



<https://www.wevideo.com/view/1646322181> (For children only :))

I was always a bit puzzled to read that the disciples huddled anxiously together in a room, with life continuing outside. Have you ever wondered how waiting in a room would have looked like, waiting anxiously for something they could not even name, listening to the noises around the house, trying to keep the world out by having the door shut tight? Many people suffer, locked up in their own world, or suffer under anxiety and depression. Disciples of Jesus do that at times...and it is not a lack of faith as much as it is the inability to envision a better tomorrow.

Maybe you do that right now, you feel anxious and have your door closed to the world, wonder what tomorrow may bring. I hope not. But be of good courage, you are not alone, and neither are you the only one with this feeling. Perhaps what we as children of God are experiencing right now, what we are being told to do or not to do by the government of today will help us to reflect on what we are being told by the One who holds us by His right hand.

- ***When I saw him, I fell at his feet as if I were dead. But he laid his right hand on me and said, "Don't be afraid! I am the First and the Last. I am the living one. I died, but look—I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave. Rev 1:17-18***

Less because of these words, but also because of the living presence of Jesus in our lives we can face tomorrow.

***God sent His son, they called Him Jesus
He came to love, heal and forgive
He lived and died to buy my pardon
An empty grave is there to prove my savior lives***

***Because He lives, I can face tomorrow
Because He lives, all fear is gone
Because I know He holds the future
And life is worth the living, just because He lives***

Many of us know this song, have heard the lyrics and now we want these words to ring true for us, so that we can be an encouragement or a rock to someone. And yet we can be honest; fear, anxiety, uneasiness, nervousness or jumpiness is not something the friends of Jesus were unfamiliar with.

- ***That Sunday evening the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them! “Peace be with you,” he said. John 20:19***

Jesus coming into the life of people always interrupts...it interrupted John's life who contemplated life while exiled on an island...when the presence of Jesus brought him to his knees. Jesus coming back into the life of his disciples interrupted their fearful hiding, but it did not ease their jumpiness, nervousness, uneasiness, anxiety, or fear. They needed the peace that only Jesus can give, his peace, not the peace the world knows.

Peace doesn't come from/by/through hiding, avoidance or escaping like in the case of Jonah or the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (but I get head of myself) **True peace, lasting peace comes in the presence of the Lord.**

The nature of Jesus' message called for people to make a choice. Rather than uniting humanity, it divided friends and families. It still has that effect today. His coming, his peace, his calling us changes everything. Those who believe in Jesus, who have fellowship with him, belong to him will have that lasting peace, even in this broken world. God tells us we don't have to be afraid, no matter what the latest headlines say:

- ***“Do not be afraid of the terrors of the night, nor the arrow that flies in the day. Do not dread the disease that stalks in darkness, nor the disaster that strikes at midday” (Ps 91:5-6).***

Jesus made a simple statement and a profound promise when he said,

- **“You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free” (John 8:32).**

When he spoke of the truth that liberates, he was not merely talking about the absence of falsehood. Like the peace he offers, which is more than the absence of conflict, truth is more than the absence of lies and counterfeits. Jesus, in talking about truth, said of himself: **“I am** the way, the **truth** and the life...”

Let’s wash our hands, keep our six feet distance, calm our fears, but in all that let us encourage one another (and ourselves) in the truth that the peace of Christ is in us., knowing that his right hand is on us.

Your friend

Manfred