**North East Circuit of Independent Methodist Churches**

**Devotional for Sunday 19th April 2020**

**Introduction**

* The say a week is a long time in politics.
* We are one week since Easter Day, what a week.
* What a long week for Thomas who missed out on seeing Jesus that first Easter Day.
* I imagine his mind going into overdrive. Saying to himself, “If only . . .”, “If only I had been there!”, “If only I had stayed with the others!”, “If only I had not gone . . .”
* Like Thomas we often miss out when choosing not to meet together but we are unable to meet together at this time, so it is important for us not to miss out

**Hymn: At the name of Jesus**

At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow,
every tongue confess him King of glory now.
'Tis the Father's pleasure we should call him Lord,
who from the beginning was the mighty Word.

In your hearts enthrone him; there let him subdue
all that is not holy, all that is not true;
crown him as your Captain in temptation's hour:
let his will enfold you in its light and power.

Brothers, this Lord Jesus shall return again,
with his Father's glory, with his angel train;
for all wreaths of empire meet upon his brow,
and our hearts confess him King of glory now.

**Bible Reading: John 20**

**Jesus Appears to Thomas**

26A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” 27Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”

28Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

29Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

**Devotional:**

* Thomas often gets a bad press.
* Many of us refer to him as “Doubting Thomas” when really that is an injustice to the man.
* Matthew, Mark and Luke all make reference to Thomas but it is John who in his gospel tells us all we know about Thomas, and even then, it appears to be from a short period of time starting with John ch. 11.
* There, Thomas was present at the raising of Lazarus and it is here he showed his loyalty to Christ (John 11:16).
* It is Thomas who asked to know the way and in reply Jesus told us ‘I am the way, the truth and the life’ (John 14:6).
* Thomas was absent when Jesus first appeared to the disciples after the resurrection (John 20:24), and when he was told of it, he was sceptical (John 20:25).
* Imagine the predicament Thomas was in. In his grief he was not found in the company of the other disciples, and he missed out. To add to his anguish, he discovers he also missed out on meeting the risen Lord Jesus.
* Thomas is consistent in his character, for he would not believe anything, but simply wanted proof and evidence, so searches for the truth, but in doing so seems to quickly forget what Jesus had said.
* We do not know if Thomas obeyed the command of Jesus to touch His wounds, but we do have the clear declaration of faith for once Thomas sees Jesus, his faith is apparently stirred and boldly declares Jesus to be “My Lord and My God!'" ([John 20:28](https://www.bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/bible.show/sVerseID/26896/eVerseID/26896)).
* Unlike Thomas we have not seen the risen Lord Jesus, but we can be encouraged through the words of Jesus to Thomas, who said, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'"
* We may not feel blessed at the moment, but we are if we have believed without seeing we are.
* Our government has announced a further 3 week lockdown, we feel we may be missing out and we are to some extent but let us thank God for the blessing we have of believing without seeing and the one in whom we put our faith will uphold is in these days.

No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of life;
Life is naught without thee; aid us in our strife;
Make us more than conquerors, through thy deathless love:
Bring us safe through Jordan to thy home above.
Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son,
Endless is the vict'ry, thou o'er death hast won.

**Prayer:**

O God our Heavenly Father, we thank that by believing we are blessed. We will never take the privilege of meeting together for granted, ever again. We thank you for each other and the encouragements we receive. We remember those who have passed away and pray you will comfort those who mourn. We continue to pray for our decision makers and frontline workers.

**The Lord’s Prayer**