

I was just sitting there thinking, “C’mon, kid—what’re ya doin’!” I was there for my daughter’s swim lesson. It was at Swim Revolution in Vinings, this indoor pool facility, roped off into individual lanes, where children receive private instruction. And as she had her lesson, there was this one child that seemed to be off in their own world. The swim coach would be trying to teach them, but they weren’t paying attention. Then, while the coach was focused on another child, this one would be messing around, just goofing off in the water. Finally, when the coach came back to them for their turn again, they weren’t ready at all. They were still acting silly, disengaged, doing their own thing. I could tell this child just wasn’t tuned in to reality, at all aware of what was going on around them. The whole time I was just sitting there thinking, “C’mon, kid—what’re ya doin’!”

I don’t know about you, but the same thought popped into my head this morning as I was listening to the Gospel text. Today is known as Quasimodo Geniti, also known as the Second Sunday of Easter, and maybe more commonly called Doubting Thomas Sunday. Every year, the church reserves the Sunday after Easter to retell the story of Thomas the disciple and his stubborn skepticism. Because we hear it annually, we all know the story well—come evening that first Easter Sunday, the risen Christ shows Himself to all his disciples. The problem is, Thomas was nowhere to be found. Who knows what he was doing, but he missed out on the whole big event. And then when the disciples tell him about it, Thomas just shakes his head in disbelief. “Yeah right, boys. You must’ve eaten some bad fish or something—that’s the only reasonable explanation,” Thomas reasons. “No way that really happened! Unless I poke around in the holes on His hands, and reach up into His side, I’ll never believe.”

Then today, eight days later, the risen Christ shows up again. And much to Thomas’ surprise, Jesus says, “C’mere, Thomas. It’s okay—don’t be afraid. Go ahead, stick your finger through my palms. And dig into my side all you want. Don’t disbelieve anymore, but believe.” We’re never told if Thomas actually takes Jesus up on His offer. We just hear the next words out of his mouth as he stammers, “My Lord and my God!” From such a staunch skeptic, it’s encouraging to hear these wonderful words of faith.

So, usually this Sunday Thomas takes the abuse for ever doubting. But honestly, that’s completely and totally unfair. If you want doubt, just check out the rest of the bunch. The other ten disciples aren’t just skeptical about the resurrection of Christ once like Thomas is, not just twice even, not only three times . . . but in John’s Gospel it’s *four total times!* Just last week, for example, we heard how Mary Magdalene had stumbled upon an empty tomb—the first evidence for the Lord’s resurrection. Finding the body of Jesus missing, Mary runs and tells Peter and John about it. And what do Peter and John do? They go dashing to the tomb. It’s almost like they’re the original skeptics before Thomas made it cool—“Hey, we’ve got to see this for ourselves!” It’s as if they demand hard evidence before believing Mary’s claims. Well, that’s the first time they’re not quite convinced of the risen Christ.

So they get there, and scope the place out for themselves. After finding it just like Mary said, they head back home. But Mary hangs around a little longer and so encounters two angels and even the risen Christ firsthand. And after an experience like that, she runs back to the other disciples and tells them all about it. “I have seen the Lord!” she announces. But do *they* believe her? No, we’re told that when Jesus shows up in their midst later that first Easter evening, He has to find His own way in since they have the doors locked in fear. They’re acting like the resurrection never happened, they’re still scared. So, that’s the second instance of their unbelief.

Finally, when the risen Christ really does show himself to them—giving them the very same proof that Thomas will demand: His hands and His side—what happens then? Are they fully convinced? Not quite. Today’s text tells us that when Jesus shows up again eight days later for Thomas’ sake, they *still* have the doors locked out of fear. After their encounter with Jesus, you’d think they’d be out acting like real apostles already and not a buncha ‘fraidy cats. Which makes it *three* times now that the disciples don’t believe—even after getting the same evidence Thomas was working with. It almost sounds like Thomas is a greater example of faith than the rest of them, since it only took him one appearance to be convinced.

So, after Jesus shows Himself to Thomas and the rest of them, they boldly go out to fulfill the Great Commission, right? Hardly! If we were to turn to the next chapter, John 21, we'd find the disciples back to fishing. Again, it's like they still don't quite get the full magnitude of their Lord's resurrection. If they did, surely by now they would've become the daring preachers that we find in the book of Acts. But instead they return to their former lives, their old routine as fishermen, like nothing ever happened. This makes *four* total instances of unbelief on the part of the disciples in the Gospel of John—even with all the many resurrection appearances they get. It's not until they get a *third* surprise visit by the risen Christ as they're out on their fishing boat—the fourth total sign of His resurrection—that everything finally changes for them. Y'know what they say though—third time's a charm.

If you're anything like me, hearing this whole narrative is like watching that kid in swim class, these disciples are living inside their heads and not facing facts. Even with everything happening around them, they're just not getting it. And you and I as listeners are left thinking, "C'mon, guys—what're ya doin'!"

Perhaps this story isn't just about Doubting Thomas though, nor is it only about the Doubting Disciples, but perhaps it's about us. It's about you and I, people who doubt not just once like Thomas, not even four times like the others, but more times than we can count. You see, if Christ is truly risen from the dead, if the resurrection is true—and, *of course, it is*—shouldn't it impact our lives in a *big, BIG* way? Of course it should!

If Christ is risen from the dead, then everything's different—nothing's the same! And that includes *you* and that includes *me*! It means that no matter what, God's gracious promises are always true! It means that our sins were indeed nailed to a cross and that, with the risen Christ, you and I also walk out of the tomb as new creations! It means that death has died and life now lives forevermore!

Now, that's a bucket of ice water, isn't it folks? That is nothing short of breathtaking, mind-blowing, eye-opening, life-altering, earth-shattering news! But . . . when we look at our daily lives . . . do we find it to be so? Has it finally gripped us yet? Or, like the Doubting Disciples, like that kid in the swimming pool, are we still leading make-believe lives devoid of God's astonishing truth?

Think of all the trouble the disciples could've saved themselves, if they truly embraced the resurrection sooner! Instead of fear, they would've known the peace of God that surpasses all understanding! Instead of seeing mortality ahead, the panorama of eternal life would be coming up in full view! And instead of wasting their days acting like cowards, they'd be freely out and about caught up in a life of adventure and boldly proclaiming the Good News of the risen Christ! That's what they were missing out on! But once it finally dawns on them, that's the joy that they'd now know!

There's no reason the disciples had to live a lie at all, and there's no reason for us living one either. Step out with me today into God's reality! If Christ is raised, then everything for us is changed, never to be the same again! Nothing can stop us, nothing can bring us down, our future is secure! So, like the disciples, let's not miss out, but boldly go out! After all, anything else would be way out of touch. Let's not give God a reason to look down on us from heaven and say, "C'mon, kid—what're ya doin'!"

Alleluia! Christ is risen! . . . He is risen indeed. Alleluia!