

**“Life Lessons from the Games We Play”**  
**“Blind Man’s Bluff, Seeing is Believing”**

We are an Easter people! While Lent is forty days, the Celebration of Easter is fifty days ending with Pentecost and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Easter is a celebration of resurrection of new life and of the power of Christ to change and transform the world through his followers. We have encountered the Risen Christ in so many ways. We begin a new series: Easter Encounters: Life Lessons from the Game we Play.” Our first game is Blind Man’s Bluff. If you ever played it as a child, you know it’s a game of tag where one person is blindfolded and has to find someone else to grab and then they are blindfolded. A variation of that game is Marco Polo where the person who cannot see shouts out Marco and others must shout back Polo. The disciples had to see, and had to find Jesus. Thomas, unfortunately, was not there the first time most of them experienced Jesus. His grief and pain kept him blinded until he caught a hold of Jesus. This week we focus on the Thomas’ encounter with the Risen Christ. - Pastor Cindy

Things I’d like to remember from today’s sermon: **“Blind Man’s Bluff, Seeing is Believing”**

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**Prayer for the Week**

*God of new beginnings, free us from the fear of change. May our experience of Easter so change our lives that they express your boundless love. Amen. (Joy Tetley, England)*

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**This week’s sermon may be viewed at <http://sundaystreams.com/go/firstwichita>**

## Study Guide

### **Monday, 4/24/17 John 20: 19-23**

The disciples were in a locked room; they had heard the women's testimony, but obviously didn't believe it. They had locked the doors and were gathered together, but afraid. Jesus appears in the midst, and offers them peace and the Spirit. How do you think the disciples felt after experiencing the risen Christ? Having doubted the women's words, do you think they felt foolish or surprised or relieved? Putting yourself in that room, how do you think you would feel? How would you react and in what ways would you share your experience? *In what ways were the disciples kept from having faith because they had not "seen the Lord?"*

### **Tuesday, 4/25/17 John 20: 24-25**

The disciples, men and women, were energized by their encounter of the risen Christ. Thomas was alone. The women and the other disciples all had claimed to see Jesus. Do you wonder why Thomas was not with them? Did he miss the time so could not enter the room because the doors were locked? Was it too much? Was his grief so deep that he just wanted to be alone? The reasons are never stated, only that Thomas was not with the others when they encountered the Risen Lord and when they shared their experience Thomas stubbornly stated that he would not believe without very physical proof. Is this story about doubt? Is it about experience? This is the story where Thomas is tagged as "doubting". Was he? *The other's energy around their faith was based on their seeing the risen Christ. How is Thomas different? Would you base your faith on the beliefs of others or experiences of others or would you want an experience that was similar to theirs?*

### **Wednesday, 4/26/17 John 20: 26-29**

Finally, after a week, Thomas is with the others and he encounters the risen Christ. Thomas is given peace and an opportunity to do everything he said he had to do in order to believe. Thomas then affirms his faith in Christ and Jesus blesses generations to come. Some scholars believe that Jesus' words in verse 29 are a rebuke to Thomas' unwillingness to believe. Others believe Jesus' words are a blessing to all who believe yet are never given an opportunity to see. What do you think? Do you think Thomas was unreasonable to ask for what the others had already experienced? Would you have asked for the same thing? *How is it that you believe, yet have not seen? Or have you seen in a way that makes belief more possible? Is your faith based on what your heard or seen or experienced and how do you share that with others?*

### **Thursday, 4/27/17 John 20: 30-31**

The writer of the gospel of John understood that there was no way all the stories, sayings and healings of Jesus could be recorded. John hoped that the things that were shared, would make a difference, and would "make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." Jesus promised a special blessing for those who didn't "see" but believed, like the generation upon generation that followed those early disciples. *How do you "see" the risen Christ today? How can others see the risen Christ in you?*

### **Friday, 4/28/17 1 Peter 1: 3-9**

In these verses, believers are promised a living hope because of the resurrection of Jesus. Even with trials, "although you've never seen him, you love him." During the Easter season, again and again the church proclaims, "Christ is risen! Christ is Risen, indeed!" In the midst of struggles and troubles, doubt and seeking to understand faith, this is the church's response. *How do you experience and know in your heart the gift of new life and resurrection? In what way does your life proclaim, Christ is risen!?"*