april-2025-c/easter-2)

[Locking and unlocking](https://www.rootsontheweb.com/lectionary/2025/136-march-april-2025-c/easter-2)

**Bible study on John 20:19-31**

**Begin with an opening prayer**

Here we stand at the door and knock:
**open our hearts to your love.**
Here we hesitate and doubt:
**open our minds to your truth.**
Here we hide in fear and pain:
**open our spirit to your peace.**
Here we gather in doubt and joy:
**open our lives to welcome all.**
**Amen.**

**Read the passage**

*Consider different ways to read the text. For example, hearing it in more than one version of the Bible.*

**Jesus Appears to His Disciples**

**19**On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” **20**After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

**21**Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” **22**And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. **23**If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

**Jesus Appears to Thomas**

**24**Now Thomas (also known as Didymus[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=john%2020&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26892a)]), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. **25**So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!”

But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

**26**A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” **27**Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”

**28**Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

**29**Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

**30**Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. **31**But these are written that you may believe[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=john%2020&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26899b)] that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

**Explore and respond to the text**

*Start by reading the Bible notes below. You may want to read them more than once or pause after each paragraph to reflect on what you have read.*

**Bible notes**

Mary Magdalene told Peter and the beloved disciple that Jesus’ tomb was empty. They looked for themselves but then just returned home (20:10). She waited and wept there and was met by her risen Lord. Although she did not touch him, she was able to tell the disciples, ‘I have seen the Lord’ who was ascending to his Father and their Father. Rather than rejoicing, they locked themselves away in fear. Despite this, Jesus, who is himself ‘an open door, which no one is able to shut’ (Revelation 3:8), appeared to them. He showed them his hands and side, breathed the Holy Spirit on them and sent them out to proclaim forgiveness in his name. They followed Mary’s example and told the missing Thomas, ‘We have seen the Lord’, although yet again they shut themselves away.

In John’s Gospel, many characters struggle for faith and understanding and engage Jesus in dialogue. Nicodemus asks about being ‘born again’ (3:4), the Samaritan woman asks about ‘living water’ (4:10), Martha asks about ‘the resurrection’ (11:24), and Thomas himself asks about ‘the way’ (14:4-7). Jesus’ willingness to respond helps us to unlock the meaning of unfolding events. Mary asks where the body has been laid, and when Jesus responds, ‘Mary’, she meets her ‘Rabbouni’ (20:16). When Jesus again comes through those closed doors, he graciously invites Thomas to ‘reach out your hand’, and Thomas worships him, ‘My Lord and my God’. Thomas, who was so concerned about ‘the way’ in which Jesus was leading them (14:4-7), was willing to die for his cause (11:16). To be faithful to the way of the cross, he needed to know that the risen one was indeed the wounded one, and that the crucified victim is worthy to be recognised as Lord and worshipped as God. As ‘those who have not seen and yet have come to believe’ (v.29), we are blessed with the stories of those who asked Jesus their own questions, with one another’s testimonies and with the Spirit who continues to unlock for us the truth about Jesus (16:14-15).

**Reflection**

*Spend a few moments thinking about what stands out for you from the Bible reading. This idea may help.*

Escape Rooms are now found in most cities and towns. Teams discover clues and solve puzzles with the goal of finding their way out. John tells us, as readers of his story of Jesus, that our goal is ‘that through believing you may have life in his name’. There are clues and puzzles but even ‘his disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written of him and had been done to him’ (12:16). This is great encouragement to us to study our Scriptures together, sharing our puzzlement as well as our insight, so that we may share his risen life.

**Questions for reflection**

*You may wish to use these questions and the picture to help you think about or discuss issues arising from this week’s Bible passage.*

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**Questions**

* What aspects of life/faith do you wish could be unlocked for you?
* What would you have asked Jesus if you were in Thomas’s position?
* How can you unlock faith for others this week?

 **Prayer**

Risen Lord, we give thanks and praise for our many blessings.
You know our point of need and you meet it.
Because of you we have reason to rejoice.
You opened our hearts and blessed us with your peace.
**Thank you, risen Lord. Because of you we live and grow**
**in witness to your love.**
**We praise your Holy Name.**
**Amen.**