

John 20:19-29 (NIV)

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

²¹ Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

²⁴ Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!”

But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”

²⁶ A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”

²⁸ Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

²⁹ Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

Aristotle called death the ultimate fear because “it appears to be the end of everything.” End of Life, end of Love, end of Hope, end of meaning

“I’m going on to that Great Perhaps.” Francois Rabelais (atheist)

1 John 4:18 There is no room in love for fear. Well-formed love banishes fear. Since fear is crippling, a fearful life—fear of death, fear of judgment—is one not yet fully formed in love. We, though, are going to love—love and be loved. First we were loved, now we love. He loved us first.



BECOMING FEARLESS

What if **FAITH**, not **FEAR**,
determined your **FUTURE**?

*Fear is the default mode of a **broken heart**. Fear is pain memory.*

The opposite of Fear is not COURAGE

Combat Fear with COMMITMENT

Thomas (known as Didymus), was not with the disciples when Jesus came.

*“In him the twins, **UNBELIEF AND FAITH**, were contending with one another for mastery, as Esau and Jacob in Rebecca’s womb”*

Combat Fear with Action

Fear says “it is **ENDING**.” Faith says “it is **BEGINNING**.”

Life does not get better by **CHANCE** it gets better by **CHANGE**!

Combat Fear with WORSHIP

Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. Jn 14:1

You become like what you worship. When you set your focus on a person or thing; when you stand in awe of it, you begin to take on the character of that person or object.

The LORD is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid? Ps. 27:1

The Opposite of Fear is PEACE

Peace is the state where you no longer have to act courageously because there’s no need. It’s the calm, the rest, the inner tranquility where you don’t confront fear; you realize it doesn’t even exist.

"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." John 14:27 (NIV)

The opposite of fear is NOT courage

Fear describes a state, not an action. Courage describes an action.

If you're afraid, you're in a state of fear, like in that moment right before you're called up to the platform to give a speech. You're sitting there, trembling, rehearsing again and again the reasons you're afraid, trying to justify that fear.

But then you're called, your feet walk you to the podium, and you begin. That's courage. You're still trembling, your voice might even crack as you start to speak, but you're going ahead anyway. You're acting despite the fear.

Fear is the state you're in. Courageous is how you're acting in that state.

But what if you could change that state entirely? What if you could move beyond fear? What if you didn't have to do anything courageous because you just *were* no longer afraid?

That would be the true opposite of fear. And that I call peace.

Peace is the state where you no longer have to act courageously because there's no need. It's the calm, the rest, the inner tranquility where you don't just kill the resistance, you realize it doesn't even exist.

And all this time I was shooting for courage. No wonder I didn't get anywhere. Courage is only the path, not the destination.

It's like I woke up: *the destination is peace. Peace, Marshall!*

The opposite of fear is peace. The other point of the line is peace. The state is peace.

There is, however, another golden rule of spirituality – *worship makes you more truly human*. When your worship is properly directed to God (the only one worthy of our worship) you begin to take on His character. You become more compassionate, loving, discerning. You gain new perspective. You see the world in a new light. You see the reality of the kingdom of God. In realizing these things you become more alive, aware that God is creator and rescuer of the world. So whether it comes through a sermon or a song or a moment of prayer, all of the sudden you are caught up in worship because you see God for who He really is. In those moments, you feel more alive, more human.

Fear is the natural, instinctive reaction to life's threatening circumstances. What is the supernatural antidote to fear available to us through believing prayer? Are we succumbing to fear, or choosing to conquer our fears through prayer, in deepening awareness of the presence and peace of God?

"None can sing a new song who has not the new life. But many who have the new life seem to have lost the song. The first thing that goes when we begin to backslide is the joy of the Lord." — Evan H. Hopkins

Personal Encounter (trust): “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.” Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!” John 20:27-28

Jesus is calling us to courage

Practical Power (Action): “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Phil 4:13

Persistent Convictions (Reason)

Jesus is calling us to Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. 1 Corinthians 11:1

many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. ¹⁷ This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

“He took up our infirmities and bore our diseases.” (Isaiah 53:4)
[Matthew 8:16-17]

“Faith is the conviction that God knows more than we do about this life and He will get us through it.” — Max Lucado

When fear shapes our lives, safety becomes our god. When safety becomes our god, we worship the risk-free life. Can the safety lover do anything great? Can the risk-averse accomplish noble deeds? For God? For others? No. The fear-filled cannot love deeply; love is risky. They cannot give to the poor. Benevolence has no guarantee of return. The fear-filled cannot dream wildly. What if their dreams sputter and fall from the sky? The worship of safety emasculates

greatness. No wonder Jesus wages such a war against fear.
{Max Lucado, Fearless}

Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover **Mark Twain**