

Sermon: The Upper Room

- Introduction:
 - Childhood anecdote of a pet rabbit named Pendle, reluctant to leave his hutch despite freedom outside.
 - Drawing parallels to locked rooms and fear.
- John 20:19-End:
 - Disciples gathered in fear, locked doors representing inner anxieties and limitations.
 - Jesus appears despite barriers, offering peace and liberation.
 - Encouragement to unlock internal barriers to embrace freedom.
- "Room" by Emma Donoghue:
 - Narrative of imprisonment and escape parallels spiritual confinement.
 - Fear of the unknown and attachment to familiar confines explored.
- Reflections:
 - Human tendency to cling to what's known even if limiting, like Thomas and Jack.
 - Easter invites introspection on fears hindering spiritual growth.
- Conclusion:
 - Easter signifies breaking free from fears, embracing a larger reality.
 - Encouragement to heed Christ's message of peace and step into newfound freedom.

Questions:

1. **Fear and Freedom:** How does the sermon illustrate the tension between fear and freedom, particularly in the context of the disciples' locked room and Pendle the Rabbit's reluctance to leave its hutch?
2. **Internal vs. External Barriers:** The sermon discusses both internal barriers (the disciples' fear) and external barriers (Jack's physical confinement). How do these barriers relate to our spiritual journey and experiences of liberation?
3. **The Role of Jesus:** In what ways does Jesus serve as a catalyst for breaking through barriers, whether they are internal or external? How does his presence bring peace and liberation to those who are confined by fear?
4. **Thomas's Doubt:** Thomas's scepticism is highlighted in the sermon. Why do you think Thomas struggled to accept the possibility of a reality beyond the confines of death? How does his journey mirror our own struggles with doubt and faith?
5. **Comfort in Familiarity:** The sermon draws parallels between Pendle's reluctance to leave his familiar hutch and humanity's tendency to cling to what is known and comfortable. How does this inclination hinder our spiritual growth, and what steps can we take to overcome it?
6. **Easter Reflections:** As the sermon suggests, Easter is a season for reflecting on our fears and embracing the promise of peace and liberation offered by the risen Christ. How can we apply this message practically in our lives, especially when facing uncertainties and anxieties?