This morning I would like to talk to you at Tomas the apostle. He came to India and landed in a small town called Kodungalloor. The picture on the screen is the scenic view of the place now.

I am born and brought up around 12 miles away from where Thomas landed. There is a magnificent shrine dedicated to St. Thomas here with a statue of him touching the side of Jesus.
Now, I have a story to share with you.

St Thomas came to Kodungallur in Kerala and began to preach the word of Jesus. Nobody listened. He told them about the loaves and fishes. Nobody listened. He told them about the Immaculate Conception. Nobody listened. He told them about the resurrection. Nobody listened. Then he told them about how Jesus turned water into wine. The next day one third of Kerala converted to Christianity.

Today there are over 6 million Christians in Kerala today.

Does anyone recognize the name of the person in the picture?
It is Bill Buckner. He played as a first baseman in the 80’s, where he had a fairly distinguished career. He won the batting crown in 1980 for the Chicago Cubs, and followed that as an All Star in 1981. Over his 20-year career, Buckner had 2700 hits – not bad, for a Cub. But in the midst of all that, what is he remembered for? He’s known most for playing first base for the Boston Red Sox in the 1986 World Series against the Mets, and making a fatal error in the bottom of the 9th in Game 6, eventually allowing the Mets to go on and win the series, continuing the so-called “Curse of the Bambino” for another 20 years. Of all the hard work that he put into his sport, and all the accomplishments he made, that’s what he’s known for, and that’s what defines him.

Let us talk about Thomas. What do you remember about Thomas? What is that? He is “Doubting Thomas?”
The Yes. So true! Doubt for a little minute and they will not let you forget it. Have you felt that way sometimes? Easter story this morning is about Thomas. The guy followed Jesus faithfully during his public ministry, he preached throughout Syria, and eventually went all the way to India spreading the Gospel. And what do we remember him for? For doubting Jesus, of course. He is labeled as “The Doubting Thomas.” In answer to the empty tomb, visions and appearances, we have a huge variety of responses: from the “disciple who loved Jesus”—the Bible says that all he did was stick his head in the tomb, saw the grave cloths, and he “believed,”—to Thomas who heard about this, about visions of angels, and now a whole room of his friends had seen Jesus, and still he couldn’t bring himself to believe! He said “I’ll believe that when I see it!”
There are some things that I believe about Thomas. I believe he deeply loved his Lord. I also think that he was no chicken; he had great courage, but he was a bit pessimistic. In John 11:16, after delaying a bit, Jesus announced to his disciples that they would start heading toward Jerusalem, to Bethany where Lazarus was dying. His disciples knew this was a dangerous place for Jesus to go. When he realized what Jesus had decided to do, Thomas said, “Let us go [to Bethany] also, so that we may die with him.”

Thomas was a pessimist. An optimist sees the best in the world, while a pessimist sees only the worst. An optimist finds the positive in the negative, and a pessimist can only find the negative in the positive.

Do you know who is missing in that picture? It is the opportunist. And an opportunist said, “While you guys were arguing about the glass of wine, I drank it.” When Jesus died on the cross, Thomas’ world was shattered! Surely he thought the worst! He no doubt became despondent, depressed and discouraged. He was not with the other disciples by choice. He was not there because he was broken-hearted and felt that their dream had reached an end. Thomas was somewhere else pouting that first Resurrection Sunday.

Thomas’ big mistake was he withdrew from his fellow disciples. In his isolation he missed the sight of Christ. He wanted to be by himself in his suffering. Alexander McLaren noted, “Thomas did the very worst thing that a melancholy man can do, went away to brood in a corner by himself, and so to exaggerate all his idiosyncrasies, to distort the proportion of truth, to hug his despair, by
separating himself from his fellows. Therefore he lost what they got, the sight of the Lord. He was not with them when Jesus came." He would have been far better off spiritually and emotionally in the upper room with the rest of the mourners than alone turning over in his gloomy mind the dissolution of the fair company. He was alone by himself hugging and nurturing his unbelief.

How many of us have tried to go it alone when God has provided others who have made the same difficult journey through hurts, grief and suffering?

I am thankful for Thomas’ pessimism and I think you should be too. I am thankful for this story. This story is really about the Risen Lord, for we see that the Lord Jesus Christ does not abandon Thomas in the sea of his pessimism. That’s right, Christ does not leave you and me in the dark gloomy clouds of pessimism. But rather, in our Gospel reading we hear that Jesus stretched out His nail-scarred hands and pulled Thomas to Himself saying, “Peace be with you.”

Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side; do not be faithless, but believing."

Do not be faithless, but believing!” What stands out for me is that Jesus presents himself as one who loves you, cares for you and is in deep relationship with you.

I would like to conclude with another thought. Thomas is called Didymus, which means in Hebrew and Greek Twin and who was his twin? We are his Twin.

We are just like him in so many ways: full of pessimism at times – Sometimes, we get negative to an extent that we lose passion to do anything and don't like ourselves. We don't like to play, don't like to go anywhere. Life seems completely useless.

We are just like Thomas filled with doubts and insecurities about our faith- May be I feel as if I
need something more tangible, something I can see, touch and understand. May be I am disillusioned or disappointed with God. May be I am feeling God is too distant from my world and me. Like Thomas I am pouting somewhere in this Easter season. We are his Twin.

So enjoy this Second Sunday of Easter, this “Twin’s Day. Let us remember that like Thomas, the Risen Lord loves us, He cares for us. Let us leave this morning from Church as Thomas left the upper room. God loves us. God cares for us. He will heal us of our weaknesses. God can turn our pessimism into something beautiful and positive for God. He can transform our doubts into Trust. Remember, too, that Thomas, despite his shortcomings, was always a disciple. So can you be!