

Small Group Notes from Sunday 8th April

Icebreaker: When do you have doubts and how do you deal with them?

John 20:19-end

Thomas perhaps rather unfairly is labelled with doubting, which came about as he was not with the other disciples when Jesus appeared to them, although they were in a locked room. We aren't told where Thomas was or why he was not with the others when Jesus came into that locked room. Just that when he was told the amazing news that the others had, "seen the Lord", and had been shown his hands and side, Thomas declared he would not be able to believe unless he was able to see the nail marks and put his hand into his side.

A week passed. The disciples were again in the locked room, but this time Thomas was with them. We see how gentle Jesus was with Thomas inviting him to see for himself the wounds from the cross.

At this point we were told of Bishop Pete W's talk which was given on Easter Sunday in Sheffield Cathedral based on Mark 16:1-8. The message the women were given at the tomb was to tell the disciples and Peter that Jesus had risen, showing how intent Jesus was at re-establishing the relationship with Peter.

Although we don't hear a lot about Thomas in the gospels, the two other occasions where he is mentioned by name show:

1: He was courageous and honest. Thomas was the one to say it was right to go to Lazarus when he was sick, even though the authorities were looking for a way to arrest Jesus.

2: Following on from John 14:1-4 it is Thomas who says "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Thomas is not afraid to ask.

Getting back to Thomas and doubt.

Doubt is not sinful. We need to question to express doubt, for we need to make the decision whether to accept Jesus. In proclaiming "My Lord and my God" Thomas was the first to acknowledge the deity of Jesus.

We all have to make the decision of declaring this.

We were reminded from Hebrews 11:1

Faith is being sure of what we hope for, and certain of what we do not see.

Whatever our age we were all encouraged to question; that is the adventure of being a disciple to step out and ask questions.

So to Questions:

1: Having read through the passage again, do you have any questions!

2: Do you have a favourite passage from any of the gospel accounts of that first Easter Day.

3: What encouragement do you take from this reading?