



PEACE BE WITH YOU!

Jesus has compassion and love for those who, when discouraged and confused, need the Lord's presence—He shows up!

OUR DEVOTIONAL

A group of Jesus' followers had gathered in a locked room (John 20:19), hiding and struggling with the fact that Jesus' body was missing. Their hopes and dreams were lost on the cross where Jesus died. They heard rumors of His appearances from several people in their group, and were discussing his recent appearances.

As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you!" But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."

LUKE 24:36-39 (ESV)

Jesus' first words to the group of discouraged, frightened followers and disciples (all of whom had left Him in His time of greatest need) were: "**Peace be with you.**" This was a standard Hebrew greeting, but it was filled with greater meaning. Jesus brought a greeting of peace, but now His resurrected presence brought *real* peace!

"As he spoke, he showed them his hands and his feet. Still, they stood there in disbelief, filled with joy and wonder. Then he asked them, 'Do you have anything here to eat?' They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he ate it as they watched" (Luke 24:40-43).

His resurrected body still bore the wounds of the cross as a testimony to His followers that this was the same man they had loved and followed—and had seen die.

Was this too good to be true? They experienced the conflicting emotions of disbelief, doubt, joy, and wonder that any person would have when a most desired, but seemingly impossible, wish comes true. Jesus stood there among them, alive, even eating, to show that He was not a ghost. He was real. He came back to life just as He said he would! As they spent more time with Jesus, the disbelief and doubt faded, and they were left with great joy and full of praise. (See verses 52-53.)

The presence of Jesus in our lives brings this kind of peace—not just tranquility, but completeness, unity with God—security in the knowledge that He will do what He said He would.

FAMILY MOMENT

Play some kind of competitive game—the more chaotic, the better—like capture the flag, dodgeball, etc. During the game, keep changing the rules without notice. When you're finished, talk about what just happened. How did everyone feel during the game? Then talk about how life can feel chaotic sometimes. Talk out how our minds and feelings can be chaotic, too.

Next, spend 5 minutes or so doing a guided relaxation exercise. You can use a scripted Christian meditation or read a psalm. You can play soft music and talk about breathing and relaxing your body. (If this doesn't fit for your family, do a calmer, cooperative game with clear rules/directions.) The most important part is to make a plan and talk about what to expect before you begin. When you're finished, talk about how different this experience was from the game you played before, focus on the difference in your mind and emotions.

Talk about how Jesus brings tranquility. He may or may not calm the world around us, but He can always help us calm the storm on the inside. He brings security. We always know we are safe with Him. He brings confidence. He will never change the rules or pull out the rug from under us.

Whatever craziness life brings, Jesus will bring peace!

PRAYER & REFLECTION

Are you resting in the peace of the Lord's presence or are you tossed around by the chaos of life? Spend a few minutes here and there throughout your day reflecting on this question. If you are not experiencing the peace of God, what do you need in order to receive this peace? Ask Jesus for it!