

24th April 2022

  
The **Methodist Church**

**South Warwickshire Circuit**

Registered charity no. 1154830

Superintendent Minister: Rev Dr Iain Ballard

**Hello everyone, my warmest Easter greetings to you all,**

The story of Thomas is one of my most dearly loved New Testament passages. I think it teaches us so much about the nature of Jesus, and the nature of what it is to be human. For me, it is one of the most wonderfully encouraging passages in the Gospel of John, a gospel which is full of affirming accounts of how Jesus treats fallible human beings. Look at how Jesus patiently answers Nicodemus, how dearly Jesus loves Lazarus and his family, or how Peter is restored after denying Jesus. Jesus' treatment of women, and the status afforded to women in this gospel, is also illuminating.

John 20:19-31 begins with the disciples gathered together in the locked room, disconsolate, sad and fearful. Jesus' first words to them are 'Peace be with you' – how accurately and concisely Jesus sums up how they are feeling, and what they need! But Thomas, of course, is not with them at this point. We are not told where he is, or what he is doing. But one can pretty well guarantee that he is feeling just as confused and bereft as the others. Indeed, his response to Jesus later on confirms this.

On hearing the news from his excited friends, Thomas will have none of it. He has to look, of course. He so wants to believe, he would love to think his Lord was alive, but he needs material proof. Unless I see those marks, he says, unless I see Him, unless I touch those wounds, I won't believe it. And Jesus is not impatient with this, he's not dismissive of this – instead, he comes **personally** to Thomas, to sort him out, to set him straight. Here is Thomas, so very human and frail, saying what I guess we all say from time to time – well unless I see it with my own eyes, I *won't* believe it. And Jesus deals with this so patiently, so kindly. He knows this is a big problem for Thomas and that he won't be able to progress unless he does see Jesus with his own eyes, and touch with his own hands. So that is what Jesus does. It's a personal touch from Christ our living Lord. But with it comes help for the rest of us:

**Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.**

Christ knows our struggles. He knows we doubt. He knows that sometimes we have to wrestle with our faith, and work it through. Many of us are doing this right now, as we come to terms with the difficulties of the last two years, and the fears of the present time. Jesus knows that sometimes he doesn't seem real to us. He knows and he understands, and he will come to us, and straighten us out too.

And this is His encouragement to us - Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.

May we all be blessed anew with the knowledge and the belief that Jesus is alive, this Eastertide and beyond.

**Rev'd Sally**

**Reminder: Dial – a – Prayer, Methodist Church**

Listen to a prayer: 0808 281 2514  
2478

Listen to news: 0808 281



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**Keep safe. Keep caring. Keep praying. With every blessing to you and yours.** *The Ministers and Stewards of the South Warwickshire Methodist Circuit of Churches*