

Thomas – it's good to ask questions about our faith

Our gospel reading today is a familiar one: the disciples, minus Thomas, are cowering fearfully behind locked doors, terrified of reprisals in the wake of Jesus' crucifixion. When Thomas arrives on the scene he refuses to believe the testimony of the other disciples concerning Jesus' appearance, saying that only the evidence of his own eyes will convince him. Jesus appears again and offers Thomas the evidence he demands, and Thomas is finally convinced.

Because of this incident, Thomas has gone down in history and Christian tradition as "Doubting Thomas" – as if he were the only one of the disciples ever to have had doubts. But we know from other post-crucifixion narratives that this is not the case: in Luke chapter 24 the women return from their dawn visit to the tomb claiming that the tomb was empty and that an angel told them Jesus had risen from death. But the disciples did not believe them, dismissing their words as "an idle tale" (24:11). So Thomas is here simply repeating the stand taken earlier by all the disciples, in refusing to accept the testimony of others.

In his love and compassion for Thomas, Jesus appeared again and gave Thomas exactly what he had demanded. Jesus' gentle rebuke of Thomas "*Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe*" is normally read as implying "blessed are those who don't give in to their doubts, even though they have not seen." But perhaps it could also be read as comfort for all those who follow Thomas. Thomas is not condemned for his struggle to believe, and nor will we be. He stands as a model to all who have felt doubt but won through. Thomas is not left with his "failure" – Jesus lovingly provides what he needs.

Thomas is a model for us, not because he doubts, but because he fails to live up to the best that God desires for him. We too fail God, repeatedly. But as Jesus picked Thomas up and set him on his feet again, so too he forgives and restores us. Our failures are no reason to despair, and we are lovingly challenged to continue our journey in faith, hope and trust.

Bincombe with Broadway Upwey and Buckland Ripers



Please take these notes away with you

Welcome to Church today

My Lord and my God

April 11th

Second Sunday of Easter

Cutting it fine.

Broadway	10.30am	Family Worship (Brian Shore)
Bincombe	9.15am	Morning Service (Terry Landsbert)
Upwey	10.30am	Parish Communion (Revd Pat Jones)
Buckland	6.00pm	Evening Service (Terry Landsbert)

Acts 5: 27 - 32; Revelation 1: 4 - 8; John 20: 19 – 31 **pp859ff**

Bibles - page 1097

1233

1089

The Prayer for Today

Almighty Father,

you have given your only Son to die for our sins

and to rise again for our justification:

grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness

that we may always serve you

in pureness of living and truth;

through the merits of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Introduction to the Peace

The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples and said, 'Peace be with you.'

Then were they glad when they saw the Lord.

The peace of the Risen Lord be always with you

and also with you.

COMMUNION We welcome all who are members of their own Churches to receive the sacrament at any of our Communion Services. If for personal reasons you prefer to dip the wafer into the Chalice, please feel free to do so.

Today's Gospel John 20.19-31

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it."

A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Faith means believing in advance what only makes sense in reverse.

Philip Yancey

Notices

Tuesday 10.00am - 12Noon Upwey Coffee Morning and Bring and Buy
Betty & Paul Sutcliffe, 32 Elwell Street

Thursday 10.00am Holy Communion at St Nicholas Broadway

18th

Broadway 10.30am Family Worship (Revd Dick Luther)
Bincombe 9.15am Holy Communion (Revd Pat Jones)
Upwey 10.30am Parish Communion (Rector)
Buckland 6.00pm Evening Service (Rector)

Followed by Annual Church Meeting
Acts 9: 1 - 6; Revelation 5: 11-14; John 21: 1 - 19 **page 864ff**
Bibles - page 1102 1237 1090

**Saviour, He can move the mountains,
My God is Mighty to save, He is Mighty to save.
Forever, Author of salvation, He rose and conquered the grave,
Jesus conquered the grave.**

A New Shalom

When Jesus appeared to the disciples, his greeting was, "Peace be unto you." The Hebrew word shalom, for "peace," is a most comprehensive word, covering the full realm of relationships in daily life and expressing an ideal state of life. The word suggests the fullness of well-being and harmony untouched by ill fortune. The word as a blessing is a prayer for the best that God can give to enable a person to complete one's life with happiness and a natural death. If the concept of shalom became all too casual and light-hearted with no more significance than a passing greeting, Jesus came to give it new meaning. At Bethlehem God announced that peace would come through the gift of God's unique Son. The mission and ministry of our Lord made it quite clear that Jesus had come to introduce the rule of God and to order peace for the world.