**Slide 1: Title**

Throughout this last series we have been looking at the whole story of the Bible through the lens of thresholds, or passageways or doors. At first glance it seems like a strange theme, but it is actually a very helpful way to understand who God is and how he has chosen to tell his story. We began way back in the garden of Eden where Adam and Eve’s sin caused them to be severed from a relationship with God and blocked from the ever entering the garden. What follows is the story of God fixing this problem of separation. He provided protection for Noah and his family, for the Hebrew slaves in Egypt during the Passover. He carefully dwelt among his people via the temple system. He knocks on the door of our hearts and he lays down his life for us, his sheep..But then he came back! He rose from the dead. The one way threshold from life to death was reversed!

**Slide 2: He is Risen**

He is risen!

Eastertide continues as we consider one final threshold, it is a simple one that consists of three things: a wooden door, a lock and fear.

**Slide 3: Car Window**

Locksmith illustration

**Slide 4: Tomb**

You see it had been three days now since Jesus was crucified. They had all seen it happen…they witnessed the dead body…they saw him being buried. There was no doubt about it..Jesus was dead. He had been defeated and suddenly all the exciting things he had talked about and all the miracles he had performed seemed like fuzzy memories. He talked a lot about the Kingdom of God…well, I guess it was nice to have hope while it lasted…Now Jesus is dead and so is the movement he had started. As the disciples grappled with their sadness they also became very aware of the precariousness of their situation. They followed Jesus faithfully for three years. They had pit themselves time after time against the Pharisees. To the Jewish leaders they were known as agitators and upstarts…lowly men who did not know their place. Not to mention the fact the Jesus, a completely innocent man, was now dead because these Jewish leaders convinced the Roman government to go through with a mock coronation followed by crucifixion. Sad or not, the disciples knew their lives were on the line. Maybe they could plead and beg for forgiveness...recant of their previous opinions.

**Slide 5: WHAT TO DO NOW?**

But what would any self-respecting follower of Jesus do in such a situation…

**Slide 6: A**

take up the sword and die with honor?

**Slide 7: B**

Continue to boldly proclaim the kingdom of God despite all odds?

**Slide 8: C**

Stand up for Jesus even unto death?

**Slide 9: D**

Or they could run and hide away behind locked doors..a threshold of their own making.

Before we judge these chosen and called men too harshly, keep in mind that they will all die for their faith at the hands of their enemies…so what changed? Let’s look at John 20:19

**Slide 10: Scripture text**

It was still the first day of the week…still Easter Sunday okay, so the disciples have been made aware of the empty tomb and you can just see them all pacing around scratching their beards throwing out brainstorm ideas back and forth. What could have happened? What should we do? How do we get out of this mess alive? Maybe we should get another lock on this door. You would think that these men would be overjoyed…we read on. The disciples were behind closed (locked) doors because they were afraid of the Jewish authorities. They were hiding away in fear! They were panicking and scrambling for a good idea about what to do. Look back to verse 9. Peter and John have run to the tomb they have found it empty. Hallelujah right!

**Slide 11: Verse**

No, verse 9: they didn’t yet understand the scripture that Jesus must rise from the dead. They are standing in the empty tomb, the same tomb they saw Jesus buried in and they did not yet understand what had happened. They were not quite to Hallelujah…they were stuck at Huh?

**Slide 12: Padlock**

So the disciples are not filled with joy, they are filled with fear. But before we judge these men to harshly, we have to remember that at this point, locked away, racking their brains for an escape, these disciples are basically unbelievers. They are not Christians. We are Christians! We proclaim faith in a crucified and resurrected Savior. The disciples are not there yet. Right now, they are a troop of very heartbroken and confused Jewish men. They do not understand Easter.

But things change because Jesus shows up.

**Slide 13: Jesus with Disciples**

When Jesus shows up things change. He lays into them…Three years! Three years I poured into you and set you up for this very moment! Where is your faith? Where is your courage? Why are you locked away like sniveling cowards? This is how you represent me?” Wait, wait, that’s what I would have said…Ahem, before we judge these men too harshly, Jesus comes among them and says “peace be with you.”

