

They can't believe the stories these women had told them. They were genuinely scared, that's why the door was locked.

But Thomas wasn't there. We know that he was prepared to die with Jesus, but he prefers to grieve for his dead friend and leader alone.

So, he misses the moment when Jesus appears in the locked room. Jesus offers the disciples his peace, and they are stunned. Jesus swiftly gives them a commission, just as God sent Jesus, he was sending them out into the world. Then Jesus breathes the Holy Spirit on them.

Wow, no waiting for Pentecost! Amazingly we have Christ's Resurrection, the commissioning of the disciples, and the giving of the Holy Spirit all in the space of a single day!

And Thomas misses the lot!

Interestingly, Thomas finds himself in our position—he's told about the appearance rather than seeing it first-hand. But like every Christian since he needs to find out. He wants, he needs, he demands the evidence, the truth. And, of course, a little later he gets it. Jesus appears again in the locked when Thomas is present. Thomas' response to seeing Jesus seems to be the zenith of John's Gospel when he exclaims to Jesus "My Lord and my God".

Jesus' reply to this famous acclamation is really important because it about us. Jesus tells us that believers who are not first-hand witnesses like us will be blessed. The Holy Spirit is working now in our hearts and minds to give the truth and the faith we need to also accept Jesus as our Lord and God.

We grow our faith, just like Thomas did, and yes, doubt is essential. We question, we probe, we study, we learn, and we experience. The great news is that same Holy Spirit has been breathed on us enabling us to live as Easter people just as the first disciples did.

We also are commissioned.

We are part of an on-going story that brings peace and hope to a world full of pain.

So, will everyone in the future regard Thomas in a positive light?

I doubt it!

Mark Gilks
Hampton Mission Partnership

Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer

We pray for our world, for countries ravaged by war and natural disasters. We pray for those countries struggling with Covid who have little or no vaccines.

We pray for our country, for those making decisions, give them wisdom and courage to act wisely. We pray for those who are on the frontline, who are exhausted from the effects of the pandemic, give them rest.

We pray for the bereaved, especially those who haven't been able to grieve with or for loved ones. We pray for those still struggling with illness and weariness. We think of those who are anxious and afraid to go out, those who have been isolated for so long and those who are lonely.

We pray for our churches, some open, some still worshipping in other ways, help us to go forward in the way you lead us, not to just return to what we have always done.

We pray for ourselves, that we don't need a sign to believe in you, that we trust you to supply everything we need in our lives. Through our risen, redeeming Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: Listen to <https://youtu.be/J7JdhbQ33r0?t=13> or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind

A prayer of blessing

Peace be with you, dear brothers and sisters, and may God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you love with faithfulness. May God's grace be eternally upon all who love our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen (Ephesians 6: 23-24)

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