

## THE SCRIPTURES: (WEEK OF EASTER 2)

*Most of our celebrations are very brief. The festival of Easter, however, inspires a certain “afterglow” that by God’s grace burns ever brighter as we celebrate anew each Sunday during the Easter season. Led by the Spirit to believe in the resurrected Lord, we rejoice in holy awe in this glorious truth and are filled with a desire to speak of our hope with others.*

### DAY 1: Acts 2:14,36-47 (Monday<sup>1</sup>)

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”

<sup>37</sup> When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

<sup>38</sup> Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. <sup>39</sup> The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.” <sup>40</sup> With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” <sup>41</sup> Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

<sup>42</sup> They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. <sup>43</sup> Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. <sup>44</sup> All the believers were together and had everything in common. <sup>45</sup> They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. <sup>46</sup> Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

### Some Notes:

Jesus told Thomas, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” However, Jesus had good reason to let the disciples see him with their own eyes: they were to be his witnesses. When Peter stood before the crowds on Pentecost, we see the purpose for all the resurrection appearances of Jesus. Jesus let them see and touch because they weren’t just looking for themselves. No, these eleven would be the witnesses of the bodily resurrection of Christ for all ages. Through the eyes of these eleven men, God gives his Church the gift of proof and the gift of peace.

### Think about it<sup>2</sup>: Focus your attention on the verse above in italics

1. What does this Word of God teach me?
2. For what does this Word of God lead me to give thanks?
3. What sins does this Word of God lead me to confess?
4. For what does this Word of God lead me to pray?

---

<sup>1</sup> The suggested days are just that: suggestions. Your family can use the readings on whichever days you would like.

<sup>2</sup> These questions don’t have a right or wrong answer. They are meant to lead us to think about the Scriptures and what they say to us. They are based on Martin Luther’s “A Simple Way to Pray” – a letter he wrote to his barber. Simply talk through the questions one at a time, giving each question some time for input from the family.

## DAY 2: John 20:19-31 (Tuesday/Wednesday)

<sup>19</sup> 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!” <sup>20</sup> After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. <sup>21</sup> Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” <sup>22</sup> And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup> If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

<sup>24</sup> Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> 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.”

<sup>26</sup> 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!” <sup>27</sup> 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.”

<sup>28</sup> Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

<sup>29</sup> Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” <sup>30</sup> Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. <sup>31</sup> *But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

### Some Notes:

Peace was one thing the disciples did not have. They had questions, concerns, and doubts. But they had no peace that Easter evening as they huddled behind locked doors. Jesus was dead—killed on a Roman cross— and now fear held them in its icy grip. But then Jesus came! In the face of all their doubts he offered proof that he was alive and sin was dead. Jesus showed them his nail-marked hands and riven side. These holy wounds are the proof positive that God is at peace with us. But Thomas wasn’t there and unless he got the evidence that he demanded, he would in no way ever believe it. What grace we see in Jesus! He comes again and repeats Thomas’ objections nearly word for word. Again, he gives the ultimate proof that he was alive, and sin was dead. Jesus gave the proof that led to peace for Thomas, peace that could only be found in his Lord and his God.

**Think about it:** <sup>3</sup> *Focus your attention on the verse above in italics*

1. What does this Word of God teach me?
2. For what does this Word of God lead me to give thanks?
3. What sins does this Word of God lead me to confess?
4. For what does this Word of God lead me to pray?

---

<sup>3</sup> These questions don’t have a right or wrong answer. They are meant to lead us to think about the Scriptures and what they say to us. They are based on Martin Luther’s “A Simple Way to Pray” – a letter he wrote to his barber. Simply talk through the questions one at a time, giving each question some time for input from the family.

### **Day 3: 1 Peter 1:3-9 (Thursday/Friday)**

<sup>3</sup> Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. <sup>6</sup> In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. <sup>7</sup> These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. <sup>8</sup> Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, <sup>9</sup> for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

#### **Some Notes:**

What brings more doubt into our lives than grief or sorrow? “Why did this happen to me?” “How could God let my loved one die?” “When will this sickness stop?” Grief and sorrow raise doubts about God’s love and God’s plan for our lives. Peter points us to the resurrection as proof of the living hope we have regardless of our outward circumstances. We may doubt when we face trials, but the trials themselves prove the genuineness of our faith. Faith clings to a Savior we have not seen, but love. And this unseen Savior gives us the inexpressible joy of proof and peace even in the face of doubt.

**Think about it:** *Focus your attention on the verse above in italics*

1. What does this Word of God teach me?
2. For what does this Word of God lead me to give thanks?
3. What sins does this Word of God lead me to confess?
4. For what does this Word of God lead me to pray?