

“What Do You Do When You Are Afraid?”

John 20:19-23

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As a child, did you ever lock yourself in a room because you were afraid? Did that make you feel safe? How long did you stay there? How were you able to come out of that room?

If you did this, you can relate to the experience the disciples had on that first Easter evening. They were huddled in a room behind a locked door because they were afraid the same authorities that crucified Jesus were looking for them. To their surprise, someone found them that evening. However, it was not the Jewish officials whom they feared, but the risen Lord whom they needed. Just when they needed Him most, Jesus came and helped them by giving them peace of mind, a purpose for living and the power they needed to carry out that purpose.

You will find an account of this event in John 20:19-23 in a story that tells us some things about the disciples and Jesus that we need to know. Let me share them with you.

**Let's begin with the disciples.** This story tells me that these followers of Jesus, perhaps his closest, were capable of being afraid, worried and confused. That's why they were meeting behind locked doors listening fearfully for every step on the staircase or knock on the door. They believed the religious officials were not content with crucifying Jesus but wanted to get rid of them, also. They fully expected emissaries from the Sanhedran to come looking for them, for their hostility toward Jesus did not end with his death and burial. As a result, they were terrified.

I confess that I find some comfort in knowing that the disciples felt this way. At times I feel afraid, worried or confused and wonder if that is normal. After all, there are those who believe that Christians should not have these feelings. Stories like this help dispel that myth and remind me that life can overwhelm even the closest followers of the Lord.

**What does this passage tell me about Jesus?** It tells me that Jesus knew where these disciples were. Others may not have known, especially the Sanhedran, but Jesus did. Thank goodness they could not hide from him and neither can we.

This story tells me that Jesus was able to get to them. That locked door may have kept their enemies away, but it could not hold Jesus back. Getting to his secluded disciples was no problem for him.

This passage tells me that Jesus knew how they felt and provided what they needed. He sensed their fear, anxiety and confusion. As a matter of fact, he was there because they felt that way and needed his help.

So, what did he do? He gave them the gift of peace to calm their fears, a purpose for living that cleared up their confusion and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that infused them with courage and power.

Just when they needed him most, Jesus was there and he will be for us, too. He knows where we are, how we feel and what we need. I hope you will not ignore him or run away from him when he comes to you, but open your heart and life to him and let him help you. He can make such a difference in your life. Ask one of these frightened disciples that he turned into a bold and valiant witness.