

Living Lord Jesus Christ, come & stand among us and through Your Spirit, overcome our fears & speak to our hearts.

- ❖ ***“Thomas wasn’t with them when Jesus came.”(24)*** – Thomas wasn’t there the first time Jesus came to the disciples, huddled & hiding as they were, behind locked doors because they were afraid .

- ❖ ***“Thomas wasn’t with them when Jesus came.”*** Everyone handles grief, loss & disappointment differently, & we do not know for sure why Thomas wasn’t with them – maybe, he had wanted to get space & walk the streets, just wanted to be on his own. Maybe doing something practical like buying food for his friends. So let’s not criticise him – nor for that matter, those who are absent from church services on occasions for whatever reason - & do miss out - when some of us have been aware of Christ’s presence & blessing in a real way. ***Thomas was not with them when Jesus came.***

- ❖ & do not rush to criticise Thomas, so often dismissed as “doubting Thomas” - loyal, brave Thomas, he was the one at the start of John 11, who had said to the rest of the disciples, *Let’s stay with Jesus & go with our teacher, - go to Bethany & then to Bethlehem, even if it means death for us all.* Thomas had been the one who when Jesus was saying, *“I am going to prepare a place for you. I will come back & take you to be with me so that you will be where I am. You know the way that leads to the place where I am going”*, Thomas said out loud what all the others were thinking, *“Lord, we don’t understand. We don’t know where you’re going so how can we know the way?”*
It is good to ask questions and to be honest about our doubts.

- ❖ ***“Thomas wasn’t with them when Jesus came”*** but most probably through the encouragement of his friends, ***he was with them the next Sunday - when J came & stood among them again.***

- ❖ Even after 10 of them had seen Jesus, one week before, the disciples were still hiding ***“behind locked doors & afraid”*** **Even after** the joy of seeing Jesus again & of Him showing them the wounds in His hands & side. Even after He had blessed them,

“Peace be with be you. Receive the Holy Spirit.” I find it reassuring that these disciples were not transformed overnight into turbo-charged super-saints. It took time for the miracle of the resurrection and of Christ’s presence to sink in.

As for us, **do we lock** the door of our lives and minds? (see Reflection 2☺)

❖ “Thomas said to them, **“Unless I see the scars of the nails in his hands & put my finger on those scars, I will not believe... unless.....unless.** What is our “unless”?

❖ **“Thomas wasn’t with them when Jesus came” the first time but was with them when Jesus came again.** Yet, despite Renaissance pictures of Thomas putting his finger in Jesus’ nail wounds, & despite John’s report that Jesus invited him to do, as if He had heard Thomas’ words, John did not report that Thomas then did reach out and feel Jesus’ wounds. **But we do know Thomas’ answer to Jesus,** greatest response of anyone in all history: **“My Lord and my God.”**
May we also respond to Jesus, “My Lord and my God.”?

To finish, let me remind you briefly of 2 verses that don’t at first sight, seem central to story - but which are both of vital importance:

❖ Jesus said, **“As the Father sent me so I am sending you.”(21)** Jesus was sending them and still, He is sending you and me as His disciples. What does that mean for us? Jesus says, *As the Father sent me (Jesus) to proclaim the kingdom in word and deed, I am sending you also to carry on my mission to proclaim the kingdom in word and deed;* the power of the cross to confront sin with the hope that people will receive the forgiveness He came to bring.

❖ v. 31. **“These things are written in order that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, & that through your faith in Him. You may have life.”**
This Easter-time, know that Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified & dead, is now alive and calls us to share the light of His love..

Lord, I locked the door of my life and mind,
.....for I was afraid of knowing what you might mean.
I was afraid that knowing You
.....would challenge all my ideas and priorities,
.....turn my comfortable life upside down.
I locked the door of my life and mind
.....but still You entered
.....and shone with the light of truth.

Lord, I locked the door of my life and heart,
.....for I was afraid of what loving You might mean.
I was afraid that loving You
.....would mean opening myself up to others,
.....would mean suffering and pain.
I locked the door of my life and heart,
.....but still You entered
... and filled me with the joy of love.

Lord, I locked the door of my heart and soul
.....for I was afraid of what trusting You might mean.
I was afraid that trusting You
.....would mean stepping out into the unknown,
.....would mean losing myself in You.
I locked the door of my life and soul,
.....but still You entered
.....and said, “Peace be with you.”