

Read John 20 verses 24 – 29 “...Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe” (Verse 25 NRSV)

Dear Friends

The events of the story before us today have caused Thomas to be forever known as “doubting Thomas.” Thomas is the disciple who airs his doubts and his questions. Not only in this passage, but in John 14 it is Thomas whose questioning of Jesus leads to our Lord’s declaration that he is “the Way, the Truth and the Life” (See verses 1-6 of said chapter).

As Thomas and the other disciples “Wait in Jerusalem” for the comforter who is to come, I wonder if doubts arose in his mind and heart once again? After waiting for 3 or 4 days did he begin to wonder if anything at all was going to happen? Had they misunderstood or misheard what Jesus had said to them? Wasn’t this just time wasted and wasn’t it the case that God had forgotten about them? These and countless other questions could have been going through the mind of a doubtful disciple. And if those doubts were verbalised, perhaps their seeds would enter the hearts of those who listened.

In today’s world and today’s circumstances, I wonder how many of Christ’s disciples are going through a time of doubting. As we sit in isolation, unable to join together in worship and fellowship, how many of us are beginning – or more than beginning - to doubt our faith? Perhaps we feel that God has abandoned us, that he has forgotten all about us and that he doesn’t care for us.

Jesus’ responses to Thomas show us that there is nothing wrong with having doubts and questions – and that to doubt is not a sin. He doesn’t say to Thomas, “Go and sin no more,” rather through his words and actions, he offers Thomas the opportunity of responding to him in faith. Like Thomas, we can have been in the presence of Jesus and heard his words many times – yet when circumstances change, our doubts and questions can quickly resurface.

In his times of questioning and doubting, Thomas came to Jesus. In these days of difference and difficulty – which have now been with us 10 weeks, let alone 10 days – we must endeavour to do the same. For it is in challenging times like these that we should ask ourselves the question posed by a well- known hymn, “Shall our hearts forget his promise – I am with you evermore?”

Blessings

Peter