

Read: Luke 24:36-49

Peace Be With You!

Luke 24:36-39

While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Being alone. The dark. Big animals. Bugs. Heights. What do all of these things have in common? They are fears of young children. After this past year, a new fear for many children might be pandemics. What can make a pandemic so scary is the uncertainty and confusion around it. When will it be safe to see my grandma and grandpa again? When can I go back to in-person school? When can I quit wearing a mask? Not knowing the answers to questions like these can lead us to be fearful and confused about the future.

The disciples were full of fear and confusion as they hid behind the locked door of their house. They had been told by close friends that Jesus' tomb was empty and that he had risen from the dead, but they couldn't believe it because this seemed like nonsense to them.

Then the unthinkable happened! Without the door being opened Jesus appeared to them and said, "Peace be with you." The disciples were far from being at peace. They were even more frightened. They thought Jesus was a ghost. Then Jesus calmed their nerves by proving he was truly alive. He helped them understand and trust everything that happened over the past few days was part of God's plan to save them and all people from their sins.

As we face challenges that make us afraid, we may wish we could just lock ourselves in a room. It isn't just the global problems like natural disasters and pandemics that cause us to fear. There will always be something we must face each and every day. Maybe it's the bully who constantly picks on us. The math lesson we just can't figure out. The constant fighting that takes place in our homes. So often we find ourselves overwhelmed with fear and doubt.

Then we open our Bibles and hear our Savior say, "Peace be with you." The Bible proves to us that Jesus rose from the dead and took care of our biggest problem: sin. That doesn't mean we won't face challenges or that our life here on earth as believers will be easy. What it does mean is that amidst the chaos of our lives we can have peace because our future in heaven is secure through Jesus. May Jesus' words of comfort in John 14:27 calm your fears, "Peace I leave with

you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- What are you most afraid of?
- Who is more powerful than anything you might fear?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- What does God use to strengthen our faith in him and his promises?
- How does Jesus’ resurrection from the dead give us peace even as we experience difficulties?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- What part of this pandemic has caused you the most anxiety and fear?
- What Bible passage(s) provides you with the most comfort as you face adversity?

Closing Prayer:

Dear Risen Savior, all too often we are overwhelmed with fear and doubt. Help us find comfort in your promises and discover peace in the truth of your Word. Amen.

Hymn: CW 158:3 – I Am Content! My Jesus Lives Again

I am content! My Jesus is my light, My radiant sun of grace.
His cheering rays beam blessings forth for all: Sweet comfort, hope, and peace.
This Easter sun has brought salvation and everlasting exultation.
I am content! I am content!