



Thomas Sunday

In the Old Testament, the forgiveness of sins--our release from slavery to "Pharaoh"--came about through animal sacrifice in the early Jerusalem temple, which is where God's glory--his presence on earth--resided. However, St. John insists that God's glory is no longer contained by bricks and mortar. God's glory is now revealed through the incarnate and crucified Word, who in turn, bestows on us the Holy Spirit. This means that the presence of God can go out from Jerusalem into all the world, and neither fear nor locked doors can stop it.

Scripture: John 20:19-31

Bottom Line: To hear the Word and believe is to be in the presence of God and have your sins forgiven.

Discussion Questions

1. Believing comes through hearing the Word. When, in the liturgical life of the Church, do you hear the gospel? Is it important to be present whenever the gospel is proclaimed in Church?
2. To hear and believe is to have our sins forgiven? What does "sin" mean to you? What does "forgiveness" mean? Knowing that your sins are forgiven, how will you now live your life?
3. Jesus gives his disciples, and us through our chrismation, the Holy Spirit so that we can proclaim the forgiveness of sins. How can you best do that? What will you say to proclaim this "good news"?
4. Thomas wanted to "see" in addition to hearing. Do you, sometimes, also want to see? What do you want to see? Why might Jesus bless those to hear instead? How can hearing be a better way to spread the news of Jesus Christ?
5. Jesus gives the disciples, and us through the priest, his peace. What do you think "peace" means? How might it be connected to the forgiveness of sins?

Moving Forward

Thomas, in the passage, is called the "Twin." We think of this as a biographical note, but "twin" means "two-faced." Thomas wanted to both **see and hear** the Word. Before, one *could* go to the temple, where God's presence was, and **see**. But now that God is on the move, he is present when the Gospel is proclaimed through the Word. Now, we are forgiven by believing what is **heard**.

Changing Your Mind

"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'." (John 20:28-29)