

# Second Sunday of Easter

**THANK GOD IT'S SUNDAY!**

**John 20:19-31**

**Second Sunday of Easter**

**Analysis by Ron Starenko**

19When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." 20After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. 21Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." 22When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." 24But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 25So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "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." 26A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." 27Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." 28Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" 29Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." 30Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. 31But these are written so that you may come to believe

that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

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## **DIAGNOSIS: It's Still Friday**

### **Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem)** – *Even Though It's Sunday*

I was in a coffee shop recently and I heard one of the waitresses shout to a partner, "What day does Easter fall on this year?" I thought to myself, how illiterate! Granted that Easter moves to a different date each year, even non-Christians know that Easter always falls on Sunday. However, there is another more serious confusion about what is "the first day of the week" (v. 19), where, when Sunday comes, we still live as if it were Friday. In other words, we find ourselves living on the wrong side of Easter, like the disciples, still locked in fear, doubt, and despair, disposing it all the best way we can.

### **Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem)** – *As Fear Still Reigns*

As far as everyone in the Easter story is concerned it's still Friday. Fear strikes the hearts of the disciples, who are disbelieving, to say the least. They had forgotten the words Jesus had told them while he was still with them that he must suffer, be killed and rise on the third day. With no word to comfort them, they huddle in panic, waiting for the gallows. Without faith Friday is all that remains. When fear reigns we are always on the wrong side of everything that is good, where death seems to be the last word.

### **Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem)** – *And More Than a Weekend is Lost*

What the disciples were dealing with was far worse than a lost weekend. When Sunday comes and "the firstborn of the dead" (Rev.

1:5) appears and we do not know him, disbelieving, still living in Friday, we become part of that scene where “the earth will wail” (Rev. 1:7) at the end. For those still living on the wrong side of Easter Sunday remains Friday, a day of doom, when the doors will forever remain locked, as we “killed” all our hopes “by hanging him on a tree” (Acts 5:30). What could be a worse tragedy than to be condemned to everlasting Fridays?

## **PROGNOSIS: When Sunday Comes**

### **Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution) – *Friday is History***

The Good News today for the world, for you and me, is that the Lord of Easter has broken our Friday dread. When Easter comes – thank God it’s Sunday – our “Leader and Savior” (Acts 5:31) appears not in judgment but in forgiveness. Jesus’ word and promise to us is the very opposite of what might expect – and certainly deserve, – because the word of Jesus to the sinner and doubter is, “Peace be with you” (vv. 21, 26). Friday is history. Jesus lives now and forever for us. Dead and gone is the power of the law accusing us and with it the fear of punishment; dead and gone is the power of death that would separate us forever from God; dead and gone now is the burden of living life as though it were still Friday. When Sunday breaks in on our Friday-bound existence, the presence of the crucified and risen One creates a new history, the onset of a new creation that will have no end, the age of God’s shalom, inaugurated by the One who says, “I am the Alpha and Omega” (Rev. 1:8), the beginning and the end.

### **Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (Internal Solution) – *As Doubt and Fear Are Trumped***

In the face of such mercy and forgiveness, the power over death made visible, massive doubt and fear and skepticism give way to a joyous faith. The disciples “rejoiced when they saw the Lord” (v. 20). These disciples, especially Thomas, come to faith, not

so much by seeing the brilliance of resurrected beauty, but more because they behold Jesus' wounds. Thomas in particular, with an unprecedented insight, exclaims, "My Lord and my God!" (v. 28), believing that only a wounded healer, now alive for him, could be his Savior. To put his hands in his Lord's wounds was now the same thing as putting his faith in the only One who had the power of eternal life. When Sunday comes and we gather at the Table of mercy, the living Lord is among us blessing us with the benefits of his body broken and his blood shed for us, bidding us to believe and live on the right side of Easter. Given all the Fridays we endure, thank God it's Sunday!

### **Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution)** – *And a New Day Dawns*

When the resurrected Lord returned to gather his scattered disciples, to pull them from Friday now finished, he did a remarkable thing. Jesus gave them, as he gives us, his authority on earth. "As the father had sent me," he said, "so I send you" (v. 21). He gives to us the authority to retain sins (v. 23), to speak the law, to address our own and the world's Fridays with a word of judgment, calling for repentance. He gives us the authority to forgive sins, to proclaim the Gospel, to announce to any and all that Sunday is here, the past forgiven, the new creation now evolving. Jesus sends us after him in the power of the "Holy Spirit" (v. 22) to give witness that any and all who believe in him might "have life in his name" (v. 31). And, all the while, as we are giving praise to the Christ "before the throne" (Rev. 1:4), along with all the saints and angels, we are shouting, "Thank God it's Sunday!"