

It has been one week since Easter, one week since the chaos and excitement, one week since God rolled away the stone from the tomb. The seal of death was broken, and Mary Magdalene saw Jesus alive. That night, despite Mary's good news, the disciples were hiding behind locked doors. Today, a week after the resurrection, the disciples are again in the same room with the same locked doors. Not much has changed. They have traded a tomb for a house and a stone for locked doors.

It is not just the disciples; however, I suspect we all know about those locked doors. Sometimes it seems that God opens the tomb, and we follow behind locking the doors. God opens the tomb and declares forgiveness and we continue to live behind the locked doors of condemnation of self or others – we won't forgive. God opens the tomb of death, but we still live as if death is the final word. God opens the tomb and offers new life, a new beginning but we lock the doors and live in the past. God opens the tombs and declares we are loved, and we lock ourselves out of that love, we think we are not worthy or deserving. The locked doors of our lives are not so much about what is going on around us, but what is happening within us: fear, anger, guilt, hurt, grief, the refusal to change. There are a thousand different locks on the doors of our life, and they are always locked from the inside.

That is, I believe, what Thomas was struggling with when he said, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe." It earned him the name Doubting Thomas. Jesus, however, never accuses Thomas of doubting. Rather, Jesus says, "Do not be unbelieving, but believing." He could have just easily said that to the other disciples. After all, one week after seeing Jesus' hands and side they are still in the house behind locked doors...still denying the resurrected life of Christ.

Thomas' unbelief is not in his question. He did not ask to see more than the other disciples saw a week earlier. His unbelief, and theirs, is in being stuck in the house with the doors locked. Belief in Jesus' resurrection is not a question of intellectual assent or agreement. It is not about evidence or proof. It is not about getting the right answer. Belief is more about how we live than what we think.

Resurrection is not just an event or an idea. It is a way of being and living. It is the lens through which we see the world, each other, and ourselves.

Resurrection is the gift of God's life and love. Living resurrection, however, is difficult. For most of us it is a process, something we grow into over time. It is neither quick nor magical. Resurrection does not undo our past, fix our problems, or change the circumstances of our lives. It changes us, offers a way through our problems, and creates a future. Christ's resurrected life inspires us with his Spirit, invites us to unlock the doors, and sends us into the world.

I must wonder, one week after Easter, is our life different? Where are we living? Or better, how are we living? In the freedom and joy of resurrection or behind locked doors? What do we believe about Jesus' resurrection? What doors have you unlocked? If you want to know what you believe, look at your life and how you live. Our beliefs guide our life, and our life reveals our beliefs.

Resurrected people know that faith and life are messy. They ask hard questions rather than settling for easy answers. They do not have to figure it all out before saying their prayers, feeding the hungry, forgiving another, or loving their neighbor. They trust that what God believes about them is more important than what they believe about God. Resurrected people are willing to get out of the house. They unlock doors even when they do not know what is on the other side. They believe even if they do not understand. They may never see or touch Jesus, but they live trusting that they have been seen and touched by him.

Jesus steps into the midst of our house, through the locked doors, and breathes peace and life into us. He breathes peace and hope into us. He breathes peace and courage into us. He breathes peace and strength into us. And that breath of peace is the key that unlocks the door. So, take a deep breath, take it all in, let it fill and enliven you. Let it give you the hope, courage, and strength to unlock and open the doors of your life, and then get out of the house!