

Luke 24:30-43(ESV) ³⁰When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. ³¹And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. ³²They said to each other, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?” ³³And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, ³⁴saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” ³⁵Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread. ³⁶As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, “Peace to you!” ³⁷But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. ³⁸And he said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹See 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.” ⁴⁰And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. ⁴¹And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” ⁴²They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³and he took it and ate before them.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ.

Amen.

We are in the church year of the Easter season where Jesus appears after his resurrection up until his ascension into heaven. His post resurrection appearances are recorded in the Gospels and I find them to be absolutely fascinating. In his glorified body Jesus could enter rooms without the doors being opened. At one time Jesus appeared to a crowd of 500 people. The fact of his bodily resurrection has been passed on down from the eyewitnesses to us and will continue until the day Jesus comes again. He is risen. He is risen indeed, Alleluia.

The disciples were speaking with the two men who had seen the risen Christ on the road to Emmaus. Initially the two men did not recognize Jesus and invited him into their home for a meal. **Luke 24:30-32 (ESV)** *³⁰When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. ³¹And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. ³²They said to each other, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?”* The post resurrection appearances of Jesus were actual historical events. Those that witnessed his appearances were not silent; they boldly proclaimed the risen Christ.

The two men from Emmaus ran and told the disciples what they had seen and heard. Dr Luke puts it this way, **Luke 24:36-37(ESV)** ³⁶*As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you!"* ³⁷*But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit.*

In his glorified body Jesus could appear anywhere and disappear at will. Jesus ate food in his glorified body. Please know that the resurrected Christ did not have an overwhelming glow or brightness. Jesus had yet to ascend to the fullness of his glory. Mary Magdalene mistook him for the gardener. What frightened the disciples was the sudden supernatural appearance of Christ in the room. They thought it was a spirit. No human being can suddenly materialize out of nowhere into a locked room. The men panicked thinking they were seeing a ghost (Dr John MacArthur Luke 18-24, pg. 435). Jesus says to them, "Peace be with you." In my own terms, "Hey guys, it's me. Calm down. I have much to say to you."

Luke 24:38-43(ESV) ³⁸*And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?"* ³⁹*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."* ⁴⁰*And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.* ⁴¹*And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?"* ⁴²*They gave him a piece of broiled fish,* ⁴³*and he took it and ate before them.*

In his own kind way Jesus was mildly reproofing the men for panicking at the sight of Jesus. "Why are you so troubled?" "Why do you doubt?" Just three days before on Maundy Thursday Jesus had told the disciples, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me" (John 14:1). Friends do we not live in a time of many troubled hearts? Do we not live in a time when there is panic everywhere? The news of the day is always troubling. The news on television does its best to get better ratings and what better way to get ratings than to state their own opinions that tends to rile us all up.

Jesus says to us, "peace be with you." The Bible tells us that Jesus is our peace. Peace is an inner calmness that overcomes our anxieties as we trust in Christ to fulfill God's promises. No matter what we are facing, Jesus promises to never, never, never leave us nor forsake us. I find when I panic, and yes I do panic, I am doubting God's very existence. When I panic I am doubting God's power, grace, love, and more. When I panic it is a form of practical atheism. It is as if I lose my faith in God for a moment or moments and I find myself sinking into a huge pit of paralyzing fear. When we find ourselves so emotionally out of whack, it is then that the truth of Scripture comes to us and strengthens our faith in God. Jesus says, "Do not fear but believe." To believe is to cling to God. To believe is to rely on God. To believe is to trust that no matter what is happening to you, God is in control and will bring good out of all of it.

The emotion of human fear can be debilitating, steal you of your Christian joy, silence your Christian witness, hinder your friendships, keep you awake at night, and cause your blood pressure to rise. Here are some helpful ways to deal with debilitating fears. 1. Listen to Christian music. There are specific Christian hymns and songs that brings us right into the Presence of God. I have seen you in worship singing a particular hymn or song and the look in your eyes speaks volumes for God's Presence is touching you through song. It is good to have your vehicle set to a Christian station. God's comforting grace has a way of coming to us that brings calmness to one's soul even through Christian radio. 2. Read or listen to the Scriptures. My office is now in my home. I listen daily to the Scriptures on CD, several chapters at a time. God knows exactly what we need to hear that brings calmness of our souls. The Word reminds us of God's constant provision. 3. Asking a friend to pray for you. This week I received a prayer request from a friend that lives in another state. Asking for prayer is a healthy way to lessen one's personal fears. Knowing that someone is praying for you increases your awareness that God truly does love you. 4. One of the things that helps me the most is the first line of the Lord's Prayer. "Our Father who art in heaven." That phrase means that God is more powerful than

anything you are facing. 5. Reading a few of the Psalms can bring much peace. The authors were facing their own fears and they overcame them through trusting in the Presence of the Lord God Almighty. 6. Of course pouring your heart out to God and naming your fears is good and healthy. God hears and sees your fears. The Lord is your Shepherd and you can find in Christ everything that you need. 7. It is always good to have a trusted Christian to confide in and who will pray with you. 8. Physical exercise. I know as a fact that physical exercise helps reduce one's stress and improve one's physical and emotional health. These are eight specific ways that can help us all overcome fearful and troubled hearts. Amen and Amen.