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The Message: Broken Together

The reality of the resurrection doesn't depend on your belief, but that there are several clues if you are looking for them: lots of people say they saw Jesus -- including

- people who didn't know each other -- probably 500 of them
- the effects on those who say they witnessed it were phenomenal and lasted the test of time -- 2000 years

Embracing the resurrection -- like you would a great movie -- offers you gifts, allows you to be marked with the marks of the resurrection.

Jesus offers us these marks of the resurrection so we can live as an Easter people rather than join the ranks of the living dead.

Today I'm going to suggest that a mark of an Easter people is brokenness.

Not 'in' to be broken

It's not that great to be broken in our time or place.

Yet, for people of the Bible, being broken is associated with being blessed. How?

A prophet wants to know how God is going to fix the people who are not living faithful lives. And he has a dream. In his dream, God tells him, 'Go down to the potter's workshop. Watch how the potter builds up the clay on the wheel, then when it is not quite perfect, she breaks it down and starts again, working it till she is happy with the result. Just like the clay in the potter's hand, so my people are in my hand.' (Jeremiah 18.1-6)

Thomas, one of Jesus' disciples, is not with the others when they see the risen Christ. He is skeptical. Jesus appears again. He doesn't reject Thomas' doubt. Jesus invites Thomas to come forward and touch his wounds. At this moment, Thomas believes, not just that Jesus has been raised, but he believes who Jesus is. He says, "My Lord and my God!" No one else in all of the gospel stories addresses Jesus or speaks about Jesus with such a huge claim about who he is.

The reality is that we are all broken. But this brokenness that you feel, that you may feel at different points in your life, it is met by Jesus' brokenness and you are given the gift of faith.

Thomas is not cursed with the brokenness of doubt. In fact, the opposite of faith is not doubt. Personally, I think the opposite of faith is certainty -- the cause of many an evil. But Thomas' doubt is blessed by Jesus as Thomas reaches to touch Jesus' brokenness.

A broken Jesus embraces your brokenness

This brokenness that you feel, that you may feel at different points in your life, it is met by Jesus' brokenness.

A smart fellow named Augustine says that the wounds of Christ heal the wounds of unbelief.

Thomas' faith, and maybe our faith too, doesn't come from displays of God's grandeur and might and power. Christ isn't a movie-style superhero. He's broken. And that connects with what is broken in us, because when we're wounded, we don't have the confidence or the energy or the optimism that we need to reach out to glory and success, but what hurts in us can touch what hurts in God. And what hurts in God heals with the new life the risen Jesus offers to us.

People often speak of things that are broken *apart*. When you break an egg, it comes apart in pieces of shell and this amorphous gell like centre. If you have ever dropped an egg on the floor, unless you have a dog, no matter how hard you try, you aren't getting that egg off that floor.

But in many mysterious ways, when Christians choose to be in community together, we are 'broken' together. When we live together as Christ would have us live, broken together, well, that's a beautiful sight.

In baptism we are signed with the cross; "you are marked with the sign of the cross forever."

In communion, we proclaim the death of Christ, which is life to the world. Our brokenness is bound up with Christ's brokenness so that we can also receive his risen life.

In our church community, as an Easter people, we live as broken *together* finding our comfort, our challenge, our wholeness in Jesus with our community of faith.