

Wednesday Word

In reflection on the message for Sunday 30th April 2023.

Reading (with conversation) extracts from John 20, v19-30

Jesus Appears to His Disciples.

Setting the Scene: The disciples - behind locked doors - frightened of the Jews – then, suddenly the Risen Jesus appears: **An Incredible Event.** While we read the passage in groups, we were asked to discuss five questions. 1. What do you find interesting about the passage. 2. How many times does Jesus say “Peace be with you!” Why do you think it is said so often? 3. What is the writer of the passage trying to say to you? 4. What do you think is the relationship between faith and doubt? 5. Just for fun – Thomas is Hebrew and Greek for twin....Where was the other one? Who might it have been?

v19: **On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders,**

Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!”

v20f: **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.”

v22: **And with that he breathed on them and said,**

“Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven;

If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

Jesus Appears to Thomas Didymus (often called ‘doubting Thomas’) who was absent when Jesus came, refused to believe they had seen the Lord. until he could touch Jesus’ hands and side. v26f.: **A week later, in the house again, Thomas was with them and Jesus came**

again and told 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 Jesus. ”My Lord and my God!”

v29: **Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”**

Talk: Follow-up to discussions of questions.

Q1. Jesus brought a message and advice for the disciples to calm their fears and provide them with hope for the future. **“I am sending you,”** said Jesus, to continue the work that Jesus had been given by the Father. He empowered them for this by breathing on them and saying, **“Receive the Holy Spirit.”** (Note Genesis, Ch.2, v7, this is how God breathed life into Adam.)

Q2. Three.

Q3. The scripture tells how the strength and guidance now provided by the Holy Spirit will empower them to spread Jesus gospel. They are empowered to preach the message of Jesus resurrection, telling of his love and forgiveness of sins, providing salvation. The book of Acts tells how they did this in the churches of biblical times. Their successors through the ages to the present day have brought the Christian message to us.

Q4. We have our own experiences of meeting God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), so we have faith and believe in the ‘Word’ in the Bible. We will probably be doubters if we do not believe the Bible.