

Sunday Sermon - Easter 2
Bishop Will – 11 April 2021

May I speak in the name of the father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. I suspect for most of us we could list a number of things from seeing our family to being reassured in our homes to all sorts of things that bring us that sense of peace. Darkness, I suspect, is not in our top 10 most peaceful things when we're somewhere really dark. Physically it's hard to find our way around, all sorts of doubt creep into our minds and our hearts as to what the terrain is like in front of us. We find it hard to see in the darkness, which usually means we can't be in an overly peaceful state.

Right at the beginning of our gospel passage today, we're told that those disciples are in the upper room, and it is darkness around them. It is night time and the second clue to the disciple's state is said very clearly when they say that the doors are bolted for fear of the jews those disciples who've witnessed so much are literally gathered together, huddled together, their world blown apart. They don't know what is going on at all, and they are fear-filled in the darkness of the upper room with the doors locked, and then Jesus appears in front of them and says, peace be with you.

This peace, God's peace, a peace that comes from the cross comes from all that we've witnessed through Holy Week is a peace that God dwells in, and a peace that he offers us, His friends, peace be with you when we say those words in church looking at others, we're not sharing our own piece which let's face it is a pretty fragile concept isn't it. We're seeking to share God's peace which is something so utterly different it has real power real reassurance because this peace has even overcome death, it has overcome sin, it has overcome failure, it has overcome every single characteristic that we dislike in ourselves this peace banishes fear.

And then we hear of dear old Thomas doubting Thomas as he will ever be known, and I think that's a bit unfair who of us where if we caught up with our friends who started explaining all that had happened and the fact that this being that we know has died on a cross in agony has suddenly appeared in front of them. We think they've been taking something in their wine, we wouldn't believe surely, I'm sure I wouldn't, and I'm sure I can see myself saying words like Thomas did, I simply won't believe this unless I see it with my own eyes and get my hand and physically touch those wounds, I will not believe.

And then Jesus appears once again in that room and tells Thomas basically that it's okay Thomas put your hands in the holes in my hands and my side, do not doubt but believe.

Doubt is another of those emotions of the darkness, isn't it? Christ shows himself to Thomas, and Thomas's proclamation is profound, my Lord and my God.

Thomas, through seeing Jesus, gives his whole life to living in the Spirit in the peace of Christ, and we too see Christ in so many ways through the scripture that He's left us through human beings made in his image through the sacramental life of the church. We also see Christ, we have the opportunity as Thomas did to encounter the God of the incarnation

born amongst us lived with us, died for us, rose again for us, that we also may have eternal life.

So we too are called to inhabit that peace and that light and that hope of God but not just to inhabit it. Thomas believes, but that's not all that Thomas does. Thomas then spends the rest of his life proclaiming this peace and hope and love in the world around a world as we know that so in need of that positivity at this moment so in need of seeing a different agenda, a much bigger picture, a picture that helps us answer questions of why and leads us to that God of peace, leads us to peace and hope no more doubt and darkness.

The Lord is risen alleluia, alleluia, He is risen indeed, hallelujah, alleluia.

Amen