

Sunday Thought

24th April 2022 Second Sunday of Easter

Readings

Acts 5: 27 – 32
Psalm 150
Revelation 1: 4 - 8
John 20: 19 - 31

Jesus in the Room is Peace

John continues with his account of the Easter events. He tells of two Sunday evenings when Jesus' disciples experienced him alive again – in the room with them. On the first occasion there were at least two disciples missing – Judas and Thomas – and by the second Sunday others may well have started home to Galilee as Jesus had instructed them. I wonder how I would have reacted if just three days after the death of a close friend, he or she suddenly appeared in the room, greeted me, and started a meaningful conversation? Luke is more bluntly honest in his account and says, *'they were terrified!'* Thomas was present the next time! Jesus came on his account! Seven days is a long time to hold on to belief in a resurrection miracle without beginning to wonder, *'Was it real?'* *'Was our hope making us dream?'* That would be particularly so when their minds were crippled with thoughts of persecution by the authorities who had sentenced their Master. They were careful of every move they made, every footfall on the stairs, every tap on the door. Maybe that is why Jesus didn't knock?



John makes it clear how the disciples talked of other fears when they came together in their secret upper room. Their doubts for a start, which led to arguments with sceptical Thomas. He was not saying *'I cannot believe it!'* He was adamant, *'I WILL NOT believe it until I can see and feel Him in the same way that you others have seen and felt Him.'* That stubborn attitude still prevents many from knowing the joy of the real childlike trust which changes lives. Typically, Jesus gave Thomas exactly what he asked! John tells us of other concerns they shared during that post resurrection week. *'Where do we go from here?'* *'And after Galilee? What plan and purpose has God for our future together?'* *'How do we reach out – to the whole Gentile world?'* *'Will we really be able to continue preaching, teaching, healing like the Master? Will our testimony be powerful enough to bring people a conviction of their sins and reconciliation with God?'*

Jesus, of course, would remind them of how they had worked with him previously. He had an answer for every question and his breathing on them was a foretaste of Pentecost and the enabling power of his Holy Spirit.

Reading John's words yet again, a special, *Sunday Thought* jumped out at me. At every point where Jesus came among his friends, answering their questions and encouraging their faith, he gave them the traditional greeting '*Peace be with you – My Peace!*' In that same room days earlier peace had been his prayer for them. It had been his parting gift – '*my peace I leave with you.*' His presence was peace, calming and unravelling their anxieties, turning doubt to faith, fear to courage, giving aimless men a new purpose, giving strength for weakness, adding his authority to their words, assuring them of reconciliation for their brokennessPeace is '*Jesus in the room.*' Jesus who is alive. Jesus who has overcome all enemies of truth, even the last enemy – death. Jesus who is proved Son of God, and King of all kings, comes with peace, speaking words of assurance and guidance.

The reading from The Acts shows how '*Jesus in the room*' was peace in the experience of the first post-Pentecost Christian community, giving them the same courage to face opposition as they were empowered by the Holy Spirit. It is still the same for every believer. To have Jesus in the room is Peace – peace to be able to hold on to his words, his comfort, his guidance. There is a word here too for the Christian community today in this time of searching for new means of being church and of sharing our faith. Every planning meeting, every activity, every act of fellowship needs an assurance that '*Jesus is in the room!*' He does not knock – that may alarm us! He is always there when we miss him enough to want him more! If only the world and its leaders wanted him enough! The Lord of peace in MY room is one of Easter's greatest gifts.

A Prayer (with Psalm 150 and Revelation 1: 4 – 8 in mind)

Lord, Jesus Christ,
One with the Father and the Holy Spirit;
King of kings, Lord of lords:
Conqueror of death and of all the world's evil
we offer you our Easter praise – every day.

Open our lives to an awareness
of your eternal glory and power;
to know and believe the great things
you have done, are doing and will do;
to feel the joy of your presence when heaven
and earth meet in the room.
Jesus, be the gift of peace in my room.

