

From The Pulpit

by Rev. Donald M. Clark
EXILE'S RETURN

Text: "But Thomas One of the Twelve, Called Didymus, Was Not With Them When Jesus Came. John 20:24.

"But Thomas was not with them when Jesus came." He should have been. It was the eve of the day that changed the face of the world. The others must have told him that they would be together; he must have known about the rapturous events of that wonderful morning. But Thomas had exiled himself from the homeland of faith.



REV. D. M. CLARK

Why did he do it? He was no deserter. When his Master had resolved to face the dangers of Judea, it was Thomas who had insisted that they all accompany Him and, if necessary, die with Him. There is something spiritual and heroic about such a man.

Then the crucifixion happened. Thomas stayed almost to the end--his heart broken, his mind dejected. "Doubting Thomas," we say, "Despairing Thomas," would be more accurate. This reticent man could see no reason to rehash the story and talk about what might have happened. So he became a temporary exile.

When he did see the others and they calmed their excitement sufficiently to tell him, "We have seen the Lord," his intense disappointment that he had been absent flared into a hot retort. "Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe." When good comes to others, a good we might have shared had we been present, we feel like that.

Undoubtedly, Thomas was doing something useful. A man could not spend three years in the company of the compassionate Christ and not have his own heart enlarged with kindness. But Thomas should have been in the upper room; the fellowship was incomplete without him.

When hope is at its lowest ebb, and faith seems futile, we need to be in the company of hopeful and valiant hearts. Thomas, you should have remembered: "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Thomas could picture that pitiful little group, behind locked doors, afraid, and yet there would be something majestic about them. They would be on their knees much of the time. Peter, with half a sob in his throat, might retell the events of those last dark hours, and the glorious experience of the morning. John would be recalling the sayings of Jesus, the old dear words and the promise. One of

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them might repeat part of what He quoted on the cross, "Be not thou far off, O Lord! O my strength; haste thee to help me. Deliver My soul from the sword. . . I will declare Thy name unto my brethren." Another of them might break out, "Wouldn't it be good to see Him again?" And there He was! It would be worship.

Thomas needed that so much. Driven by grief and disappointment, he needed a time of refuge and healing and peace.

You modern Thomases, driven by the pressures of life, living so much in man-made environments, you need to lift up your eyes from an upper room toward a far horizon. You need some spiritual sanctuary where you can be quiet within and the heart made glad and strong. That is why we continue to worship together week by week. In the midst of endless agitation, we need to be assured of divine peace, even as those harassed disciples were assured. We need to see the wounds of the Saviour of the world, if only to know that we are still needed to help heal them. Any authentic experience of worship results in a commission and a commitment. "As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you."

How many of us say, "Lord here am I, send me?" With the commission and the commitment, the worshiper receives power, taps resources made available by the almighty Father. It is "power equal to our tasks" and it is power to become channels of liberating power to others.

"The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them." That is what makes Christian worship the recreative, ineffable experience it is.

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Rosary: Daily, 7:30 pm except Sundays

PENTECOSTAL

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Eld. Hosea Coleman, 642-8741
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(WALKER, from page 1)

said the station had received "many" complaints concerning views expressed on the show ever since it was first screened on Feb. 21.

"What did they expect?" the Rev. Walker demanded when asked to comment on this allegation. "As I said before, the station knew it would be a controversial show. It was intended to be controversial. And if they received a lot of complaints, I'd just like to emphasize that I received lots of praise from all sorts of people who thought the show was just what we needed to wake up this town to some pretty sad situations."

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