

## **Bustin' Down the Door**

*April 19, 2009*

(Easter 2 - Year B)

John 20: 19-31

*St. Alban's Episcopal Church, Waco, Texas*

Alleluia! Christ is risen!  
The Lord is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Last Sunday, on Easter Day, what did *you* do after Easter worship?  
As for me, after I left here last Sunday, I was as high as a kite after the wonderful worship that we experienced at St. Alban's.  
So after I drove away from Easter Day worship here, I went home and changed into a pair of shorts and a T-shirt.  
Our good friends from Austin, the Garces family, had come to visit us for Easter.  
So, when I got home, we all began to celebrate and laugh and have a great time.

While Susan made a wonderful brunch, we got out fancy glasses from the china cabinet and snacked on cheese and crackers.  
Then, all 8 of us feasted together at the dining room table.  
After we had eaten and laughed at the table, the kids played outside in the yard -  
And I promptly fell asleep on the living room floor.

After several of us napped, our friends got in their car and headed back to Austin.  
Yet during all of our Easter afternoon festivities, it never once occurred to me that I should lock the front door.

Yet, in the Gospel of John, that is exactly what the scripture says that the followers of Jesus did on Easter afternoon.  
After Peter and John had run to Jesus' tomb to find it empty,  
After Peter saw and believed,  
After Mary Magdalene spoke to the gardener who really was the risen Jesus,  
After Mary Magdalene exclaimed to her fellow disciples, "I have seen the Lord,"

Then they locked the front door.

For when it was evening on that first Easter Day, the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked.

But Jesus stands among them and says:

“Peace be with you.”

Then Jesus shows his friends the scars in his hands and his side.

But Thomas is missing in action on that first Easter.

So, a week later, on the Sunday *after* Easter, the doors of the house are once again shut tight.

But Jesus stands among them and says:

“Peace be with you.”

Then Jesus offers to show Thomas the scars in his hands and his side.

On both Easter Sunday and the Sunday after Easter, the followers of Jesus lock the door.

And on both Easter Sunday and the next Sunday, the risen Jesus is not held back by doors that have been bolted shut.

Now some people will say that Jesus walked through the door, much like a ghost.

However, if you read the scripture text carefully, the writer of the Gospel of John never tells us *how* it is that Jesus gets past the locked door.

I would like to think that Jesus does not just walk through walls and doors like some weird and creepy ghost.

I would like to think that Jesus uses whatever muscle and effort it takes to break down the doors that we lock.

Some of you have met Susan’s best friend, Stacy Shepherd, who lives in Florida.

Susan and Stacy are so close that they are almost like sisters.

Just a few weeks after our first baby, Scott, was born, then Stacy and Mike Shepherd had their first baby, Jay.

As you can imagine, since our first babies were so close in age, we are at each other’s houses all the time.

On an August day, in the middle of the afternoon, Stacy, and her 4

month old baby, Jay, had come to visit Susan, and our baby, Scott. After the visit, Stacy and her baby, Jay, went out our back gate to their mini-van in our alley.

Stacy put Jay into his car seat in the back of the van.

But, Stacy and Susan kept on talking.

And as they were talking, Stacy shut the van door.

The minute that the door shut, Stacy realized that she had locked her keys in the van - along with her baby in the car seat.

Stacy and Susan began to panic on how to get the van open.

Stacy called her husband, Mike, at work, to hurry and bring his set of keys.

They bent a wire coat hanger to attempt to open the door lock.

In the August afternoon heat, they knew that the baby was beginning to swelter inside that van.

So, Susan grabbed a garden hose and began to douse the van with water to cool it off.

Inside the locked van, Jay started crying.

In tears, Susan ran into our house and came out with a shovel.

She and Stacy took the shovel and tried to break in the car window.

With Susan and Stacy both in tears, they both did everything they could to unlock the doors to get into Jay.

Finally, with the shovel pounding and with tears flowing, Mike showed up with the extra set of keys, just in time.

When it was evening on Easter Day, the doors of the house where the followers of Jesus met were locked,

Yet the risen Jesus did everything he could to unlock the door to get into his friends.

This morning, we are baptizing Winnie Nelson, a beautiful 6 year old girl.

After the water is poured on her, I will put oil on my thumb and I will make the sign of the cross on her forehead and say:

“Winnie, you are sealed by the Holy Spirit in baptism and marked as Christ’s own forever.”

Winnie, and all of us who have been baptized, have been sealed and

marked as Christ's own *forever*.

When we are marked as Christ's own, forever, to me this means that the risen Jesus will do everything he can, *forever*, to break down our locked doors to get to us.

For the risen Jesus loves us so much - that he will speak to us as the gardener beside the empty tomb.

The risen Jesus loves us so much - that he will show us his scarred hands and his side.

The risen Jesus loves us so much - that he will break down the doors on Easter Sunday and on the Sunday after Easter and on the Sunday after that and the Sunday after that -

To tell all of us:

Peace be with you.

Many of us in this church today have locked the front door.

We have sealed the door shut - by convincing ourselves that Jesus is irrelevant in our lives.

We have bolted the door shut - by pouring ourselves into our job or into our appearance or into booze.

We have locked the door shut - by thinking too much about ourselves and not enough about others.

But the risen Jesus uses a coat hanger to pick the lock.

The risen Jesus takes a crowbar to pry open the door.

The risen Jesus picks up a shovel and bangs it against window.

Until he finally, finally gets into your heart.

For when it was evening on that Easter Day, the doors of the house were locked.

But Jesus busts down that door, to tell me and to tell you:

Peace be with you.

I love you, forever.

AMEN.