



## Doors - open, closed or slightly ajar?

### John 20: 19-29 - Jesus Appears to Thomas

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**24** Now Thomas (also known as Didymus<sup>[a]</sup>), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. **25** So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" "But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."**26** A 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!"** **27** Then 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."**28** Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"**29** Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

We have all been in situations where doors have closed, or have even been slammed shut in our faces! Perhaps we have been responsible for a fair few closing ourselves?

It can be a painful experience – we know the old saying, "as one door closes, another opens," – and this is true, but what if we really wanted the closed ones to be the open ones? Some of the doors that have been closed to me, I certainly wish I had the key to open them.

In my life, many doors have closed, others opened, and some have been ajar, waiting for me to take a peep inside, if I dare. I also have done my own fair share of closing and locking doors, turning down opportunities and hiding away – why? Too much hassle perhaps? Too much like hard work? Self-doubt?

Following His resurrection, the 'appearance stories' of Jesus are beautiful, challenging, life changing and inspiring. For the followers of Jesus, as he died, a door had closed. And yet...

The wonderful description in John's Gospel of Thomas meeting the resurrected Lord shows how even **though the doors were locked, Jesus entered and announced peace**. For Thomas, the Lord commanded him to stop doubting – and to believe – and he did.

Interestingly, in Western Christianity, Thomas is still referred to as '**Doubting Thomas**' – remembered for how he felt when doors had closed. Remembered for the times he struggled to believe the greatest miracle ever. Yet, in the orthodox tradition, Thomas is not remembered for doubting. He is not tarnished with the 'doubting Thomas' title which can be seen as a slur on his character. He is known as **Thomas the Confessor**. A 'confessor' to all the doors he went on to open. For his ministry in light of the Resurrection and in light of his belief. Thomas the Confessor, who met with Jesus who entered through a door locked to reveal the truth. The truth set him free.

Thomas was behind a closed door, grieving, lost, broken. Jesus found him there. There was no keeping Jesus out. Jesus did not leave his friend in that place. He rescued him from the place which had become an emotional prison where fear and doubt ruled, to a place of peace, assurance and immense joy.

What doors have you closed in your life? What spiritual doors have you closed? What are your doubts/fears? When has Jesus entered through your locked doors? The places you were hiding away? Has he turned you from being a doubter, to being a confessor of the faith?

May you go well into your week. If doors open, then be brave and courageous. If doors close – then likewise, be brave and courageous. The Lord enters and is present, regardless.

Love Jo x