Sermon:

Anyone have a fear – maybe a phobia? Situation in North Korea and fear of a nuclear war.

Disciples were *afraid ‘of the Jews’* (= religious authorities who had engineered Jesus’ death). Why afraid? Having dealt with Jesus, disciples thought they’d now ‘deal’ with his followers. If so, what did they need?

The *peace* that Jesus gave did not take away the attitude of ‘Jews’ to the disciples, but it did help them see their fear was groundless at *that* point; later, certainty about the resurrection overcame their fear.

Are we afraid of our community, or the authorities? Is it fear of rejection, antagonism, or are we more uncertain of our message, so reluctant to share it? Surely we need that peace also.

Only then did Jesus show his wounds, which reassured them it truly was Jesus. This led to joy.

There is joy here, but what is its source? Niceness? Or something much deeper?

Then disciples became apostles – sent with a task. *Being sent* would be the last thing they would have wanted at that point. What is the *last* thing we want God to ask us to do?

NB. Powered by Holy Spirit. It is this power that reassures us more than anything else.

Where does forgiveness come – seems a little irrelevant? Was it forgiveness to those who had killed Jesus?

It is as if forgiveness is *the* message of God to the world. This is more than forgiveness for occasional sin.
It relates to the big picture of the relationship of God and humans, God and creation.

The Thomas incident is mainly to show that all this is not just for the disciples then, but for us today too.

Thomas’ doubts were not about Jesus per se, but about the claims of the disciples. When Jesus came his doubts went & amazing faith came. Believing without seeing is tough - that is us - the disciples were lucky.