**Slide 14: Scripture text**

Jesus enters into the locked room, somehow we don’t know how. John is not interested in telling us that detail. Maybe he miracoulously teleported…maybe the lock was opened…either way Jesus enters a room filled with tension and panic, a room filled with his closest friends/deserters and he says Peace be with you. Then he shows them his wounds…his hands and his side and the room changes…fear and panic fade as verse 20 says they were filled with joy. Then Jesus speaks again. “C’mon now guys…you gotta do better than this. Shape up, it’s my reputation on the line….no again, Peace be with you. And a commissioning…As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you…he breathes upon them…receive the Holy Spirit. Here behind the threshold of this hidden little locked room we have a picture of the Trinity…a fuller revelation of God’s character…the Father send the Son and the Son send us with the power and presence of his very Spirit. It is interesting to me the Jesus breathes on them. I would think the normal practice would be to lay hands on them or maybe use anointing oil…But Jesus is re-enacting the very beginning of the story…

**Slide 15: Genesis 2:7**

Genesis 2:7 The LORD God formed the human from the topsoil of the land and blew life’s breath into his nostrils. The human came to life…Jesus is doing the same here with his disciples…the breath of a new kind of life, because now these men are Christians.

**Slide 16: Opened door**

Now they believe in and understand resurrection power. Now they are prepared and equipped Now they can unlock the door they had been hiding behind. Now they can cross the threshold with confidence in the Living Jesus. Now they can boldly live out their faith even if and even when it kills them.

Church, we are Christians. If you are sitting here today and you are not a Christian, you don’t believe this resurrection stuff, well we’re glad you’re here. We want you to know God’s peace and be filled with his joy, but it’s only made possible through Jesus. I want to encourage you to find Jesus for yourself. Come and see us on a Wednesday night, talk with one of the pastors, ask those big questions that you have been thinking through. If you are here this morning and you call yourself a Christian…then we need to act like it. If we understand the resurrection power of Christ, if we have received the Holy Spirit, we have no reason to fear. And yet, so often we stay behind locked doors

**Slide 17: Couple in living room**

…or more likely we unlock the doors and tell ourselves that people can come and stop by if they want to. My door is always open…well at least unlocked. Once in while we might even gather up the gumption to crack open the door and peek out to take a look around. Maybe we see someone, maybe not. Either way we shut ourselves back inside. Maybe you’re ashamed, maybe you don’t feel good enough or holy enough. Maybe you are too concerned with your reputation…what if people mock you for your faith? It might be the case that you actually don’t care all that much…you like the room you are in, you are comfortable with it so your concern for those outside might be non-existent. Wherever you are, whoever you are, please hear again the words of Jesus: Peace be with you.

**Slide 18: Peace Be with You**

Hear that simple sentence and let it soak in, let it soak in deep. Jesus says it twice...within two verses he says it twice: Peace be with you. In fact let’s stand up…let’s physically respond here. Breathe it in…know it to be true…feel it in your bones. Find comfort in that perfect peace. Let it still your soul…let it sooth your fears…But don’t sit down. Don’t get comfortable! Because you have been sent! You have been given this peace that passes all understanding so that you can leave the comfort and safety of the locked room. You have been given the power and presence of the Holy Spirit so that you can cross over this threshold in order to bring others back through it.

Jesus appears to many more people and continues to perform miracles, then he finally ascends,

**Slide 19: Jesus’ Ascension**

he returns to be with the Father in heaven. He tells the disciples, wait in Jerusalem. Don’t go, but wait for the Father’s promise. Sure enough the Spirit comes in power on the day of Pentecost.

**Slide 20: Stained glass dove**

It is then that the disciples are unleashed to establish God’s kingdom in this world. Church, we are here because of Pentecost. We are Pentecost people, we are easter people. We are a sent people. Jesus does not tell us to wait…what would we be waiting for? Our time is now. Absorb his peace, be filled with his joy, let him breathe upon you his Spirit and cross that threshold! It may bring you hardship, it may bring you pain…it may even kill you…but I ask you, in all honesty, given the reality of Easter, is discomfort, or pain or even death anything to fear?