**Doubting Thomas John 20**

Where’s Jesus when you want Him? I read the Gospel whilst eating my muesli at 3am this morning. Doubting Thomas – we all know the story. Jesus in the room with him and still he doesn’t believe.

Doubting Thomas was in a Delicatessen’s early this morning in Bath in the form of Andy, the Scottish owner. We often have a deep theological discussion first thing in the morning, it sets us up for the day and certainly makes me think on my feet. Although Andy doesn’t believe in God, he often tells me that he would like to have Faith.

He began this morning by asking what God thought about the current situation of His world?

 “Well, I’m sure that he isn’t raining down pestilence like he did on the Egyptians at the beginning of the Exodus, and I’m pretty sure that He is praising the fact that for once, his creation, the global population, is understanding what is meant by loving your neighbour.”

“*Well yes, but I can’t believe in God myself”*

“Well have you looked into it and considered the facts?”

*“I’ve got a fairly intelligent knowledge of God but it doesn’t make sense, and anyway, Jesus happened two thousand years ago so it seems pretty irrelevant. Isn’t it about time that he came back to earth and sorted it out? Where’s Jesus when you want Him?* “

And that’s the problem isn’t it? The Risen Christ is right in the room in front of our noses, we can see him in all the people that we meet, we can meet with him personally in prayer and the scriptures, and, on occasions, especially when we’ve been ignoring his will for a bit, he comes right in through the front door uninvited. Yet we still doubt.

I get frustrated sometimes when people don’t get it. There are examples in the Gospels when Jesus says, ‘I’m here right in front of you, I’m telling you what you need to do – believe in me! Yet you want me to perform a miracle here right in front of you here and now, and then, you say, you’ll believe! But even then you wouldn’t!

The miracle has already happened - we celebrated it last week. Jesus, who was God incarnated here on earth, worked for three years day and night in order to show us that the God of old is a very real God who loves each and every one of us and travels with us through our life’s journey. A God loving God that is willing to forgive us our sins when we get it wrong. A God that doesn’t want to totally control us like robots, but rather, wants each of us to live a life that is more than just our inward self-satisfaction.

He wants us to live a life that reaches out to those who are oppressed, down-trodden and lonely, he want’s us to love our neighbour. So what did we do? We put Him to death on a cross in the hope that he’d go away. Well, he didn’t and he won’t. He rose again on the third day and if we look around us, we’ll find him everywhere.

Jesus is right there in amongst all this virus carnage. He is willing us to reach out to those less fortunate people around us, to those in need in these troubled times, to those who live next door to us but we’ve never really got to know their names, let alone if they have got enough food to survive another day of lockdown. He is willing us to believe in Him and pass on his Love and Peace to our neighbours.

I just hope that Andy finds him soon. Jesus is bound to turn up at his Deli sooner or later although I suspect that he has already been loads of times, it’s just that he’s being met by Doubting Thomas.